Growing Connections:
Transit’s role in supporting Livable Communities

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Transit’s role in supporting Livable Communities

Light Rail? What’s that? Evolution of public participation
Community: gathering together to form a shared vision
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Light Rail? What’s that? Evolution of public participation
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15 mile Light Rail from downtown Portland to Gresham
- Death of the Mt. Hood Freeway galvanized public attention on neighborhoods
- MAX-One of the first Light Rail alignments in the country

TRIOMET
Light Rail? What’s that? Evolution of public participation

15 mile Light Rail from downtown Portland to Gresham

- Banfield alignment precluded direct impact on neighborhoods: Hollywood, 82nd Avenue, Gateway.
- East Burnside Street alignment- directly impacts vehicular road, and adjacent residential and commercial areas
- City of Gresham- _not in our downtown‘ Oops!
Light Rail? What’s that? Evolution of public participation

Architectural form expresses ‗Train Station‘ tradition in east county, urban circulator in downtown
• Need for direct public involvement & initial community outreach
Community: gathering together to form a shared vision

1st Railvolution- 1989
- Series of outreach and advocacy events geared towards developing real advocates for the Portland metropolitan region's MAX Light Rail System
- Leveraging community interest, desire for inclusion
Community: gathering together to form a shared vision

1st Railvolution - 1989
- Desire for ‘Place-making’
- Coordination of Land-use planning, mixed-use development, and greater accessibility

New vision for light rail: serving community livability goals!
Westside MAX: How a goose stopped Light Rail

18 mile, deep tunnel, massive project
  • Vivid memories of early light rail construction
  • Project stimulates active citizen involvement
Westside MAX: How a goose stopped Light Rail

18 mile, deep tunnel, massive project
• Tipping point reached in Goose Hollow Neighborhood
• Community won extra station and streetscape enhancements

Light rail serves Urban Design and Transit Oriented Development
South/North: Lessons learned

Highly ambitious Bi-state, Clackamas County to Clark County

- Initial high level of Portland support, but
- Necessitated public referendum; failed statewide
- A chorus of *hell no*
- Vancouver, WA- we’re not Portland‘s bedroom!
- Milwaukie, OR- not in my back yard!
- Voted out Milwaukie‘s Mayor and City Council members
South/North: Lessons learned

Highly ambitious Bi-state, Clackamas County to Clark County

Lesson Learned:
• Alignment through the community requires early & continuous support
• Public funding referendums are very difficult!
• TOD isn't well understood, density is feared
Airport MAX: The importance of partnerships

5.5 Mile alignment to PDX

- Power of Partnerships: public and private
- City of Portland, Port of Portland, TriMet, and Bechtel Corp.
- No public vote was required
- Leveraged public land for private development,
- But development didn’t achieve density, mix-use objectives
- Suburban type retail, lodging, dining
Airport MAX: The importance of partnerships

5.5 Mile alignment to PDX
• Opened the weekend before 9/11.
• Quickly adopted by public to downtown Portland
• Connects PDX to Silicon Forest.
Interstate MAX: shift from auto-cratic to demo-cratic

Aftermath of South/North Requires New Thinking

• Alignment on old Highway 99- Interstate Avenue
• Creation of Urban Renewal District for local funding match
• Mayor’s manta- —No business goes out-of-business”
• Innovations in Business Support, Construction, Station design, and art
Interstate MAX: shift from auto-cratic to demo-cratic

Aftermath of South/North Requires New Thinking
  • Project creates infrastructure of citizen involvement & decision making
  • Station reflect community identity and culture
  • Innovations save time & money, introduces sustainable practices
  • Serves follow–on community supported development
  • Opens ahead of schedule, and under budget!!!!!!
Portland Mall Revitalization: contingent relationships

**Manifestation of the community’s will** to create a multi-modal street that enhanced livability; create a ‘Great Street’ through all of downtown

- Station as Place- System elements within particular streetscape
- Urban Rooms- Streetscape reinforces the urban characteristics
- Convey the quality, character and aspirations that distinguish the community.
Portland Mall Revitalization: contingent relationships

‘Great Street’ Principles-

- Great streets are not about buildings and streets. They are about the people who use them now and will use them in the future.
- Reflecting the best features of the surrounding community.
- Other defining characteristics of great streets:
  - the ability to attract, stimulate and sustain desirable activity
  - balance diverse transportation modes
  - instill a sense of stewardship by the businesses and residents located on and near the street front
Portland Mall Revitalization: contingent relationships

Portland Mall Revitalization: ‘Great Streets Observations
• Reveal the activities and qualities that distinguish the city
• Accommodate all modes without compromise
• Require proper behavior of all activities
• Those who manage activities also sustain the street
• Establish and maintain a physical quality that inspires all who use it
Portland Mall Revitalization: contingent relationships

Portland Mall: a Great Street
Portland Mall Revitalization: contingent relationships

Portland Mall Revitalization: The Making of ‘Great Streets

- Safety
- Business Needs
- Transit Capacity
- Operability
- Clarity
- Cost
- Downtown Attractiveness

**Renovate the Mall**

- Protect and strengthen the office and retail core

**Enliven the Mall**

- Improve downtown transit service

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Portland Mall Revitalization: contingent relationships

Portland Mall Revitalization: The Making of ‘Great Streets

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South Corridor/ I-205: 35 years in the making

8.3 mile along I-205 freeway: uses land dedicated for transit in 1974
- Connecting into suburban neighborhoods
- Reduces cross town bus routes
- Provide limited Park & Ride
- Includes upgrade/extension of multi-modal path
- Reinforces regional bicycle circulation: Springwater Corridor
- Leverages Neighborhood groups, citizen involvement
South Corridor/ I-205: 35 years in the making

8.3 mile along I-205 freeway: uses land dedicated for transit in 1974
  • Follow-on Planning & Development- Lents Town Center
  • Allows for Town Center concept at Clackamas TC
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail: Tom Sawyer had it right

—Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence, and all gladness left him and a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of board fence nine feet high. Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a burden.”

—Oh come, now, you don‘t mean to let on that you like it?”

The brush continued to move.

—Like it? Well I don‘t see why I oughtn‘t to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?”

That put the thing in a new light. Ben stopped nibbling his apple. Tom swept his brush daintily back and forth—stepped back to note the effect—added a touch here and there—criticized the effect again—Ben watching every move and getting more and more interested, more and more absorbed.

Presently he said:
—Say Tom, let me whitewash a little.”
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail: Tom Sawyer had it right

—He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it — namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to obtain.”

—Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do, and. Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.”

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail: Tom Sawyer had it right

Creating a Shared Vision: Transit is the convener of public, private, and community based planning.
- Messy vitality
- Difficult
- Open source
- Democratic (small ‘d’)

Possibilities for Neighborhoods: Transit alignment and station are the ‘What and Where’

But the community involvement is the ‘How’
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail: Tom Sawyer had it right

Creating a Shared Vision - Bringing neighbors together to craft how transit will serve their communities

A Collection of Stories; connected by transit
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail: Tom Sawyer had it right

The —NwSo Little Idea”:
The Portland/Milwaukie light rail alignment shall weave themselves into the natural, economic and human fabric of the adjacent neighborhoods more than any TriMet alignment before. For, rather than TriMet distinguishing this alignment as a system within Portland, it will now become the city itself.
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail: Tom Sawyer had it right

**Lesson Learned:**
Active & early public involvement ensures the right project, in the right place, for the right price.