

SUMMARY

Tacoma Station Area Plan Community Meeting #1

September 24, 2012

6:30 – 8:30 pm

City of Milwaukie, Public Safety Building, Community Room

Following is a summary of the first community-wide meeting conducted for the Milwaukie Tacoma Station Area Plan. The purpose of the meeting was to review a draft set of Redevelopment Scenarios prepared for the Station Area, including proposed land use concepts and transportation improvement projects.

Approximately 20 people attended the meeting. They included a combination of study area and surrounding business and property owners, residents and members of the City's Planning Commission. The agenda for the meeting included:

- Time to sign in and view presentation display boards illustrating the redevelopment scenario concepts
- A brief description of the project background, schedule, process and redevelopment scenarios
- Two small group discussions, with one focused on proposed transportation improvements, street designs and parking issues, and another related to proposed land use concepts
- Reports back from the two discussion groups and additional comments
- A wrap-up and summary of next steps in the process

Participants also had the opportunity to fill out written comment forms during or after the meeting.

Following is a summary of comments provided during and after the two discussion groups, as well as feedback provided on the written comment forms. Additional comment forms may be completed and returned to the city after the meeting. If so, they will be summarized in a separate document.

Transportation Improvement Projects and Street Design Issues

Three primary themes emerged from this discussion – concerns about parking supply and impacts; the need for improved bicycle and pedestrian access and connectivity within and to the study area; and the need for safe bicycle and pedestrian connections. Specific comments included the following:

- **Parking.** Providing adequate parking to address current and future needs is very important. There currently is a shortage of parking in some portions of the study area and improvements associated with the future light rail line will exacerbate that situation, including adverse impacts on properties along Mailwell Street and in other locations. Further reductions of on-street parking in the study area would make things difficult for property owners and businesses. Proposed street cross-sections and design for Moores,

Ochoco and Stubb Streets are considered to be too narrow and would not provide adequate parking.

Other comments and suggestions related to parking included:

- If areas near Moores, Stubb or other streets in the northern portion of the study area remain industrial, use the city's typical industrial street design in those areas, rather than the new cross-sections shown at the meeting.
- Consider use of a parking district to manage parking in a way that provides enough parking for local employees.
- Continue to allow head-in parking on Mailwell Street and/or in other areas where it is currently used.
- Revise the design for Main Street to include some pockets of parking that would reduce the loss of on-street parking on Main Street.
- Replace the existing TriMet park and ride lot with a parking area for local businesses and employees. There may be some deed restrictions that require this to remain a parking lot even if it is not used as a park and ride lot.
- Use a portion of Opportunity Site B for parking for local businesses, in addition to meeting needs for parking associated with redevelopment of that site.
- Consider using the location of the existing building just south of the Springwater Corridor on the east side of McLoughlin Blvd. (north of Moores Street) as a future parking area. This could be accessed by a northern extension of Main Street and could incorporate a bicycle and pedestrian path.

- **Bicycle and pedestrian improvements.** Meeting participants agreed that Main Street is and should be the main spine for bicyclists and pedestrians traveling north/south through the area and accessing the new LRT station and the Downtown. They generally supported proposed bicycle/pedestrian improvements for Main Street, as well as other improvements recommended for the study area. They also recommended more or better crossings of McLoughlin Blvd., including potential overcrossings at Milport, Ochoco and Umatilla Streets. Additional specific comments included:

- There may not be room for the proposed bicycle/pedestrian crossing parallel to the LRT line between Moores Street and the LRT station (proposed transportation improvement #3). TriMet plans to build a wall next to the LRT line in this area and modify the location of one of the other rail spurs.
- A bicycle/pedestrian ramp from the Springwater Corridor to the south is probably not feasible given property ownership and easements in that area. The primary connection should be from the north side of the Springwater Corridor and then along McLoughlin Blvd. under the Springwater.
- As an alternative to the bicycle/pedestrian connection from the Ardenwald neighborhood at Olsen Street (proposed transportation improvement #2), consider a connection from Kelvin Street instead. This may be easier or less costly to build, given topographic and other conditions in this area.
- It may not be possible to do much to improve at-grade crossings of McLoughlin Blvd. at Ochoco and Milport. Consider overcrossings instead.
- For the connection from the Springwater Trail to the west side of McLoughlin, a ramp would be preferable to stairs.
- There should be a landscaped buffer between the proposed multi-use path along McLoughlin (proposed transportation improvement #11) and the roadway.

- The potential parking area proposed just south of the Springwater Corridor on the east side of McLoughlin Blvd. (north of Moores Street) could serve as a bicycle/pedestrian connection to McLoughlin Blvd. and north to the LRT station.
- Of the bicycle/pedestrian facility design proposed for Main Street, most participants preferred the multi-use path along the east side of the street.
- **Safety.** Participants noted potential safety concerns related to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including possible crime associated with trail use. They recommended adequate lighting of bicycle/pedestrian facilities and striping of on-street facilities to address these concerns. As mentioned above, the ability to safely cross McLoughlin Blvd. is a significant concern.

Redevelopment Scenarios

Participants generally supported the range of scenarios presented. They agreed that is important to create more of a sense of place within the study area, noting that it is currently perceived as a “dead zone” to some degree. They agreed that expanding the mix of businesses in the area, creating the opportunity for residential uses and improving connections to surrounding neighborhoods, as well as the LRT station and the downtown are important strategies for achieving this. Additional specific comments included the following:

- **Entertainment or civic uses in Scenario #1.** Participants like the idea of some type of large-scale civic or entertainment use on Opportunity Site B that could serve as a destination for community residents and others in this area, including promoting use of the LRT line to access the area. They also noted that the character and extent of complementary commercial or retail uses near this site would depend to a large degree on the type of specific use developed there. Specific suggestions included:
 - Farmers market or public market, preferably open several days per week.
 - Roller derby arena.
 - Meeting or event facility
 - Use of the historic building as an eating/drinking establishment (similar to a McMenamins)
- **Possible future residential uses.** Some participants questioned the viability of future residential use in the area, particularly near the railroad line, given potential noise impacts and the relative isolation of the area. However, others said they think certain types of residential uses would be very viable, particularly live/work units or artist lofts for people who may find it advantageous to be within an industrial area and may not be dissuaded by noise or other impacts. They noted that some type of mixed residential/retail/industrial area as shown in Scenario #2 on both sides of McLoughlin could be a good fit for the area and could spur the creation of an arts district that could be a draw for the area. They recommended that if residential uses were allowed, it would be important to also allow continued use of the area for industrial, small-scale manufacturing or other similar, existing uses. Support for existing businesses, flexibility and allowing for transition over time will be important to implementing this idea.
- **Retail and commercial opportunities.** Several participants said it would be beneficial to have additional commercial or retail uses in the area under any of the scenarios. This would give people a reason to visit the area and potentially create an incentive to use the light rail station. Specific desirable uses could include food carts or other transitional uses, a grocery store or places to eat or drink.
- **Access and parking.** Participants noted that any redevelopment scheme will require adequate parking for proposed uses in the area and better access and signage to help people understand how to get into the study area. It is currently difficult and confusing to navigate into the area from McLoughlin Blvd.
- **Priorities.** When asked to identify the most important ideas for the area, participants noted the following:

- Potential future residential use, including live/work and artist loft type spaces, with a balance between these and other existing and future uses in the area.
- Public or farmers market, open as many days per week as possible.
- Proposed transportation improvements, particularly bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Mix of uses and better connections to the downtown.
- Population within and adjacent to the study area to support future redevelopment.
- Adequate parking to support whatever type of land use is recommended.
- A destination land use at Opportunity Site B (e.g., roller derby facility, meeting center, public market, etc.)

Comment Form Responses

Following is a summary of additional written comments provided at the meeting listed by the questions included on the comment form.

- › *Do you suggest any changes to the land uses proposed in any of the scenarios?*
 - Hybridize #1 and #2 to create a focus for the development. Include industrial / artist live work space and light industrial.
 - I like Scenario #2 but with a space for an entertainment venue.
 - Greenspace – park of any kind – recreation, sports. Public market – not just a weekend farmers market (although I think the Milwaukie market has a very long wait list for vendors – maybe they need more space?). This could also serve as the local grocery for any area residents.
 - Flex zoning to allow live/work. Food cart zones.

- › *What do you think about the recommendation for housing in the study area (shown in Scenario 2)?*
 - Buffer the housing with small light industry spaces from the train tracks.
 - There should be a buffer zone between residential and railroad, but holds the potential for a vibrant community. IDRA: Housing/buffer wall/parking/wall/railroad track.
 - Not sure. Housing next to railway may feel isolated; noise will be an issue. A “quiet zone” may not be enough.
 - Specific designs could work.

- › *What other strategies might help make the study area a future community destination?*
 - Rezoning for broad list of uses – residential, light industry, retail, live/work.
 - Celebrate its industrial heritage – ODOT lodge building as a centerpiece. Site A as a gateway.
 - Better street access from Hwy 99/McLoughlin or clearer signage to get to the potential destinations. Keep ODOT building. Some level of sensitivity to the built environment – don’t tear everything down p the greenest building is the one already built.
 - Big focus on arts. Live/work studios.

- › *Are other (transportation) improvements needed?*
 - Bike and pedestrian improvements throughout.

- Bike/pedestrian access to area from a second rail crossing (like Olsen, Roswell, etc.) would be fantastic.
 - Not sure at this time.
 - Access to Springwater on west side of McLoughlin.
- › *Do you have significant concerns about any suggested (transportation) improvements?*
- Possible impact on historic resources. Need to create a 24/7 type community.
 - Not at this time.
 - No.
- › *Which improvements are most important to you?*
- Zoning that could lead to a grocery store and residential, plus enough of an entertainment draw to make the place more vibrant.
 - Creative use of whole area.
- › *Do you have any other comments or concerns about the proposed street designs?*
- More street connections – easier to move around by foot, bike, car, bus, train.
 - No opinion at this time.
- › *The proposed improvements to Main Street will eliminate some on-street parking spaces but provide better bicycle and pedestrian access. How do you feel about that trade-off?*
- Good.
 - No opinion at this time.
- › *What types of improvements to Main Street would encourage you to bike or walk there?*
- Grade separated or otherwise protected bike/pedestrian path.
 - Bike and pedestrian paths, not single, multi-use path.
 - I don't know if it would encourage me to walk/bike on Main Street, but I hope the landscaping remains. This area needs all the trees, grass, etc. it can get to soften the impact of all the concrete.
- › *Other Issues?*
- Do whatever is necessary to ensure ODOT building is reused.