Tough Choices: The Whens, Whats and Hows of Mega Projects

MODERATOR:
Sean Libberton, PB Strategic Consulting, Washington, DC

Alan Lehto, TriMet, Portland, Oregon
Mark McLaren, HDR Engineering, Inc., Phoenix Arizona
David Mieger, Metro, Los Angeles, California
Sean Northup, Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization, Indianapolis, Indiana
TriMet:
It’s the Corridor and the System
Will it encourage changes in my community that I want to see?

• Economic Development – jobs and housing
• Attractiveness
• Long-term traffic/regional travel capacity benefit
What is most important to local decision-makers in choosing an LPA?

- Ridership – all riders count not just new riders
- Cost
  - Cost-effectiveness
  - Operating cost is more critical than initial capital (annualized cost loses the distinction)
    - Permanent commitment
- Long-term traffic/regional travel capacity benefit
  - Short-term benefit matters, but long-term is the key factor
What is most important to local decision-makers in choosing an LPA?

- Support for regional land use plan and 2040 Framework (similar visions around the country)

- Does it contribute to the system – “whole is greater than the sum of its parts”
Does this fit our vision of community?
Not just adopted plans, but vision?
Will it increase the “Trip Not Taken”? 

Most important factors
Other factors

- Integration with other transit and other non-SOV transportation modes
- Travel time to key destinations
- Local issues – noise and vibration, local pollution, traffic and mobility impacts AND mitigation
- Emissions / Global Climate Change
Looking Ahead

• Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail – opens 2015
• Columbia River Crossing Light Rail - 2019
• Southwest Corridor – mode?
• Powell-Division Corridor – mode?
Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail

- More than 50% complete
- 7.3-mile light rail extension
- Up to 22,765 weekday rides by 2030
- Improved light rail, bus, streetcar, bike/ped and freight service
- Two Park & Ride lots
- 445 bike spaces
- New multi-modal bridge
- Up to 14,500 jobs
Columbia River Crossing

The closest river crossing is Longview, WA, 40 miles west.

The Esther Short Park is an event venue surrounded by new high-density mixed-use and office redevelopment.

The Waterfront District plans for over 3,000 new housing units, 600,000 sq. ft. of office space, 170,000 sq. ft. of retail, and a 134,000 sq. ft. hotel.

The Waterfront District is zoned CX - city center mixed use.

Much of the downtown is zoned CX - city center mixed use.

C-TRAN provides express bus service to downtown Portland from suburban park-and-ride locations.

The transit project alignment is integrated into planned highway improvements, including a new bridge with likely variable tolling.

The closest river crossing is Interstate 205, 6.5 miles east.

C-TRAN Bus Lines: Vancouver Central City to Yellow Line or Downtown Portland

C-TRAN Express Bus Lines: Suburban park-and-rides to Portland Central City
Southwest Corridor

Supporting the 2040 vision: Continuing to connect the dots with attractive and efficient transit service

- Downtown Portland
- 1 Regional Center
- 5 Town Centers
- OHSU and PCC
Connections

Portland State University
30,000+ students

Innovation Quadrant
OHSU, PSU, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, PCC Workforce

Mt Hood CC
33,000 students annually

Oregon Health & Science University
New South Waterfront campus
& Connection via Tram.
10,000+ employees

Portland Community College
SE Portland location growing to full campus

Connections:
- Education
- Innovation
- Workforce housing
- Regional mobility
- Health care
- Over 10,000 daily rides on buses along the line today

Bus Rapid Transit
- Fast
- Distinctive
- Convenient
- Comfortable
- Easy to use

A Concept for Bus Rapid Transit along the Powell-Division Education Corridor
Thank You

Alan Lehto
Director of Planning & Policy
503-962-2136
lehtoa@trimet.org
Transit System Plan
- About 44 new bus routes
- 9 Transit Centers
- 9 Park & Ride lots
- New Two-way all-day Park & Ride service
- 64.8 miles of Light Rail
- About 54 Light Rail Stations
- 8 miles Commuter Line
- Approximately 20,000 new parking spaces
- Bike Racks on buses and at transit centers
- METROLift Service mirrors bus expansion

Legend
- Local and Express Bus Service
- Signature Express Bus Service
- Park & Ride Service
- Phase I METRORail (opening Jan., 2004)
- Additional METRORail (planned)
- Future Rail Extensions
- Commuter Line by METRO (pending feasibility)
- Commuter Line by Others (pending feasibility)

July 31, 2003
FTA Full Funding Grant Agreement Signing
November 28, 2011

• Addressed Buy America issues
• Received $900 million in FTA New Starts grants
• Path cleared to complete construction of three light rail lines concurrently
Implementing The Short Term Plan

To celebrate the cultural and artistic diversity of the vibrant communities along the new rail lines, METRO created Arts in Transit.

This project enlists the talents of 22 local artists, community residents and art experts who are transforming individual stations from bland, generic necessities into engaging artistic showcases of the communities they serve.
Laminated Glass
3 different glass panels

Platform Blockout in Lithocrete and Lithomosaic

Metro Solutions Arts in Transit
ARIELLE MASSON
October 2010
Calvalcade Station
North Corridor
Final Design
It was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was an age of faith, it was an age of doubt, it was a sea of hope, it was a desert of despair, we called it "Progress," we called it "Liberation," we called it "The Promise," we called it "The Union."
Burnett Station
Completed
“Mega-Transit Projects” in Los Angeles 
(and their options...)

David Mieger, AICP
Los Angeles County MTA (Metro)
October 21, 2013
LA Urban Rail Projects

Metro Red Line

Metro Blue Line

Metro Gold Line
Los Angeles Transit “Mega-Projects”

- Red/Purple Line: $4.5B
- Purple Line Ext: $6.3B
- Gold Line: $2.5B
- Expo Line: $2.4B
- Crenshaw: $2.1B
- Regional Connector: $1.4B
Existing and Future Fixed Guideway System Mileage

**Existing Mileage**
- HRT: 70 miles
- LRT: 44 miles
- BRT: 17 miles

131 miles total (119 stations)

**Future Mileage (2035)**
- HRT: 26 miles
- LRT: 160 miles
- BRT: 68 miles

254 miles total (197+ stations)
Existing and Future Fixed Guideway System Ridership

Existing Boardings
- HRT: 201,000
- LRT: 158,000
- BRT: 31,000

Total Average Weekday Boardings: 390,000

Future Boardings (2035)
- HRT: 208,000
- LRT: 372,000
- BRT: 120,000

Total Average Weekday Boardings: 700,000
Diminishing State & Federal Support
LA Metro Urban Rail Projects

Pre-Measure R Projects

- Local: 47.7%
- State: 33.1%
- Federal: 19.2%

Measure R Projects

- Local: 59.9%
- State: 29.8%
- Federal: 10.3%
Other LA Mega-Projects
-Metrolink/Amtrak

**METROLINK**
- 7 Routes, 55 Stations
- 512 Route Miles
- 43,810 Avg. Weekday Boardings
- 14,275 Union Station Boardings

**AMTRAK**
- 4 Routes
- Termini: San Diego, Chicago, Seattle, New Orleans
Super Mega-Project
-California High Speed Rail
Using the Right Tool

Operating Speed Range

Peak Directional Capacity (Passengers per Hour)
LA Alternatives to Mega-Projects: BRT

Metro Rapid Bus
20 Bus Lines
201,485 Daily Boardings (May 2013)
308,013 Daily Boardings on Local Lines
LA Alternatives to Mega-Projects:
- Express Lanes with BRT
LA Alternatives to Mega-Projects

Restoration of Historic Streetcar Service in Downtown LA

European Style “Tram” Service (arterial corridors)
LA Alternatives to Mega-Projects

Convert Commuter Rail... To Regional Rail (512 miles)
Mega Project Thoughts from L.A.

- Mega-Projects are still needed but must be targeted to corridors with most need

- Increased Local Funding is required due to shrinking federal and state sources

- Alternatives to Mega-Projects exist and may provide significant benefits at lower cost
  - Bus Rapid Transit
  - Congestion Pricing / Tolling for Transit
  - Streetcars/Trams
  - Commuter Rail Conversion to Regional Rail
Sean Northup, Assistant Executive Director
Indianapolis Metropolitan Planning Organization
Indiana was the U.S. transit leaders a century ago...

But financial excess and the Great Depression hastened its demise.
In 1899, more than 100 miles of interurban lines were being built. Indiana, with 2,300 miles of interurban lines by 1908, was second only to Ohio in trackage. Lines went through 67 of the state’s 92 counties. Only Bedford, Bloomington and Bicknell, among towns of more than 5,000 population, had no interurban.

About 200 operating companies were in existence before the interurbans reached the end of their line. Another 250 companies had filed incorporation papers.

Indianapolis was the hub of the Hoosier interurbs and in 1904, the Hoosier capital boasted a $1 million traction terminal. Features were a nine-track train shed and a nine-story office building, which served as general headquarters for Public Service Indiana from 1930 to 1951.

TRACTION TERMINAL AND INTERURBAN STATION ON THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF MARKET AND ILLINOIS STREETS, INDIANAPOLIS.
Largest US Cities
2010 US CENSUS BUREAU

1. New York
2. Los Angeles
3. Chicago
4. Houston
5. Philadelphia

Largest Bus Fleets
2008 METRO MAGAZINE

1. MTA (NYC)
2. Pace (Chi)
3. Metro (LA)
4. NJ Transit Corp.
5. CTA (Chi)

Indianapolis, IN
829,718 people | 155 buses

Columbus, OH
787,033 people | 306 buses
Blue Ribbon Commission

PLANS, PLANS, & MORE PLANS
INDIANAPOLIS HAS BEEN MAKING TRANSIT PLANS FOR DECADES
BEST PRACTICE PUBLIC INPUT
3 ROUNDS OF INPUT, MORE THAN 10,000 PUBLIC COMMENTS
PHASE I: HAMILTON & MARION COUNTIES IN 10 YEARS

- Doubles local bus service
- Express bus between counties
- Circulator routes within communities
- 5 rapid transit lines
INDY CONNECT PHASING PLAN

Local Routes: Phased in Route & Service Expansions - $163.5M

Express Routes: Phased in Route & Service Expansions - $9.6M

Red Line North-South: Fully Operational - $102.8M

Blue Line East-West: Fully Operational - $130.6M

Downtown Circulators: Fully Operational - $39.4M

Purple Line 38th Street: Fully Operational - $75.5M

Orange Line Keystone Avenue: Fully Operational - $101.4M

Green Line Northeast: Fully Operational - $483.2M

Transit Facilities:

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• **Connects Hamilton County to Downtown.** Northeastern suburbs are the largest concentration of downtown workers and the fastest growing part of the state.

• **Travel Time Advantage.** I-69 never went through from the NE, so there’s no direct highway access and lots of congestion. Transit would be faster than driving.

• **HHPA Corridor is Publically Owned.** 22 mile corridor
INDY CONNECT PLANNING STARTED WITH RAIL
EARLY PLANS SHOWED RAIL ON ALL KEY CORRIDORS
Hamilton County

Q13: Would you vote to raise income tax by .3% to construct and operate a bus rapid transit corridor from Indianapolis through Fishers to Noblesville?

- YES: 21%
- NO: 79%

Marion County (Indianapolis)

Q19: Would you vote to raise income tax by .3% to construct and operate a light rail corridor from Indianapolis through Fishers to Noblesville?

- YES: 59%
- NO: 41%

SURVEY SAYS…
HAMILTON COUNTY POLLED “YES WITH RAIL, NO WITH BRT.”
### Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<td>15 min</td>
<td>120 passengers per car</td>
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<td>Service stays on rails, establishing permanence</td>
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<td>Operating Costs</td>
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All numbers are preliminary estimates; more detailed analysis by end of year.
FAST & RELIABLE
Limited stops, dedicated lanes, signal priority
CONVENIENT
Bike, stroller, & ADA accessible
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<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>West Preston</td>
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SmartGuide 5:43:12 PM

**FAST & RELIABLE**

Real-time travel info
CONVENIENT
Off-board fare collection
IMPACTFUL
BIG development potential
Which one is light rail?
Your “roads first” mentality is bromide.

Your “we need rail” mentality is as out-of-date as that term.
“The committee believes that the preference for flexible bus rapid transit (BRT) acknowledges the ultimate need for multiple transit centers and dispersed rapid transit route termini, interconnected by a circulator system.”

“The findings of the sub-committee do not support rail... substantial impact on residential areas... Jeopardize property values... increased noise, traffic congestion, and rising taxes.”

“Smart Transit busses can be easily and quickly expanded with much less cost and more rapidly than rail.”

“This (BRT advantages) is brought up frequently by Wendell Cox and Randall O’Toole, recognized experts in mass transit.”
Perspectives on Transit

Anti-Tax

Don’t Impede Throughput or Parking

“No taxes, government is the problem”

“The free market has chosen the personal automobile.”

“Light rail is a boondoggle. Driverless cars are the future.”

“If this were a good idea, private business would build it.”

“Taxed Enough Already!”

“Auto-dominance is subsidized; a market failure.”

“Light rail is a boondoggle. BRT is a cheaper, market-based, private sector alternative.”

BRT

“Auto-dominance is subsidized; a market failure.”

“We may need to invest in this publically, but it has to be affordable.”

“It’s the same service at a better price.”

Pro Public Investment

Complete Streets

Rail

“We need a balanced transportation system – and we’re currently unbalanced.”

“Different solutions for different corridors.”

“Right-sized projects.”

“Every year we’re not investing in rail, we’re wasting money.”

“Rail is the only way to attract new investment.”