

SMILE GENERAL PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2014
SMILE Station

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OFFICERS PRESENT: President Gail Hoffnagle; Vice President Mat Millenbach; Secretary Eric Norberg
BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ellen Burr, Brian Posewitz, Michael Hayes, Nancy Walsh, Bob Burkholder, Gerri Sue Lent

With but one item on the agenda -- an appearance by TriMet to discuss plans for reducing bus service to the Sellwood and Westmoreland neighborhoods once light rail service begins -- the room was set up like an Open House, with chairs set around numerous tables, rather than in the usual auditorium style -- each table equipped with the same sets of maps of current and proposed future bus routes.

SMILE President Gail Hoffnagle called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. With a large crowd estimated at 30 in attendance, it was clear that a quorum was present. She began by asking all those present to introduce themselves, in turn, around the room, while everyone reviewed the minutes of the February meeting. Hoffnagle then asked if there were any changes or corrections proposed for the minutes. None were offered, so Mat Millenbach moved they be accepted as presented, and Bob Burkholder and others simultaneously offered a second. The minutes were approved without objection, in the subsequent vote.

President Hoffnagle next introduced TriMet spokesperson and Sellwood resident Jennifer Koozer, to begin the presentation. She introduced Kerry Ayres-Palanuk, Service Planning Manager for TriMet, and Steve Kautz, Manager of Service Development -- and asked Kerry to address "how bus service may change after light rail opens in Southeast".

Kerry began by making it clear that this new Orange MAX Line will not simply dump its riders at the south end of downtown, as some had feared, but will travel the length of the transit mall, and may have direct connections to other lines as well. Steve explained that the discussion tonight was to be part of the process of developing a "Southeast service enhancement plan" -- a long-term vision for the entire Southeast Quadrangle of the TriMet district. This process will extend into 2015, he said.

Kerry stated as assumptions from which this planning begins:

1. McLoughlin buses 31-32-33 and 99 will stop in Milwaukie, not traveling further to/from Portland.
2. Buses 17 and 19 will cross the river on the new transit bridge near OMSI, no longer using the Ross Is. Bridge.

Kerry added that there are still no plans for Sellwood Bridge bus service returning, but TriMet is aware of some demand for it. She said TriMet is also aware of concern that the reduction in bus service to the north end of Westmoreland, without providing direct access to light rail there, seems like "stranding people" to the residents there.

Brian Posewitz, SMILE Board Member and Transportation Committee Chair, reported popular support in the committee meetings for some bus service again across the Sellwood Bridge, and connection via bus to the light rail stations at Tacoma Street and Bybee Boulevard.

Teresa Pucik, SMILE's official representative to the Southeast Light Rail Citizens' Advisory Committee, said she agrees that providing some bus service to and from light rail stations is a popular request.

A woman present observed that it will be a "long hike" to get to the Tacoma Street Station by foot via the Tacoma Overcrossing or the Ochoco Street signalized crossing at McLoughlin Boulevard.

Another woman remarked that she hopes for Bus 70 service to downtown and to connect to neighbors in Woodstock, Reed, and Brooklyn -- "Bus 70 doesn't do much of that". [Some of that is done by Bus 19, however.]

A man present affirmed the need for bus service across the Sellwood Bridge.

In response to an observation that it's quite a walk to get to the Bybee Station or the Holgate Station for people in north Westmoreland, Koozer suggested that one could take Bus 70 to connect directly with either of two light rail stations north of Powell and east of the Willamette River.

A woman present pointed out that the heavy commuter traffic from Ardenwald and Clackamas County over the Sellwood Bridge demonstrates the need for bus service across that bridge. And, she added, for Sellwood residents, accessing businesses on Macadam Avenue, north from the west end of the Sellwood Bridge, is very difficult by bus from Sellwood and Westmoreland now.

A man present remarked that if north Westmoreland loses service from Buses 31-32-33 on McLoughlin, and Bus 19 will become the only bus downtown, the "epic traffic backups" on Milwaukie Avenue in commute times will provide a major impediment to getting downtown in timely fashion. He asked if anything could be done to expedite Bus 19 on that route? [No response was offered from anyone connected to TriMet to that question.]

A woman present said she wants Bus 70 once again to go to the

Rose Quarter Transit Center ("it's ridiculous to get that close to it and not to go there"), to avoid the current "delays and multiple transfers" to get downtown using Bus 70.

The time having reached 8:30 pm, President Hoffnagle asked all present to fill out the comment cards on the tables, to give written input to TriMet on these matters. Meeting attendees treated the SMILE General Meeting rather like the Open House it resembled -- by filling out the cards and then departing, or by staying for a while to converse with others in the room.

At 9 pm, the scheduled time for adjournment, room had largely cleared, and no quorum remained to support a motion of adjournment -- so President Hoffnagle announced to those left in the room that the meeting was now declared adjourned.