

Mobility Symposium #1

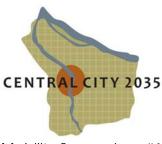
February 11th, 2011, 1900 SW 4th Ave, Portland, OR 97204, Room 2500A

Agenda:

- 1. Welcome and participant introductions
- 2. Central City 2035 Planning Process
- 3. Land Use and Transportation in the Central City
- 4. Present Draft Transportation Vision Statement:

Increase the competitive advantage, economic development potential and livability of the Central City by increasing the number of people (trips) to, from and within the district while reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

- 5. Discussion is this what we want to achieve?
- 6. Public Comment Period
- 7. Break
- 8. Discussion how do we achieve these goals? Issue presentations on three topic areas:
 - a. Efficiently managing limited right-of-way capacity
 - · Access
 - Vehicle miles traveled
 - Greenhouse gases
 - b. Expanding multimodal access
 - c. Efficiently managing parking resources
- 9. Public Comment Period
- 10. Adjourn



Mobility Symposium #1 **February 11**th, **2011**

Facilitator: David Knolwes

Panelists in attendance: Susan Anderson (Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability), Gwenn Baldwin (Baldwin Consulting), Mia Birk (Alta Planning and Design), Bernie Bottomly (Portland Business Alliance), Bob Buchanan (Pioneer Place), Rob Burchfield (Portland Bureau of Transportation), Chris Kopca (Downtown Development Group), Alan Lehto (TriMet), Amy Lewin (Central City 2035 Advisory Group), James McDermott (Web Trends), William Palmer (Brooks Brothers), Carly Riter (Portland Business Alliance), Michelle Rudd (Central City 2035 Advisory Group), Rob Sadowsky (Bicycle Transportation Alliance), Phil Selinger (Willamette Pedestrian Coalition), Bill Scott (Zipcar), Chris Smith (Planning and Sustainability Commission), Peter Stark (Central Eastside Industrial Council), Craig Sweitzer (Central City 2035 Advisory Group), Dan Zalkow (Portland State University)

Staff in attendance:

Portland Bureau of Transportation: Dan Bower, Mauricio Leclerc, Kate McQuillan, Grant Morehead, Sara Schooley; Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability: Shannon Buono, John Cole, Troy Doss, Elisa Hamblin, Steve Iwata, Karl Lisle, Turhan Sonmez

Public in attendance: Mariah Acton, Roger Averbeck, Carly Danley, Lisa Frishner, James McGrath, Chet Orloff, Cora Potter

1. Welcome and participant introductions

Susan Anderson welcomed the group and provided an overview of the purpose of the Symposium. David Knowles welcomed the group and asked each participant and audience member to introduce themselves.

2. Central City 2035 Planning Process

Steve Iwata provided an overview of how the Symposium fits in to the overall Central City 2035 planning process, and how it will be coordinated with the Portland Plan.

3. Land Use and Transportation in the Central City

Mauricio Leclerc provided a historical perspective and overview of existing transportation conditions in the Central City. The goals and accomplishments of the Central City Transportation Management Plan were reviewed, and new and emerging challenges were outlined.

4. Present Draft Transportation Vision Statement:

Increase the competitive advantage, economic development potential and livability of the Central City by increasing the number of people (trips) to, from and within the district while reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

David Knowles asked panelists what they think is working about current transportation policy, and what changes they would like to see.

Peter Stark: Goals seem appropriate. Multi-modal access is a laudable goal; however, bicycle infrastructure often conflicts with freight routes. We can't just focus on moving people; goods movement is a very important component from an economic standpoint. Freeway access is very important from this perspective, but access has diminished. Many businesses in the Central Eastside serve downtown. Parking is also key to economic success, but too many commuters use the Central Eastside as a commuter parking.

Chris Kopca: Inducement is a better method to achieve multi-modal goals than regulation. Transit investments have been more effective in encouraging non-auto trips than parking regulations. New strategies will be needed to accommodate all the new jobs envisioned in the Central City. We have lost businesses due to restrictive parking ratios. This might not be an effective regional strategy.

Phil Selinger: Walking is often taken for granted, since there are sidewalks on every block face. We need to focus more on the pedestrian experience, particularly at freeway interfaces. The east end of the Morrison Bridge and the west end of the Steel Bridge are not good for pedestrians. Curb extensions need to be more effectively implemented, to the level of a design standard. Pedestrian crossings at regular intervals should be pursued.

Bernie Bottomly: We have done better than a lot of cities at job retention and transportation infrastructure development. Going forward, transportation funding mechanisms will need to be revisited, as money becomes more limited. Freight projects often suffer because of limited funding and the timeline for projects. Right-of-way allocation might be at the point of becoming a zero-sum game. The Central City's success is the most effective tool at achieving greenhouse gas and land use goals. Rather than focus on specific mode split goals, we should focus on making downtown an attractive destination, with jobs and other destinations. The rest will take care of itself.

Carly Riter: Better management of existing parking resources will be a key aspect of downtown's success. The electronic signs on the Morrison Bridge that show available parking spots is great – how can we similarly use technology for on-street parking?

Bob Buchanan: We should focus on what types of development we want to attract. Certain businesses won't locate downtown if it is not accessible by automobile. Retaining current businesses should be a focus. There will continue to be a need for short-term parking.

Gwenn Baldwin: "Closing the loop" will be a key to success of streetcar. We need to address the operating funding question. To be an attractive transit option, making it free

only on the west side is not going to work. We need to implement additional technologies to help people find available parking. This will go a long way to reducing congestion. The street grid works well, but some streets should be considered non multi-modal. Sandy Blvd, for example: bikes have alternatives, while trucks do not. Burnside-Couch Project was good for some modes, but not for freight. Encouraging mixed traffic in some cases can be dangerous.

James McDermott: From an employer standpoint, having a space that is attractive to employees is a key component. Downtown provides that. Our transportation infrastructure is great, but we lack key amenities like wifi on transit. Portland needs to move more towards becoming a digital city. The lack of those amenities is an impediment to attracting high tech firms. Parking is less of an issue.

Craig Sweitzer: Transit investments have generally been good, but the transit mall has had a detrimental impact on retailers. We need to get beyond the perception that downtown is congested and hard to navigate. We need to increase livability for people, not just create an "economic neighborhood." Parking is retailers biggest concern, especially on-street parking. Streetcar was a good response to parking supply issues.

David Knowles: Where are downtown's biggest competitors from a retail perspective?

Craig Sweitzer: Depends on the type of retail. The regional malls for larger stores, but for small retailers, the neighborhoods are emerging and doing well. Mississippi, Williams, they are both thriving.

Bob Buchanan: I would say the regional malls are the biggest competitor. The neighborhood retail districts generally only attract local clientele. Downtown is still a regional draw. To maintain competitiveness, we need to make sure people can get here.

Craig Sweitzer: Restaurants are different. The best restaurants are no longer downtown.

Amy Lewin: The impact of minimal parking requirements on adjacent neighborhoods needs to be considered. Signage for visitors should be increased. Freight movement is important and we should think about ways to reduce conflicts with bicyclists.

William Palmer: It's very easy to get around downtown. But people are going to need to continue to drive into downtown. Smart Park is great for that. There is a stigma that getting around downtown is difficult, but it's not. We need to do better at communicating that.

Chris Smith: Our goals should focus on leveraging previous investments. There is a great potential for synergy between the streetcar loop and bicycle sharing. Parking regulations may not be necessary, as economic factors seem to be metering the amount of parking built. Parking capital costs should be passed onto consumers: either by decoupling residential units from parking stalls, or through parking cash outs for employees. Reducing overall oil dependence will have a positive impact.

Dan Zalkow: PSU has seen dramatic reductions in auto mode split, due in part to infrastructure, and in part to economic factors. We have also integrated transportation and land use development planning. We see better mode split in areas of campus where

multi modal infrastructure exists. We also use variable pricing based on time and location.

Rod Sadowsky: The bicycle industry is a growing component of the economy. We need more bicycle parking. Double parking on streets is rare, and traffic signal timing works well for bicycles. I think the primary conflict is with transit, and visitors. The transit mall doesn't work well, for any user. Right turn prohibition is a key factor, as is visitors not knowing how to navigate. Additional wayfinding signs would be a great addition. For downtown to succeed as a neighborhood, we need to increase housing. Include "safety" in the vision statement.

Bill Scott: Mobility in the Central City has improved dramatically for all modes in the past 40 years, unless you want to take a taxi. Taxi policies should be revised. It is easier to get around downtown today than it was back in the 1970's. Most Zipcar users are giving up a car, and we should gain a better understanding of why there is a shift to car sharing and how car-sharing trips are used. To increase the use of alternative transportation modes, we need better information and marketing. The Central City needs to be more competitive for office tenants over the next 10-20 years.

Alan Lehto: The biggest issue transit is facing is operating revenue. Vehicles are full, which is discouraging ridership. Economic development is a key long term strategy to stabilize revenues. Another key issue is access to stops on the periphery of the system: people need sidewalks to access their bus stops if we expect them to ride transit.

Mia Birk: The Eastbank Esplanade and bridge improvements have been great new developments. Lloyd TMA and Smart Trips are very successful programs. Issues: north-south connections between the Central Eastside and Lloyd are lacking. Better connections on both sides of the Morrison Bridge are needed. We need better bikeways downtown. We have only scratched the surface on bike use on the Central City. Bike sharing and car sharing need to be expanded; this could have a great impact for visitors. We need clear policies that address bike/streetcar and bike/freight conflicts. There is too much traffic in the Pearl. We need better connections into NW Portland. Need better connections across I-405 at PSU. The alarms and flashing lights at parking garage entrances are annoying for pedestrians. On street parking is not necessary for successful retailing. In the Central City, it is important to focus on the human element, and to create an environment that is easier for people to get around by walking and biking.

Rob Burchfield: We have truly multi-modal transportation policies for the Central City, and they are generally supported by the public. Don't look at infrastructure as a measure of success, look at use. People take transit and ride bikes, so those policies are clearly successful. It is difficult to optimize right-of-way use for everyone, if you have to accommodate everything. Look at SW 5th and SW Hall. Bikes, pedestrians, traffic, MAX, and streetcar – it doesn't work well for any mode. We need to develop strategies for the right balance. We should consider adding Marquam Hill into the Central City boundary. The retail core needs to embrace the street. Currently it is in a bunker. We should consider combining transit operations with Streetcar and TriMet.

Michelle Rudd: Our business based its location decision on being on the MAX line. We should consider making on-street parking short term, and encourage long term parking into structures. Congestion on 6th at the Hilton is a problem. Unpredictable bridge

openings might encourage freeway trips. Can we communicate that better? Agree that downtown lacks a sense of place for retail customers.

Bob Buchanan: We need to be aware that several retailers at Bridgeport Village are having problems. They have the same issues: access and parking.

David Knowles summarized the discussion so far. Existing investments and overall policies are generally seen as successes. Things we might want to change: Central City is not just downtown. Different areas function differently, and policies should reflect that. The Central City is the hub of the region. Safety for all users should be given greater consideration. We need to be better and smarter about how we spend money. The role of technology: wayfinding, parking, etc., as an attractor for business and tourism should be explored. There is a competitive shift occurring, where the Central City is more attractive to some businesses, and less attractive to others.

5. Discussion – is this what we want to achieve?

Peter Stark: We need to consider the movement of goods. It's not just moving people and commuters. Many businesses don't focus on commuters. It's what's in the truck, not the truck driver.

Phil Selinger: We should include something about the quality and safety of the experience.

Rob Sadowsky: Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and single occupant vehicle use are not inspiring goals. Should we focus on flow?

Bernie Bottomly: VMT is more of a proxy for other things we are concerned about: congestion, and greenhouse gases. We want to focus on reducing friction.

Mia Birk: "Reducing" is too tepid. That can mean one less car.

Bob Buchanan: Should we have a more balanced goal? Where is the equity piece?

A discussion ensued as to whether the group should be so downtown focused. Telecommuting might continue to decrease the need to commute to a workplace at all. The transit, system, meanwhile, remains downtown-centric. Alan Lehto noted that downtown is the only part of the region that maintains the density of destinations necessary to sustain the system.

Mia Birk: We need to think very big: way beyond our current goals.

6. Public Comment Period

Roger Averbeck: What about connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods? That's important. Is ODOT involved in these discussions? They should be. Connectivity in South Portland needs greater attention.

Steve Iwata noted that ODOT staff has been involved in the Mobility Working Group discussions, but was unable to attend today.

Cora Potter: We need to focus attention on allowing people to age in place. As the population ages, things like signal timing may have to be adjusted. Access to hospitals, etc. that may be outside the Central City will need to be maintained.

Carly Danley: We may be behind Europe on bicycle infrastructure, but we are way ahead of Europe on wheelchair accessibility. The Broadway cycletrack, however, creates conflicts. Mobility impaired persons don't have time to cross the street due to signal timing, and thus often wait in the cycletrack. This is a problem. Further, the presence of the cycletrack inhibits the deployment of mobility devices from vans. Accommodating everyone might result in barriers without realizing it.

Maria Actin: We haven't been talking enough about equity. Some people might not have the means to use some of the modes we are talking about. Can we get a list of panelists next time?

Cora Potter: Transit service should be extended later into the evening. It prevents people living outside the area from accessing events in the Central City.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.