

**Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Advisory Committee
Transportation Task Force
Meeting Notes
January 13, 2010
Mount Scott Community Center**

Task Force members present: Elizabeth Buckwalter, Jim Chasse, Ray Hites, John Mulvey, Cora Potter, Seth Richardson, Heather Robinson, Gary Sargent, and Jim Williams.

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

Guests present: David Hyde, and Jeff Lynott

Welcome and Introductions.

Approval of Summary Notes.

The summary notes were approved without changes.

URA Budget Process and Project List Updates.

Kevin indicated that the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Advisory Committee (LTC URAC) met the night before and among other items discussed the budget for next Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-11 and approved a letter that described its budget priorities.

Kevin also described several projects that were inadvertently left out of the first project list and spreadsheet presented to the Transportation Task Force (TTF) Cost estimates for the listed projects have also been updated, which resulted in a total cost increase.

Local Improvement District (LID) Program.

Andrew Aebi from the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) presented information about the LID Program. An LID is a method by which a group of property owners can share in the cost of transportation infrastructure improvements. This involves improving the street, building sidewalks, and installing a stormwater management system on local streets. In the LTC URA, PDC has contributed a significant percentage of the cost of improvements in the three previous LIDs, and will continue to do so in future LIDs. There are financial tools available to help property owners with low incomes who cannot afford their share of the LID, but sometimes people are not taking advantage of those loans.

Property owners usually contribute 62 cents per square foot of improved right-of-way (ROW). That means \$6200 per 10,000 sq. ft. The calculation is made regardless of the frontage, and it can be amortized over 5, 10 or 15 years in the owners' property tax bills.

There are two ways for initiating an LID: (1) by petition from the property owners of the streets to be improved; and (2) by City Council action. It is hard to tell which way would work best for an LID in the

LTC URA. All previous LIDs in the URA have been initiated by petition and in slow housing markets, like the current one, owners would likely be more willing to pay for improvements, since they are stuck with the properties.

Kevin indicated that PDC and PBOT staff recommend to maintain the current \$1 million allocation for LIDs so the program can continue in the LTC URA, perhaps with some minor criteria changes so more streets (like 104th Avenue) become eligible.

Staff Evaluation of Project List.

In order to evaluate the project list, staff used the criteria that were created jointly with the CAC at the previous meeting. Staff expanded the definition of each identified criterion, analyzed each one of the projects on the list according with each criterion, and decided how to score each project. The only criterion that was not used by staff was Geographic Equity because it cannot be applied to an individual project, but it should rather be applied to the entire list of projects, once it is ready. Kevin showed the CAC the criteria matrix created by staff. Staff tried to make the matrix and evaluation as scientific as possible, but ultimately the scoring exercise is somewhat subjective.

The evaluation resulted in the prioritization of projects into three tiers: first (the highest scoring), second (the next highest scoring), and third (the third highest scoring). The lists of projects by tier are:

First Tier Projects:

- # 1 Ellis Street, Foster to 92nd Avenue;
- # 3 Flavel Street, 82nd to 92nd Avenues;
- # 40 Foster Road, 50th to 52nd Avenues, Streetscape/pedestrian safety;
- # 41 Foster Road, 54th Avenue, Streetscape/pedestrian safety;
- # 43 Foster Road, 64th Avenue, Streetscape/pedestrian safety;
- # 44 Foster Road, 65th Avenue, Streetscape/pedestrian safety;
- # 45 Foster Road, 67th Avenue, Streetscape/pedestrian safety;
- # 47 Foster Road, 78th Avenue, Streetscape/pedestrian safety;
- # 63 Ramona Green Street, 92nd Avenue to MAX Station;
- # 65 122nd Avenue, Powell to Bush Street; and
- # 77 82nd Avenue High Crash Corridor, Powell to Foster Road.

Second Tier Projects:

- # 78 112th Avenue, Powell to Holgate;
- # 22 Powell Boulevard, I-205 to 122nd Avenue;
- # 51 Foster Road, 50th to 52nd Avenues, District improvement;
- # 52 Foster Road, 63rd to 67th Avenues, District improvement;
- # 53 Foster Road, 56th Avenue, Focal point improvement;
- # 54 Foster Road, 72nd Avenue, Focal point improvement;
- # 56 Foster Road, 52nd to 63rd Avenues, Corridor improvement;
- # 57 Foster Road, 67th to 80th Avenues, Corridor improvement;

59 Foster-Woodstock, Phase II, 94th to 101st Avenues;
60 Powell Boulevard, 84th Avenue; and
61 Powell Boulevard, 91st Avenue.

Third Tier Projects:

5 103rd Avenue, Harold to Foster Road;
20 Foster Road, 97th to 122nd Avenues; and
70 Streetcar, Foster/122nd Avenue.

The staff's evaluation of the project is not the final evaluation and prioritization. The CAC and the community have opportunities to influence the process. Scoring was hard to do, and some criteria were easier to apply than others. There were projects that were one point away from the first tier, so even small changes in the scoring can have a significant impact. The CAC can work to determine whether they would prefer to make significant improvements in a few spots, or make smaller improvements to larger areas such as corridors.

Regarding the allocation of funds in this exercise, staff made the assumption that the first-tier projects are fully funded, but it does not have to be that way. Some funds could be designated as match for future grant applications to other funders.

The question of whether transportation improvements will raise properties' assessed values and help bring more money to the URA came up. The answer is yes, but new development is preferable to remodels or improvements because new development comes into the tax rolls at a higher value level.

Will addressing pedestrian safety problems along a corridor help with obtaining funds for future improvements? Not necessarily. A funder may think that the corridor does not need help as much as other areas because they already had some improvements done.

Rich Newlands from PBOT suggested that the CAC do not pick and choose elements within some large, multi-element projects (like pedestrian safety improvements of the Foster Streetscape Plan), but rather consider a total funding amount for the project and decide which specific elements to implement later (the programmatic approach).

Rich went over how the first-tier projects were identified using the matrix elements. One project that was included in the first tier is the Streetcar Extension Study, which could also be paid for by other funds besides tax increment funds (for instance, with a grant from Metro). Rich then described the second- and third-tier projects.

Transportation Projects Evaluation Exercise.

The TTF members then described their priorities for transportation projects:

- John Mulvey: Projects on the first and second tiers make sense and are the most important and beneficial in terms of funding. He liked the programmatic approach to project choice taken by staff. He would like to find a way to assess the worthiness of a project based on the economic benefit that the project would bring. The Foster Streetscape project ought to be at the top of any list because a modest investment could have greater economic impact than other projects. The Foster Road project between 60th and 68th Avenues (listed as projects #43, 44, 45, 52, 56 in the Project List) would be the ideal place to make investments on that corridor.
- Elizabeth Buckwalter: Her main priority is the Foster Streetscape project around the focal point (63rd & Foster; #52, 56). She would also like to fund some Safe Routes to School projects, and the Ramona Street project (#63) in the Lents Town Center.
- James Chasse: He would like to add the 112th Avenue project (#78) to the top tier. Everything else looks good. The Powell Boulevard project is in the early stages of planning, so it does not make sense to add it to the top tier.
- Gary Sargent: The 103rd Avenue project from Harold to Foster (#5) should be a priority. The Foster Road project from 97th to 122nd Avenues (#20) seems too high-scoring; it should have lower importance considering that it abuts the BES floodplain project area.
- Cora Potter: The Ramona Street (#63) and Ellis Street (#1) projects should be in the top tier, and staff should pursue grants for those projects right away. The livability score on Ramona Street should be higher because it is the entryway of the neighborhood to and from the MAX station (#59).
- Seth Richardson: Safe Routes to Schools projects should be bumped up in the priorities list. Everything else looks good.
- Jim Williams: Safe Routes to Schools projects are cheap and they fit well with the connectivity criterion, so they should be funded and implemented.
- Heather Robinson: Safe Routes to Schools projects are also very important to her. Ms. Robinson expressed regret that her top priority project, 104th Avenue from Powell to Harold (#6) will not be funded. The 111th Avenue from Holgate to Harold (#4) is another project that should be funded because it is one of the few north-south continuous connectors in that area. Kevin suggested that the project guidelines for LIDs could be revised so project #6 could be eligible for an LID project, which would be another way to fund that project.
- David Hyde, Land Use Chair of the Lents Neighborhood Association, made comments in lieu of Jess Laventall: He would like to prioritize the Ellis Street (#1) and Flavel Street (#3) projects because they have bus routes on them. Everything else looks good.
- Ray Hites: He commended staff on doing a good job with criteria, but he would also like to see how the list fares in terms of geographic equity. Safe Routes to Schools projects and the Foster Streetscape project (#59) are important. He would make the Foster Road project from 97th to 122nd Avenues (#20) a priority.

Preliminary Staff Recommendation and Open House Review.

Rich Newlands recapped that the TTF members identified the following projects as a priority, in addition to the priorities identified by staff using the criteria matrix: #4, #5, #20, #59, #78, and the entire Safe

Routes to School program. He also mentioned that there is enough agreement between the TTF members and staff about the prioritized project list, in spite of the additions, so he would like to show both the consensus and the anomalies at the upcoming TTF Open House on January 26. That way the public would have the opportunity to weigh in on both lists. After we get public input at the Open House, then the TTF will make the final recommendation.

Next Steps.

Kevin offered to attend the meetings of any neighborhood and business associations to present and discuss this information directly with them. He also indicated that if we take a programmatic approach (fund several programs as opposed to elements of a project), that will allow us to use significant amounts of money to obtain good leverage.

Gary commented that the TTF should make its recommendations thinking of what projects give us the most bang per buck. Jim Williams agreed, and indicated that this is the reason why people like the Safe Routes to Schools Program. James Chasse concurred that the first tier projects were well selected, with an eye to leveraging economic benefits.

Gary asked how the current cost estimates for the projects were calculated. Rich answered that staff updated the bid item cost estimates and added a five-year inflation factor plus contingency.

The TTF Open House will take place on Tuesday January 26, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm and from 8:00 to 9:00 pm, to bookend end Lents Neighborhood Association general meeting.

The next TTF meeting will take place on Wednesday February 10, at Ron Russell Middle School, 3955 SE 112th Avenue, in the Powellhurst-Gilbert neighborhood.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.