



MEETING SUMMARY

MEETING: High Capacity Transit System Plan MTAC/TPAC Subcommittee Meeting
DATE: April 9, 2009
TIME: 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: Metro, 600 NE Grand Ave., Metro Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT

Tom Armstrong (for Joe Zehnder)	City of Portland - Planning
Kenny Asher	City of Milwaukie
Andy Back	Washington County
Jazmin Casas (for Satvinder Sandhu)	FHWA
Jonathan David	City of Gresham
Denny Egner	City of Lake Oswego
Jon Holan	Forest Grove
Nancy Kraushaar	City of Oregon City
Alan Lehto	TriMet
Mike McCarthy (for Ron Bunch)	City of Tigard
Margaret Middleton	City of Beaverton
Dave Nordberg	DEQ
Lidwien Rahman	ODOT
Dale Robins	RTC
Paul Smith	City of Portland - Transportation
Patrick Sweeney	City of Portland - Transportation
Cynthia Thompson	SMART
Ron Wienman	Clackamas County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ron Bunch	City of Tigard
Jonathan Harker	City of Gresham
Jane McFarland	Multnomah County
Satvinder Sandhu	FHWA
Joe Zehnder	City of Portland - Planning

PROJECT STAFF

Metro	Tony Mendoza, Crista Gardner, Karen Withrow
Project Consultants	Kristin Hull and Brandy Steffen, CH2M HILL Tom Brennan, Nelson/Nygaard David Calver, HNTB

GUESTS

Jim Howell	AORTA
Fred Nussbaum	AORTA

I. WELCOME/INTRODUCTION

On April 9, 2009, the sixth MTAC/TPAC HCT Subcommittee meeting was held for the Regional High Capacity Transit (HCT) System Plan project. Ms. Kristin Hull outlined the agenda and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review the evaluation results, answer questions that were raised at the last meeting, and agree on a set of preliminary recommendations that can be presented to the other groups involved in the project. She stated that this is the second of three meetings focused on this topic and that there will be another meeting before the final recommendation is made in May.

There were no group communications or public comments.

II. PUBLIC INPUT AND PRIORITIES

Ms. Hull provided a brief update about the project, including the outreach made to the public to announce the build a system tool and questionnaire. She said that preliminary results of the questionnaire have shown that ridership is the most important criteria for the public and that respondents said that more money should be spent on transit investments. The preliminary results also show that a mix of residential, retail and employment areas should be served, as well as a mix of lines to downtown and between suburbs. The complete results of the questionnaire and other public outreach will be presented at the next meeting.

III. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

Mr. Tom Brennan reviewed the steps involved in the evaluation process. Edits from the group have been incorporated, and the process is nearing a final product. Some of the big issues discussed at the last meeting included:

- 2040 Growth Concept land use criteria
- Columbia River Crossings and connections to Clark County
- Local aspirations
- Capital costing
- Redundancy of lines

Discussion:

- Some members asked about the station communities. Mr. Tony Mendoza said that a station community is on existing lines and that extra points were given to new lines that cross/connect to existing lines.
- There was a concern that not all town centers were serving the same function.
- There was a concern by some members about the I-205 crossing to Clark County. Coordination with Mr. Dale Robins led to agreement on how to word a statement about high capacity transit on the I-205.
- It was requested that the team give more information in the next steps section of the evaluation report, specifically regarding collaboration with ODOT and other roadway/railway owners about right of way and other issues.
- There was a concern about giving zero (0) points to lines that pass through jurisdictions that have not yet submitted local aspirations. Mr. Andy Back and Mr. Mendoza will speak about this off line.

- A few members were concerned that local aspirations points were not evenly applied, especially outside of the urban growth boundary. Ms. Crista Gardner said that the local aspiration goals were applied evenly for all corridors. It was decided by the group to treat Forest Grove differently from the other corridors, since it is a unique situation, located on a transportation corridor that passes through an area outside of the urban growth boundary.
- There was discussion about the price of right of way acquisition that was assumed for all corridors. Mr. Mendoza said that a range was developed for each corridor and the higher costs were used for all comparisons.
- There was disagreement among committee members regarding the importance of finishing the “spoke” design that connects regional centers to the central city (downtown Portland) before focusing on suburb to suburb, or “hub,” development (regional center to regional center).

Redundancy discussion:

- Some members were surprised at the rankings that resulted from adding a redundancy criterion. Specifically there was a concern about how to determine redundancy and if lines should have points deducted.
- The group discussed the best method for decreasing redundant corridors that are parallel to existing lines while providing sufficient service where it is needed. The group decided that the WES line is unique because it has recently received investment and future light rail transit investment in this (or a parallel) corridor does not make sense at this time. However, upgrades to the line could be considered later.
- There was more discussion about giving more points to regional centers that are not currently served by HCT while not giving any points to those centers that are already served, as opposed to penalizing those corridors.
- A new scoring option for redundancy would be on a 1- to 3-point scale to reflect the group’s desire to serve those centers that are currently not served before adding capacity or other lines to a center that is currently served by HCT, specifically for the Oregon City and Washington Square regional centers.

There was a question about how the tiering system would fold into the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), specifically how many corridors would be in the financially constrained section. Staff said that the extent of the financially constrained list is still being discussed. Several members were concerned about how this list of recommended corridors would relate to other plans, specifically the mobility corridors, and asked for this topic to be discussed more at the next meeting.

IV. PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATION

Ms. Hull clarified that staff will report the findings from the evaluation and the subcommittee’s preliminary points of agreement for action:

- Revise redundancy scoring, focusing on serving regional centers not currently served by HCT.
- Remove corridor 34 (WES upgrades) from the scoring; this project is unique and shouldn’t be part of the project as a light rail line.
- Rescore local aspirations for the Hillsboro to Forest Grove corridor to recognize the unique position of Forest Grove in the region.

- Consider changes to the RTP policy for places served by HCT (regional centers versus town centers).

The group had a preliminary discussion to include the following lines in the top tier:

- Line 11 – Portland to Sherwood or Beaverton via Tigard
- Line 29 – Milwaukie to Beaverton via Lake Oswego
- Line 10 – Portland to Gresham via Powell Boulevard
- Line 8 or 9 – Clackamas or Milwaukie to Oregon City

Discussion:

- A few members wondered if there were steps outlined for a town center to elevate its status to a regional center.
- Some members were concerned about the ranking of line 17 and that it may not have been examined as a complete line. Some thought that it should be evaluated as an expansion/enhancement to the existing system rather than as a new line.
- The group discussed including a potential extension to Beaverton as part of the line 11 corridor study.

V. EXISTING SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT ANALYSES

Mr. Mendoza said that staff examined improvements to the existing system but that scores did not rise to the level of adding new corridors. Since such improvements, like a tunnel through downtown Portland, would not capture new ridership, it was not listed in the same category as new lines.

VI. NEXT STEPS

Ms. Hull invited the public to comment.

Mr. Jim Howell said that the current approach bothers him since commuter rail is not part of the process. He was also concerned about the mode choices used.

Mr. Fred Nussbaum was also concerned about the mode specific examination of the corridors. He suggested that the group look at where demand was and then determine where the lines were needed. Specifically, he said that he wouldn't assume that WES service will be the same in 2035 as it is today.

Seeing no further business, Ms. Hull adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and let the group know that Metro will poll them for their availability for a May meeting. During the final meeting, the group will prepare a final recommendation for TPAC and MTAC and discuss other policy issues.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR MARCH 25, 2009

The following have been included as part of the official public meeting record:

TOPIC	ITEM	DOC DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
I.	Agenda	4/09/09	MTAC/TPAC HCT Subcommittee agenda	
II.	Draft detailed evaluation memo	4/09/09	Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan evaluation results - draft	
III.	Meeting summary	3/25/09	Summary of the March 25 meeting	