Meeting #4 Summary - DRAFT

Wednesday, May 8, 2018, 4:00 – 6:00pm
Vey Auditorium - OHSU

Committee Members in Attendance

Fred Miller (Chair), Doug Kelsey, Skai Dancey, Todd Lofgren, Zari Santner, Councilor Bob Stacey, Anton Vetterlein, Chet Orloff, Don Stastny, Jamey Duhamel
Presenters: Shannon Simms (ZGF-VIA-Mayer/Reed Joint Venture), Sarah Vonde Veld (OHSU), Josh Mahar (TriMet)

Main Outcomes

- The committee decided to remove the tunnel + elevator option from further consideration.
- The committee requested that a ropeway engineering team be contracted to confirm information about towers and cable requirements for an aerial tram.
- The committee requested a walking tour of the vicinity. TriMet will coordinate tour opportunities as needed.

Public Comment

1. A letter was provided to committee members from the Columbia Land Trust. The letter expressed concern of the inclined elevator's potential impact on wildlife movement in the parkland and stated that a bridge/elevator would likely have less impact. (Written letter available).
2. An individual spoke against any of the current proposals to take park land and construct a transportation project that will permanently scar the landscape. (Written statement available).
3. An individual that identified as a previous Design Commission Chair stated a preference for the tunnel or tram options and concern about the bridge and elevator options. He felt the connectivity was better with the modes that get further onto the hill and that they would have less effect on the character of the historic parkway.
4. An individual expressed concern about the inclined elevator's impact on wildlife movement in the area as well as the connection point at Terwilliger Boulevard. She said the she loves the existing tram.
5. An individual who identified as a SW Portland resident expressed concern about the inclined elevator's impact on wildlife movement in the parkland and stated a preference for the tunnel/elevator option.

OHSU Growth and Circulation

Sarah Vonde Veld provided a brief overview of OHSU's growth plans (see full presentation). Key points include:

- There is a new hospital expansion that is being planned for the site just west of the Casey Eye Institute. It is aimed to expand women and children's services. While planned, funding has not been approved by the OHSU board at this time.
    - The architectural team is currently exploring the possibility of a public elevator that would connect this hospital expansion building to the 9th floor (with no intermediate stops).
- While there will be continued growth on Marquam Hill for OHSU, the South Waterfront will be the primary focus of future expansions.
- While parking is provided for all patients, it is only provided for 1 in 3 employees. A series of pedestrian connections, trails, and elevators help people move throughout the campus.
- A committee member asked where the best place to land a connector is for the OHSU campus.
    - Vonde Veld said that currently the ninth floor acts as the main hub for movement throughout the campus.
    - There is some concern that the 9th floor and Kohler Pavilion in particular, location of the aerial tram terminus, is nearly at capacity and very congested at times.

Outreach and Engagement Summary

Josh Mahar, from TriMet's Community Affairs, provided an overview of outreach and engagement to date.

- At a meeting with a sub-committee of four members from TriMet's Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT), the group expressed a preference for the bridge + elevator and the inclined elevator options (see full CAT meeting notes).
    - It was noted that the committee did not express any preference or input on the upper terminus landing location for any of the connectors.
- An in-person open house on April 10 received 29 attendees and 17 comment cards. Of these comments, there was an expressed preference for a bridge + elevator followed by an inclined elevator. The open house did not include opportunities to provide feedback on an aerial tram option.
- An online open house received 291 responses. Preferences from these respondents was:
    - Inclined elevator
    - Bridge + elevator
    - Aerial Tram
    - Tunnel + elevator
- One of the committee members asked whether open house and online open house attendees were provided with an overview of the Olmstead's original plan for Terwilliger Parkway.
    - The Marquam Hill Connector video was embedded in the online open house and had some information about the history of the Parkway.

New Information on Connector Types

Wildlife Corridors and Inclined Elevators

Shannon Simms, the Urban Design team lead for the Marquam Hill Connector project, provided an overview of the wildlife in this particular area. The primary wildlife concerns are the large white oaks and associated species such as the White Breasted Nut Hatch. Much of the wildlife in this area are generally used to maneuvering through and around urban environments.

The team's most recent research on the inclined elevator suggests that wildlife impacts could be minimized through design.

- Most inclined elevators are built on an elevated track, which could allow wildlife to move underneath.
- An inclined elevator can typically be built close to within the footprint of the trackway, minimizing the need for tree removal. Any tree canopy clearing distance would be based on the needs of the owner/operator agency.
- An inclined elevator trackway is generally made of thin materials that allow light and air penetration.
- Fencing around the trackway is an operational requirement and the decision of the owner/operator agency.
- A committee member expressed concern that there would be disruption to wildlife during the construction period.
- A committee member mentioned that the Oregon Zoo's recent work may provide some insights on wildlife passages.
- There was some concern from the group about the noise impacts on wildlife from operating an inclined elevator.
    - General noise from an inclined elevator is similar to a passing car. There are some possible design decisions that could lessen noise impacts, for example, replacing metal car tires with rubber tires.

Aerial Tram

- Operating costs for the Portland Aerial Tram are $1.8 million annually.
- The potential landing sites at OHSU are very challenging. A new tram cannot land at existing Aerial Tram upper terminus and would need to land at a very small, tight space east of the Kohler Pavilion. Construction costs would be high due to minimizing impacts to OHSU operations. Reaching the new hospital expansion site would require going quite high to clear the Casey Eye Institute. It would be difficult and expensive to re-engineer hospital expansion building to accommodate a tram terminus.
- The height of towers depends on the overall cable sag. Potential tower heights are not known at this time but will be further investigated.
- Is it possible to go under the existing aerial tram cable but it would be very difficult to "thread the needle."

Connector Capacities

- Simms showed some estimates of how the connectors would function at peak capacities. (see Presentation)

- Based on estimated 140 peak load at any one time, or 1100/per hour (based on Metro's 2035 ridership estimates).
- All options can exceed the estimated peak hour loads.
- Shorter trips = means faster cycle times.
- 2 trams to move 140 people or 4 elevators.
- Max wait time is between 2-5 minutes.
- Elevator cars could be expanded, this was based on 40 passenger cars (same as MAX Zoo elevators).

Working Group Feedback

Simms reviewed the feedback from the working group members, who were asked to rank the four connector types in order of preference and provide their feedback on each on April 25. (See handouts).

- The inclined elevator was ranked as 1 or 2 by all working group members.
- The tunnel was ranked as 3 or 4 by all working group members.
- Aerial tram and bridge + elevator were mixed.

Group Discussion

Tunnel

- The group began with a consensus to drop the tunnel + elevator from further consideration.

Aerial Tram

- The chair asked if the group wanted to drop the aerial tram from consideration.
- Some members expressed interest in dropping this option, while others requested more information to understand an alignment similar to the level of work on the other options.
- Some felt that the aerial tram's potential destination further up Marquam Hill may be a more ideal location.
- There was understanding that even if the tram was preferred, the cost and operations costs makes it highly unlikely as a viable option.
    - Some members mentioned that even an inclined elevator was more expensive than the current cost estimate.
- Skai Dancey from OHSU said that the two potential aerial tram landing points are both highly undesirable landing locations from an OHSU perspective.

Bridge + Elevator

- The chair noted that this was the lowest ranked option for all of the neighborhood association members on the working group due to the visibility of the structure in the parkway as well as the required at-grade crossing of Terwilliger.

Inclined Elevator

- One member asked if an elevator option over Terwilliger had been considered instead of just the undercrossing, however there was a previous lack of interest in an overcrossing from working group members.

General

- Some members wanted more clarity on how people would maneuver to their destinations on the west side of Terwilliger.
- Doug Kelsey had concerns about the potential capacity of the connectors. While they information suggested that they could all handle peak loads in 2035, these are baseline, the planning should be thinking far into the future about these mode options.
- Jamey Duhamel pointed out that it was important to acknowledge the value of the public and stakeholder engagement. This outreach suggested an overwhelming interest in the inclined elevator and bridge + elevator.
- Jamey Duhamel noted that there are likely OHSU employees that also have some limited mobility and that limiting the walking distance to destinations is important for both patient and commuter access.
- There was an interest in doing a walking tour of the area to get a sense of the vertical and horizontal distances and scale of movement.
- Commissioner Bob Stacey from Metro mentioned his previous experience on the SW Corridor Light Rail project Steering Committee and pointed out the overall importance to reach Bridgeport Village with its budget. He noted that the current Steering Committee may be reluctant to support options that are expensive or that may limit opportunities to continue the line further south. He said that any recommendation from Green Ribbon Committee should include clear reasoning so the Steering Committee understands why it was chosen.
- There was interest in receiving the meeting materials earlier for review and focusing the last meeting (June 5) as much on the discussion and decision-making as possible.