

Portland Freight Committee

Notes from December 6, 2018 Meeting No. 186

Special guest: Metro President Elect Lynn Peterson

- Outlining regional vision and how to tackle the big issues. Gentrification, affordability, congestion. Lack of affordable housing moves workforce outside the region or keeps workers from filling needed jobs. Main message: Our land use system is not sustainable and its impacting our transportation system. We have a bigger problem than transport, and that's the bigger conversation we need to have.
- The region has taken an incremental approach to light rail, building approximately 5 miles every 5 years. Our arterials, many state owned, provide us regional access but have not received adequate improvements. We need to think bigger and better. We have aged corridor and project plans; need to look towards the future and invest in ourselves. Commitments to corridors and improvements; significant levels of investment. Marry land use and transportation planning to maximize investments to solve our livability issues. Metro is rolling out implementation of affordable housing bond measure. IGAs with counties and getting units on ground. Metro wants to retain trust that has been shown and make employment areas and communities more accessible.
- Questions:
 - Pia Welch (FedEx) – Everyone must be coordinated. How is this going to happen?
 - Lynn Peterson (Metro) [LP] – How to structure for transportation: committee in early 2019 to construct problem statement, outcomes, identify regional projects. Conversation must be taken up at the corridor level and carefully coordinated. We don't know what we need in the 15-20-year timeline. Washington and Clackamas counties are both geographically isolated; there are connections that we need to talk about that haven't made it into the 30-year projects list. We have not had the money to do that kind of planning for large projects. \$180 million for CRC meant we did not do a lot of other planning for the region. How can we minimize risks and start doing these kinds of projects?
 - Bob Short – Suggests a new way to think about land use. Regional pop growth, housing shortage, inadequate transportation system... Reducing SOV is not going to be enough. We should rethink our approach to land use. State does not have money to tackle the things you're talking about. Private investment capital drives everything.
 - LP – Our issues are not unique to our region. Who is doing it right? UGB expansion was put forward by the cities that submitted their plans. They articulated how these communities will be integrated in the long-term.
 - Tim Collins (Metro) – A connected system for mobility corridors... Metro just completed a Regional Freight Strategy. Will study freight delay and commodity movement next year. Input from PFC and freight community will be solicited.
 - LP – A lot of the coordination comes from the RTP. Not all corridors are considered mobility corridors, but that does not mean we wait to address the known issues. We do not want to be hamstrung by lack of federal funding.

- Sorin Garber (Sorin Garber Consulting) – Regarding tolling discussions in WA state, can you tell us how you build consensus around a project that is necessary?
- LP – It is based on the community. There is no uniform approach. Tacoma Narrows Bridge – tolling is paying for that project.
- Jana Jarvis (OTA) – Oregon recently passed a big transportation package. Trucking pays twice the average cost in the state. Metro must deliver on their word to provide additional capacity. Roadway capacity is still relevant.
- LP – We have a programmatic problem in dealing with one-offs and hotspots. We must think about how to improve flow. The importance of our highway system and other regional connections must be addressed as we think about what we want in the next 20-30 years. We need to attract workforce. TriMet has not had money to continue their program for large projects. We need expertise to carry out projects and reduce risks.
- Marie Dodds (AAA) – What is your vision as AV fleets are deployed?
- LP – Cities and regulations will be important. How Metro coordinates and acts as a data center hub, standards for information collection and sharing. Policies around parking, levels of automation and safety, and changes in commute distance will have to be considered. We must consider the impacts of empty vehicles using the system (staging issues). Metro's role and understanding benefits and cons.
- Tom Dechenne (Colliers Real Estate) – There is a disconnect on the ground level regarding costs. Changing land use planning could take a long time. Why not get cities on the same track? Jurisdictions do not seem to be on the same path.
- LP – It is relative. It is still easier here to develop than in CA. WA County cities will soon convene around how to get out of the way of development. Cities should examine their development codes to remove barriers and look at SDCs and the construction of affordable housing and high costs. Each city has their own politics and culture, so we must start with specifics to move forward. CA has fast-tracked developments that meet zoning requirements. Not everyone can be under the exact same code.
- Steve Kountz (BPS) Industrial land supply and freight mobility are not popular. Industrial rents have risen significantly. We are becoming a less competitive region for industrial growth. How do you propose we address supporting industrial-related middle-wage jobs?
- LP – Industrial lands near interchanges have gone to big box stores. We must think differently about how we deal with these lands as they come back on the market.
- Corky Collier (Columbia Corridor Association) – Put a dollar value on health benefits of providing middle-wage jobs and how they bring dollars into the state. Does it make sense for us to look at this from an income perspective?
- LP – Yes. Safety always has to be a priority. Economic development is a huge part of that. There are other things in these corridors that have community benefits. We must be aware of the communities that have been left behind.
- Bob Hillier (PBOT) – Should we be looking at a statewide or regional I-5 strategy?
- LP – We tend to take on one project at a time and not put all the solutions on the table. It is not just I-5. We haven't allowed ourselves to have programs that allow us to achieve results throughout a whole corridor. How we talk about and fund these things must change. The CRC was not successful on the political side because the policies did not work. There are different issues on each side of the I-5 bridge. We do not have enough money to replace the

I-5 bridge. The states need to decide on LRT or BRT and when we start tolling. These are the only two issues that need to be decided together. The rest must be decided independent of the other.

- Bob Short – What percentage of the Oregon workforce is from Clark Co.?
- Multiple answer – *A range of figures were discussed, and committee acknowledged that a significant amount of state income taxes come from Clark Co. residents working in Oregon.*

Chris Kroeker (NW Natural) Presentation – Compressed natural gas

- The global market for CNG is skyrocketing. There is large growth potential in Oregon. CNG use in public transit is growing in US. CNG emissions testing shows 90 – 99% lower than EPA CARD/NOx standards. There are zero CNG public fueling stations in Oregon. There are only private stations. NW Natural is looking for options to make more fueling stations available. Rate-based approach requires no federal or state money. Fueling infrastructure on Swan Island could serve the estimated 700 trucks in the area. Responses from major fleets varied. Cost of fueling station around \$1 million, plus incremental costs of vehicles. Pickup truck \$10K, \$80K - \$1 million for large trucks.
- Renewable natural gas (RNG) – Waste materials (human and ag waste, compost) used to capture. There are no net gains of CO2. Natural gas has less carbon output than other fuel sources. Federal government created trade market with credits for renewable fuel sources. Because of revenue generated, RNG is nearly in parity with the cost. Energy density (Watts per liter), range (miles per liter), and costs produce different efficiencies and capabilities for freight and large vehicles, such as buses.
- There are different pathways to achieve the desired outcome of lower carbon emissions. Each fleet has options to choose from. There could be significant savings for fleets by this efficient technology.
- Questions:
 - Sorin Garber (Sorin Garber Consulting) – Can you tell us more about the strategy for making a business case?
 - Chris Kroeker (NW Natural) – NW Natural is exploring financial incentives.
 - Bob Hillier (PBOT) – Are you talking with TriMet?
 - Chris Kroeker (NW Natural) – Yes. TriMet wants to diversify its fleet and move toward EV fleet.

Winston Sandino (PBOT) George Middle School Crossing Improvements

- Based on feedback from previous open house, a full crossing signal is required to feel safe crossing Columbia Blvd at Banks St. There are two options for crosswalk and signal placement. Project team are seeking feedback from PFC. The project is in the initial design phase. Access management will help with residential cut-through traffic at Oregonian & Midway to Fessenden.
- Questions:
 - Sorin Garber (Sorin Garber Consulting) – A signal here introduces added delay. Has a warrant test been done? How can the timing be optimized?

- Winston Sandino (PBOT) – It is pedestrian activated full 2-way signal that is expected to be utilized most during peak hours when students are going to school.
- Corky Collier (Columbia Corridor Association) – Can a timer be put on the signal so it is not activated back to back, causing backup for vehicles?
- Pia Welch (FedEx) – A crossing guard could be useful.
- Bob Hillier (PBOT) – The pedestrian bridge is still being used and removing it is to be determined.
- Tom Bouillion (Port of Portland) – Columbia Blvd is an air-freight corridor. Has any modeling been done to understand the impacts of signalization? It would be interesting to know during peak hours what the delay is expected to be.
- Corky Collier (Columbia Corridor Association) – Additional stop and go traffic could increase vehicle emissions. This is information that we will want to know.
- Sorin Garber (Sorin Garber Consulting) – Capacity and performance of Columbia is vital, so the freight community is sensitive to impacts.
- Bob Short – Is there not an option to move the pedestrian bridge where people will use it? This will disaccommodate freight.
- Winston Sandino (PBOT) – This is a safety issue. PBOT did a traffic count. Kids are looking for gap in traffic and are just running across Columbia Blvd.
- PFC collective feedback– We are asking for other solutions, a crossing guard, etc.
- Feedback will be incorporated, and project may come back to PFC in January 2019.