

PCC Sylvania Connection: Status of Further Investigation

September 11, 2015

In July 2015, the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee opted to reschedule the decision regarding the PCC-Sylvania light rail cut-and-cover tunnel to October 2015. The committee asked project staff to conduct additional analysis and public outreach to better understand trade-offs of direct service versus cost and construction impacts, and to learn more about future campus planning efforts.

This memo reports on the status of this additional analysis and summarizes the full range of options for the Southwest Corridor plan to connect with the PCC Sylvania campus.

Staff organized its further investigation around the six actions spelled out in the *Draft Staff Recommendation for July 2015 Decisions* document:

- **Refine tunnel designs.** The Southwest Corridor project team will continue to refine preliminary tunnel designs in order to better define tunnel impacts and potential mitigation.
- **Explore alternate connections.** The Southwest Corridor project team will continue to explore alternative mechanized connections between a Barbur station and the campus, such as a shuttle bus system or people mover, in the event that the option on Barbur is identified as the preferred alignment.
- **Develop campus visioning.** PCC is asked to work with the Southwest Corridor project team to develop campus visioning prior to master planning efforts, identifying potential redevelopment opportunities and the scale of desired redevelopment in response to an investment in an light rail station on campus.
- **Receive student and staff travel data.** PCC is asked to share student and staff travel data so that Southwest Corridor project team can understand how to best support improved transit to the Sylvania campus.
- **Engage with neighborhoods and campus community.** The Southwest Corridor project team and PCC will work together on engagement with the neighborhoods surrounding the campus as well as the college community.
- **Define a formal partnership.** Finally, Southwest Corridor project team, in particular Metro, TriMet and the City of Portland, will work with PCC officials to define a formal partnership in support of the Southwest Corridor Plan.

Staff from Metro, TriMet, and the City of Portland also held regular coordination meetings with PCC officials to gather and review information.

Refine tunnel designs

Staff looked to identify ways to reduce impacts, costs and risks while maintaining or improving performance. On August 14, 2015, staff released a technical memo on PCC Sylvania Light Rail Connection Options, reporting on the outcomes of this work. The technical memo can be found on the project website:

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/SWCP-PCC-Tunnel-Technical-Memo-20150814-web.pdf>

Explore alternate connections

Staff aimed to evolve design concepts for walk/bike improvements on SW 53rd Avenue and investigate the feasibility of a people mover or other mechanized connection from HCT to campus. The August 14 technical memo reported on the outcomes of this research and design work. Please refer to this memo for further details.

Develop campus visioning

The steering committee called on PCC to work with project staff on this effort. Staff requested to PCC officials that the College develop a preliminary vision for the campus containing “how, what, and when” and describing community benefits. PCC has been working with SERA architects to develop a preliminary vision of possible future development on the Sylvania campus and with ECONorthwest on the potential locations for a new Health Professions Center. The College plans to share this information with the steering committee prior to the October decision. Based on what PCC officials have shared to date, staff is satisfied that the College has fulfilled this request.

If a direct HCT connection to PCC Sylvania is included in the Final Preferred Package, staff believes the next step for the College is to evolve redevelopment concepts for campus. Such evolved concepts should include direction on the scale and phasing of desired campus development and possible on-campus infrastructure needed to connect central campus buildings to the HCT station.

Related to this action, the City of Portland is currently updating its comprehensive plan, including development guidelines for college and university campuses. City staff is working to ensure that the updated guidelines and designation for the PCC Sylvania campus align with the Southwest Corridor Plan goals.

Receive student and staff travel data

Staff requested travel data from the College, with the intention of understanding how to best support improved transit to the Sylvania campus. Data requested included mode split and trip origin. Staff is satisfied that the College has fulfilled this request. As the Southwest Corridor Plan proceeds, staff will continue to use this data to refine connection options.

Engage with neighborhoods and campus community

Throughout the spring and summer, staff continued to engage neighborhood groups, residents and institutions in the Mount Sylvania area. Staff met with the Far Southwest Neighborhood Association in June and will do so again in September, met with the West Portland Park Neighborhood Association in August, and provided resources and support for an informal gathering of Far Southwest residents to discuss the project. PCC officials, including the new Sylvania campus president, have attended and spoken at the same neighborhood association meetings as project staff.

Local residents continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining local character in the neighborhoods, improving walkability and pedestrian safety along Capitol Highway and Barbur Boulevard, and providing frequent reliable transit service. Residents continue to have questions about the rationale for investing in a high capacity transit tunnel to serve the PCC Sylvania campus and concerns over how tunnel construction could impact area residents.

Throughout the next month, staff will continue to meet in person and provide electronic information to neighborhood associations, Somali American Council of Oregon and other civic groups and residents in the area regarding the most recent technical findings related to light rail tunnel options, as well as potential bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the area. Resident-led surveys are being conducted to gauge levels of support for light rail, bus rapid transit, and local bus options for the area.

Multiple events to connect with students and staff at PCC Sylvania are planned for the upcoming weeks as the fall academic term begins. Project staff will attend Student Welcome Day and college staff in-service events, and provide updates and requests for feedback through campus e-newsletters and social media. A PCC student and staff survey will be open for three weeks to gauge levels of support for light rail and bus rapid transit options for serving the campus, as well as possible walk, bike and express shuttle bus options to connect the campus from a potential transit stop on Barbur Boulevard. Key findings from outreach and surveys targeting the surrounding neighborhoods, PCC staff and PCC students will be available to the steering committee and the public prior to the October 12th steering committee decision.

Define a formal partnership

Project staff and PCC officials have undertaken conceptual discussions related to the relationship between PCC and the project partners as Southwest Corridor planning proceeds.

After the October decision, staff believes the next steps are to develop the key components of a formal partnership, taking into account deliverables, timeframes, and potential future financial contribution. These points would evolve into a conceptual informal agreement and eventually into a Memorandum of Understanding.

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