

**Design and Landmarks Committee
Light Rail Open house
Meeting Notes
Wednesday, January 26, 2011**

Members Present

Patty Wisner, Vice Chair
Greg "Frank" Hemer
Jim Perrault

Members Absent

Becky Ives, Chair

TriMet Staff

Michele Traver
Claudia Steinberg
Paige Schlupp
Simon Cooper
Bob Hastings

TriMet Consultants

Carol Mayer-Reed, Mayer/Reed
Jeramie Shane, Mayer/Reed
Ron Heiden, Mayer/Reed
Jeff Joslin, Strategic Design and Development Service

Staff Present

Katie Mangle, Planning Director
Kenny Asher, Community Development &
Public Works Director
Li Alligood, Assistant Planner
Wendy Hemmen, Light Rail Design
Coordinator
Jeanne Garst, Office Supervisor
Grady Wheeler, Information Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

Due to the open house format of the meeting, the meeting was not called to order.

2. MEETING NOTES

a. December 6, 2010

The adoption of the meeting notes was postponed until the February 2011 meeting.

3. INFORMATION ITEMS—NONE

4. WORKSESSION ITEMS

a. Light Rail Design Open House

Katie Mangle, Planning Director, welcomed meeting attendees in place of Chair Becky Ives, who was unable to attend.

- She introduced the members of the DLC.
- The DLC was hosting the January light rail meeting in order to hear from TriMet and community members about the design of the light rail alignment and associated public improvements. The DLC was responsible for downtown design review as well as informal input into projects that did not require design review.

- The light rail project would introduce a number of new design and streetscape elements to downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. At the November 15, 2010, light rail design workshop, many of the opinions expressed called for high quality, distinctive components in Milwaukie.
- As the City worked with TriMet, the DLC would be responsible for reviewing components of the light rail project located in the downtown zones for compliance with the City's Downtown Design Guidelines. The comments from those in attendance tonight would assist the DLC in their review.

Ms. Mangle provided an overview of the light rail project.

- The light rail project was at 30% design. At 30% design, it was known what the objects were and how many and where walls will be. What is not known is the pattern and texture of the walls, design treatments of the streetscape elements, and other details. Between May and June, drawings would advance from 30% to 60%.
- January was the end of preliminary design. The next light rail meeting would focus on the Kellogg Bridge structure. She invited attendees to comment and provide feedback during current and future meetings.
- No decisions would be made tonight. City staff was asking for guidance regarding the character of the streetscape elements of the project. The design team would take the feedback from this meeting and return with proposed designs.

Ms. Mangle introduced City, TriMet, and Mayer/Reed staff and the next agenda item, public art.

Matt Menely, a Milwaukie resident who serves on TriMet's Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC), explained that the PAAC had worked to understand the entire alignment.

- Over 300 artists had applied to work on the project.
- The PAAC was heavily involved with the selection of the artists.

Michelle Traver, TriMet Public Art Coordinator, explained that at the end of 2010, the PAAC had selected artists for the different sections of the alignment.

- Public art was a wonderfully integrated element in the light rail project, and helped to enliven the project and bring the character of the community to light.
- She reviewed the artists selected for the Milwaukie area, including the Tacoma Station, Milwaukie Station, Kellogg Bridge, and their works via PowerPoint presentation.
- The artists were just beginning to get on board with the project, and will bring forward concepts as they move forward to 60% design completion. The art budget for each station is \$250,000.
- Artists would develop ideas for artwork with input from project staff, designers, and the community, and present their concept proposals to the PAAC for review and approval.
- The artists were responsible for creating pieces that were integrated into the overall design of one station platform, which was being designed by Mayer/Reed. This could result in one piece of artwork or several.

- There could be other art elements on the station platform, such as tile-covered columns.

Kenny Asher, Community Development and Public Works Director, noted that the building to be constructed at the station would be a private development, but public art could also be integrated into its design.

Ms. Mangle introduced the City's Downtown Design Guidelines and design standards. One of the guidelines was the "Milwaukie Character" guideline. "Milwaukie character" was subjective, but much of it had to do with the history of the place and its natural features.

- Many of the city's original buildings were gone, and many of the natural features were partially manmade. Milwaukie was made up of many different kind of styles and characters, even within the downtown blocks.
- The City had adopted a set of streetscape standards for downtown, which set a high bar for public improvements in downtown. These standards included designs for sidewalks, street furniture, light poles, and other street features.
- East of Monroe St were neighborhoods that were not part of downtown and were not subject to the streetscape standards of downtown. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss what the streetscape in these areas might look like.
- She reviewed a variety of housing and building design in the city via PowerPoint presentation.
 - She noted that the eclectic character of downtown was made up of many different architectural styles, from historic bungalows to the Lee Kelly fountain in front of Ledding Library to the stone retaining walls in front of houses and along Spring Creek in Historic Milwaukie.
 - There were many references and touchstones for Milwaukie character, more than most communities had. Milwaukie had strong values of small town, pedestrian orientation, authenticity, and eclecticism.
- The DLC would continue to define Milwaukie character throughout this project.
- She introduced the following agenda item, urban design.

Carol Mayer-Reed, Partner, Mayer/Reed, explained that whenever the firm started a project they began by looking at aerial photos to get the big picture and to get a feel for what surrounds the site.

- She reviewed project images and historic images of Milwaukie via PowerPoint presentation.
- The historic downtown, Union Pacific freight corridor, McLoughlin Blvd, trolley trail, and active waterfront of the 1950s provided a starting point. Iconic images included the Portland Waldorf School and the spire of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church on the hill.
- There were a number of wood structures in and around downtown, referencing the City's history as a lumber town. Milwaukie Lumber had a very prominent location downtown, showing that the local lumber industry was very alive and viable.
- The project team looked for elements that were similar along the light rail corridor.

- The team had divided the alignment within the city into 3 areas: the “green” residential area between Hwy 224 and Harrison St; the “downtown” area between Monroe St and Washington St; and the “station” area around the station platform.
- An example was the stacked wood, and the fact the lumber industry still has a place in Milwaukie’s downtown.
- She provided an overview of the topography along the downtown portion of the alignment, including the location of new retaining walls and removal of existing vegetation.
- She explained the components involved with a light rail alignment, including the geometry of where and how close the various elements must be. Elements and components included:
 - The TriMet right-of-way was acquired to provide width for the tracks. The right-of-way will cut through some topography, requiring retaining walls and a 6-ft fence on top of the retaining walls.
 - A minimum of 9 ft was required from the retaining wall to the center line of the light rail tracks.
 - A minimum 30-in “safety zone” was required between the light rail train and retaining wall.
 - Exactly 14 ft center to center between the light rail and Union Pacific trackways.
 - There must be another safety wall separating the light rail and Union Pacific tracks, which must be 6 ft high and 3 ft deep.
 - An additional fence was required within 250 ft of intersections; it did not need to be sight-obscuring and could be less than 6 ft high.

A discussion of landscaping requirements along the alignment followed.

Ms. Mayer-Reed pointed out that all of the retaining walls in downtown Milwaukie would have finishes. Public input was especially important in those decisions because the finishes that were chosen would have a significant impact on the final appearance of the light rail alignment.

- She reviewed a number of possible wall finishes via PowerPoint presentation.
- Landscape architects tried to respond to existing conditions, and to respond to those conditions they wanted to encourage and avoid those they did not.
- The design project team suggested using wood as a texture on the retaining walls to lend a sense of authenticity, and to draw on Milwaukie’s history.
- She suggested using textured wood form liners to cast the retaining walls. For instance, the safety walls in the central downtown area could replicate a stack of timber like those found at Milwaukie Lumber. The walls in the station area could be more modern in design.
- She suggested that attendees review the retaining walls at the Oregon Zoo interchange on Highway 26 west for an example of a recent successful retaining wall.
- Reviewed bioswale designs.

DLC Member Hemer asked if Mr. Goldbloom's art could be integrated into the retaining walls.

- **Ms. Traver** responded that Mr. Goldbloom's art could possibly be involved in the design of a form liner. However, the project team did not necessarily want to draw people close to the walls due to safety considerations.
- **Mr. Asher** added that the idea was to put the art where the most eyes would see it. The retaining walls were not necessarily the best place for pieces of art, but the wall finishes would contain an element of artistry.

Ms. Mayer-Reed reviewed the pedestrian patterns between the station area and the transit center on Jackson St.

- As preferred during the South Downtown planning process, the concept showed that Adams St west of the rail tracks would be closed.
- Pedestrian safety was the primary consideration, and the landscape design would direct people along a safe route across the tracks and discourage an unsafe route.

A discussion of landscaping and plantings along the alignment followed.

Ms. Mangle noted that the intent of the meeting was not to make decisions, but to review concepts. The project designers had suggested different retaining wall treatments for the green residential zone, the downtown zone, and the station area zone. Was the group supportive of that concept?

- The attendees were supportive of the general concept.
- Attendees requested additional information form liner designs for the next meeting, including stone-look form liners.

Ms. Mayer-Reed noted that there were a lot of examples of hand crafted stone walls in the city, and there were examples of form liners that are trying to look like stone, which might not accurately represent the authenticity of what was already there.

- The goal was to design something that was long-lasting and had a timeless component, that was relaxed and in the background and didn't call a great deal of attention to itself.
- The project design team would be open to considering a custom form liner.

Ms. Mangle noted that form liner patterns repeated, and pretended to be something they were not (such as stone or brick), which may run counter to the authenticity the designers were attempting reference to.

DLC Member Wisner asked how the wall design would transition between the 3 sections.

- **Ms. Mayer-Reed** stated that intersections would provide a natural transition.

An extensive discussion of form liner designs and maintenance considerations followed.

Ms. Mangle asked the members of the DLC for final observations.

- **Mr. Hemer** confirmed that the attendees' overall preference was for authenticity rather than imitation.
- **DLC Member Perrault** noted that he was pleased to see the amount of focus and energy regarding the design details. It provided direction to the DLC and the DLC would be doing its due diligence when making its design recommendations.

- **Ms. Wisner** noted that the DLC was always looking to see that new development was consistent with the history and character of Milwaukie and what it represents: closeness to nature and very well-established. She wanted to see this reflected in what was built in the city.

The next light rail meeting was scheduled for February 28, 2011.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW ITEMS—NONE

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, February 23, 2011.

7. ADJOURN

The meeting closed at 8:15 p.m.



Becky Ives, Chair