



City of Portland  
Bureau of  
**Planning and  
Sustainability**

Sam Adams, Mayor  
Susan Anderson, Director


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February 14, 2011

Dear Mayor Adams,

The purpose of this memo is to provide you with the thoughts and considerations of the City of Portland Planning Sustainability Commission (PSC) ahead of your February 28<sup>th</sup> vote on the Lake Oswego to Portland Transit Project (LOPT) Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

On January 25, 2011, the PSC reviewed a staff presentation on the LOPT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and heard citizen testimony at a public hearing on the project. Previous to this meeting, PSC members reviewed and discussed the contents of the DEIS at a briefing from project staff on October 26, 2010 and a worksession with project staff on January 11, 2011. Based on our review and with consideration of public testimony, the PSC offers these observations and comments for your consideration:

1. Streetcar is the preferred mode

*Discussion: Compared to the no-build and enhanced bus, the streetcar is the best modal choice to support neighborhood growth, build transit ridership, achieve climate change objectives, and leverage the City's existing streetcar infrastructure.*

2. The Macadam-in-street should be the preferred alignment in John's Landing

*Discussion: The John's Landing neighborhood and the South Portland Neighborhood Association have expressed a clear preference for the Macadam in street alignment. The Macadam add lane alternative would cost more and would reduce the mature landscape screen shielding the Willamette Shore condos from congestion on Macadam. The Willamette Shore Line ROW option through the condo area would have intolerable impacts to the condominium community.*

3. The streetcar option is the best modal choice to support City redevelopment and climate change objectives

*Discussion: As the City continues its work on the update to the Comprehensive Plan, two major evolving themes suggest that more has to be done to address green house gas (GHG) emissions and future growth needs to have better access to frequent transit services resulting in healthier, more connected neighborhoods. The streetcar option clearly has the lowest GHG emissions of the modal alternatives considered and the streetcars will be built in Clackamas County. The streetcar seamlessly connects South Waterfront to John's Landing, expanding the accessibility of commercial services and amenities for both neighborhoods. Regionally, commuters from Lake Oswego will be able to reach employment destinations such as OHSU without the congestion of the Hwy 43 corridor. For local and corridor trips, the streetcar provides a high quality fixed rail transit experience and catalyzes neighborhood oriented redevelopment and infill in John's Landing and Lake Oswego.*

4. The streetcar option with the Macadam in street alignment has neighborhood support

*Discussion: The PSC heard oral testimony (9 testified in favor, 1 did not) in support of the project and received letters of support from the South Portland Neighborhood Association, the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee, the City's Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and the North Macadam Urban Renewal Advisory Committee.*

5. The project's environmental impacts to parks and natural resource areas will need to be mitigated

*Discussion: During the Preliminary Engineering phase of the project, the project will need to collaborate with Bureau of Environmental Services and Parks Bureau staff to analyze impacts identified in the DEIS and develop mitigation strategies that meet both City and project objectives. The Willamette River riparian corridor is home to threatened and endangered species contains critical wildlife habitat and drainages from upland habitats, including the Tryon Creek watershed.*

6. As a result of the alignment in Macadam, the unused portion of the ROW in John's Landing should be used for bicycle and pedestrian improvements

*Discussion: The Macadam in street alignment shifts the streetcar out of the Willamette Shore Line (WSL) ROW for just over ½ mile. This segment of WSL lies between Willamette Park to the south and South Waterfront neighborhood to the north. The existing multi-purpose path in this segment is very popular for recreational and bike commuter users in addition to runners, dog walkers and pedestrians. Additional ROW from the WSL could be used for bicycle and pedestrian circulation improvements that could alleviate the multiple user conflicts. In addition to these improvements, the PSC supports the project's objective to design and implement a transit project that does not preclude the development of a full bicycle/pedestrian trail corridor from Portland to Lake Oswego.*

7. As the project progresses, there needs to be clarity on the expectations of adjoining property owners with respect to project funding, such as Local Improvement Districts

*Discussion: In 2006, South Waterfront property owner entered into an agreement with the City to form a Local Improvement District (LID) to help fund the expansion of streetcar to Lowell Street. These neighbors are concerned that a potential LID to help fund the John's Landing portion of the streetcar expansion to Lake Oswego will affect their properties and want to be involved in any conversation about future LIDs in the area. In addition, there will be a need for clear communication with the John's Landing neighborhood about the extents of a potential LID and how much John's Landing property owners will be asked to contribute. As the project funding strategy progresses, community outreach and consensus building will need to be priorities for project staff and City leaders.*

8. A streetcar investment in John's Landing represents a positive change with respect to the neighborhood's long overlooked development potential

*Discussion: This project will be the first time a streetcar will be extended into a Portland neighborhood (beyond the Central City). Although John's Landing is close to the Central City, it is distinctly separated from downtown Portland by I-405, I-5, the ramps to the Ross Island Bridge and the congested Hwy 43 corridor. The streetcar connection via South Waterfront will enable the Johns Landing business community and residents to connect with downtown on high quality fixed rail transit. This transit investment will be a catalyst for a reinvigorated Macadam business district and increased private investment in the John's Landing neighborhood.*

Thank you for your consideration of our thoughts and recommendations ahead of your vote at the February 28<sup>th</sup> LOPT Steering Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

