

**Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Advisory Committee**  
**Transportation Task Force**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**December 9, 2009**

Task Force Members present: Ray Hites, Roberta Krogman, Jess Laventall, Christian Smith, John Mulvey, Seth Richardson, Jim Williams, and Cora Potter.

Staff present: Kevin Cronin (PDC), Rich Newlands (PBOT), Andrew Aebi (PBOT), and Juan Carlos Ocaña (PDC).

**Welcome and Introductions.**

**Committee Purpose and Project Background.**

Charter: Kevin Cronin from the Portland Development Commission (PDC) started the meeting by reviewing the Transportation Task Force (TTF) draft charter, which is a document put together by PDC staff to clearly identify the TTF's purpose, scope of work, and outcomes. Prior to this meeting, staff circulated a draft charter among TTF members and asked for feedback and potential changes, but no one indicated any items to change. The TTF final charter will be circulated by the next TTF meeting on January 13, 2010.

Schedule: Kevin also reviewed the TTF meeting schedule and timeline. The next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2010. Then the TTF will present its preliminary findings to the public in an Open House organized around the Lents Neighborhood Association general meeting on January 26, 2010. The TTF will hold its final meeting on February 17, 2010 to finalize its recommendations. The goal is for the TTF to inform this fiscal year's budget process, so the turnaround is fast. The TTF could be reconvened in the future, if necessary, to provide advice on other projects. We will try to hold meetings in different locations throughout the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area (LTC URA).

Transportation 101: Kevin described a list of plans and programs that was previously e-mailed out. Kevin also described the basic steps from project conception to construction. Rich handed out a flow chart that outlines the basic steps for the implementation of transportation projects.

**Transportation Project List.**

Plans: The projects on the list to be prioritized by the TTF members are taken from different City Council-adopted plans and policy documents. Kevin went over the projects list and he also discussed programs such as Safe Routes to School, which encourages the safe use of alternative modes of getting to schools, and Local Improvement Districts, which are also included in the list to be prioritized.

Budget: Staff put together a document that includes the transportation related items: LID and Neighborhood Traffic Safety. According to the current budget projections, the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area has \$7.8 million to allocate for transportation projects between the current fiscal year (2009-10) and FY 2013-14.

How should the TTF approach budgeting and making expenditure recommendations for five years down the line, since those recommendations are likely to change? Staff indicated that the TTF should be mindful that projects take a long time to reach the implementation phase, and therefore the TTF should be very strategic on what projects they recommend for implementation. This is the first time in more than three years that the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Advisory Committee (LTC URAC) has had a committee to evaluate transportation projects.

Project inventory and map: Kevin reviewed the three categories of projects in the inventory sheet: completed, funded, and unfunded. The categories are color-coded in the document. Can the TTF members recommend other projects? It is possible, but not advisable because of the finite funding available (\$7.5 million), and also because that would increase the amount of work for the TTF, which is chartered to fulfill its scope of work in a short amount of time.

Rich Newlands from the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) indicated that some of the funded projects have fuzzy definitions, and revising the plans or projects will take a much longer time span than the TTF has. Rich explained how transportation projects, once they are adopted by City Council, move to the Transportation System Plan where they live until a funding source can be identified (either local, urban renewal, local improvement district (LID), state, or federal funds, or a combination thereof). Once the project is funded, then it moves into the three implementation phases: Project Development; Design-Engineering; and Construction.

Andrew Aebi from PBOT added that, as a general rule, you want to implement the projects as soon as possible, so that inflation and other factors do not make it more expensive. However, government agencies still need to go through the competitive bidding process to select the contractors. And in some situations the contractors' bids are less than the engineers' estimates.

What happens when something like the fatal accident at 80<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Foster Road forces agencies to act? Elected officials, especially the Mayor, can direct PDC to work on specific projects to respond to this kind of situations. In this particular case, PBOT is analyzing the police report, which indicates that the intersection design was not the cause of the accident. At the same time, there are certainly ways how that intersection can be improved, and PBOT is looking into that. Funding for this project is not necessarily going to come from urban renewal funds, but probably from other PBOT funds. If it becomes a major expense, then it is likely to be funded with tax increment financing (TIF, which are urban renewal funds).

Rich went over the list of plans that the identified projects came from: the original Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Plan, the Downtown Lents Business District Safety Plan, the Lents Neighborhood Traffic Safety Plan, and the Residential Street Improvement Plan. The LTC URA Plan Amendment added a big, unfunded plan to the mix: the Foster Road Streetscape Plan. Plans are made with long term goals in mind, and they assume that many improvements will be made incrementally, when different properties in the plans' areas are redeveloped or acquired. There will never be enough money to make all the improvements identified in any given plan at once. Other plans have parts that fall in the Lents Town Center URA, so those parts are likely to be funded with TIF.

Andrew presented the Local Improvement District (LID) program. This program has had remarkable results in Lents, eliminating 35% of eligible dirt-and-gravel streets in the URA, fixing potholes, and addressing stormwater drainage issues. There have been three LID phases in the LTC URA: the first two phases took place in 2001, north of Harold Street. The third phase, in 2006, took place south of Harold. At the inception of the LTC URA it was anticipated that \$12 million would be invested to eliminate substandard streets, but so far the PDC-funded program has spent only \$2M. Forming an LID requires the buy-in and financial support of property owners on the streets to be improved. On average, property owners paid 24% of the improvements, and the rest was subsidized by PDC and other sources. PDC also offers a grant to low-income property owners, if they qualify, to help them pay for the improvements. It is important to be strategic when improving streets, doing what makes sense and balancing it with property owner support. Staff is contemplating ways other than a petition from the affected property owners to initiate LID projects. When doing local street improvements, PBOT generally does not go through the Project Development phase, except for the outreach to the property owners, because it generally is a more straightforward project scope.

### **Proposed Evaluation Criteria**

Staff presented some draft evaluation criteria ideas, and the TTF discussed those and added a few more. The resulting Evaluation Criteria list is:

1. Geographic equity
2. Project ready.
3. Economic development/job creation.
4. Neighborhood livability.
5. Funding (eligibility for existing funding sources).
6. Leverage.
7. Public safety.
8. Aesthetics/utility.
9. Connectivity (“Missing links”).
10. Comprehensive approach.

Some of these criteria will be hard to measure, but at the end of the day, they will provide a rationale for the TTF to make its decisions and recommendations. Staff will use these criteria to develop a matrix for the evaluation process. We will try to send the matrix to the TTF one week prior to the January 13 meeting.

### **Next Steps**

The next TTF meeting will take place on Wednesday January 13, 2010, at a location to be determined. We expect to have the next two meetings at other locations in the LTC URA.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.