

**MEETING:** Vancouver Transit Advisory Committee (VTAC)  
**DATE:** July 21, 2010, 4:00 to 6:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** Clark County Elections Building, Vancouver, WA

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## Attendees:

### *Vancouver Transit Advisory Committee Members*

- Rob Barrentine American Institute of Architects, Vancouver
- Ken Becker Lincoln Neighborhood Association
- Marcia Carr Property Owner
- Sara Carter Vancouver Resident: C-TRAN Commuter
- Seanette Corkill Arnada Neighborhood Association
- Lee Coulthard Vancouver Downtown Association
- Troy Drawz Vancouver Housing Authority
- Todd Horenstein Vancouver School District
- Terry Hurd Property Owner
- Dean Irvin Property Owner
- Dick Malin Central Park Neighborhood Association
- Terry McCarthy Esther Short Neighborhood Association
- Randy Salisbury Vancouver Resident: Architect
- Bob Sellers C-TRAN Citizens Advisory Committee
- Dave Smith CRC Urban Design Advisory Group
- Vicki Vanneman Marshall Community Center
- Debby Watts Vancouver Resident: 17<sup>th</sup> Street Property
- Bob Williamson Clark College

### **Staff:**

- Katy Belokonny CRC
- Wesley King CRC
- Nolan Lienhart ZGF
- Brian McCarter ZGF
- Scott Patterson C-TRAN

### **Note:**

- **Meeting materials** and handouts referred to in this summary can be accessed online at:  
<http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/ProjectPartners/VTACMeetingMaterials.aspx>

## **Welcome/Meeting Goals**

**Wesley King**

Wesley King welcomed members to the second VTAC meeting and thanked them for their time touring Portland's transit stations and streetscapes on Monday, July 19. King stated that the meeting goal is to openly discuss what was seen on the tour, talk about station hardening (separating transit stations from the general sidewalk), and begin to make recommendations to the CRC urban designers.

## **Station Design & Walking Tour Debrief**

**Nolan Lienhart & Brian McCarter**

Nolan Lienhart and Brian McCarter provided a powerpoint presentation to summarize light rail transit (LRT) station design ranging between fully "hardened" to completely open stations. Each station uses a combination of station necessities (such as ticket dispensers and electrical boxes) with specific materials and placements to intentionally separate station space from the sidewalk. Station elements include:

- Glass walls
- Turnstiles
- Shelters
- Lamp posts
- Trash cans
- Benches
- Leaning rails
- Ticket dispensers
- Bollards
- Public art
- Bicycle racks
- Trees
- Electrical boxes
- Grade changes
- Fences

The presentation included images of sidewalk/crosswalk textures, LRT stations, bus stops, parking structures, bicycle parking, and streetscapes from the Portland walking tour. Lienhart and McCarter pointed out that in some examples of completely hardened stations, the stations are situated next to a plaza or park, not on an urban sidewalk. They also emphasized that there are space limitations, 19 feet for the sidewalk and platform, at the four stations on Broadway and Washington streets.

Lienhart and McCarter reminded the VTAC that they should be conscientious of bus stop design and functionality because these elements will also be included in the downtown design.

## **Station Hardening**

**Question:** Do we need to harden the light rail stations? You are showing us images of open stations, however it sounds as if members will not be allowed to recommend open stations.

**Answer:** For fare enforcement and safety, station hardening is needed to delineate the station from the sidewalk. Patterson said that members are being shown both open and closed stations so that ultimately the right balance will be found. Patterson also explained that if the LRT stations are clearly defined, apart from the public sidewalk, it will make it easier for C-TRAN to require people within the station to have valid fare. It is important to note that there will not be a “fareless” square in downtown Vancouver like there is in downtown Portland. Patterson said that C-TRAN is learning from other transit programs, in addition to using C-TRAN’s own experience, to create design parameters that will produce safe LRT stations in Vancouver. Patterson clarified that hardening a station will not be the only safety and security tool implemented to create safe stations.

Randy Salisbury said that people loitering at LRT and bus stations will simply move right outside the station and continue to loiter or be a nuisance.

McCarter added that part of a station’s lure is the shelter it provides from the elements and that when people are excluded from the shelter, they will move elsewhere to find protection.

Ken Becker commented that each station is unique and that the stations should be hardened without interfering with on-street businesses.

**General concerns with station hardening:**

- Terry McCarthy said that he is concerned about space issues at each LRT station and wants the neighborhoods to remain functional with easy pedestrian movement.
- Salisbury said that the downtown connection is crucial and wants the businesses to stay connected even if they are across the street from one another. Salisbury also explained that he fears hardened stations will segregate businesses from the life and movement of the streets.
- Salisbury said that he is concerned about policy dictating architecture, instead of vice-versa.
- McCarthy explained that he dislikes the ticket boxes he saw on the Portland tour and worries that TriMet’s system is old fashioned and not forward-thinking. McCarthy continued by saying that he wants transferability between the two systems and recommends an electronic payment system.

**Comment:** C-TRAN will continue to research fare options, but notes that when using smart cards or another streamlined system, occasional riders will need paper tickets.

Becker and Seanette Corkill asked about the differences between downtown stations and the terminus station, and if these two station types should be designed differently.

**Answer:** The VTAC is charged with making design recommendations for all stations. The committee members need to discuss preferences for each station.

## Design Preferences

- Sara Carter said that she likes the bench shown in the photo of the station in Lyon, France. Carter continued by saying that she wonders if this station can be adapted to be used in Vancouver by removing the windscreen, yet keeping the stone benches to divide the station and sidewalk.
- Becker said that he prefers the station-type with flat roofs, but thinks Main and Washington streets should have a unified look because of the small scale of downtown Vancouver.
- Carter stated that she likes leaning bars with glass and paintings because they combine art with function. She also proposed that the leaning bars be used as station hardening elements because of their dual-purpose nature.
- McCarthy explained that he is a proponent of the Cantilever and light pole being joined together.
- Carter said that she likes when dark pavers are used to break up scored concrete.
- Carter stated that she also likes the two chairs used in Portland's South Mall stations because they provide a delineation of space.
- Rob Barrentine encouraged members to review the Main Street Study before making design suggestions for Vancouver's LRT stations, BRT stations, and downtown streetscape.
- Barrentine said that he prefers for the stations to be less linear than typically seen and more creatively designed. He also explained that his preference would be for the benches, and other station amenities, to serve both the public and transit riders.

## Concerns:

- Carter said that bricks are difficult to walk on in heels.
- McCarthy stated that we need to create something that requires little maintenance.
- McCarthy also said that he wants members to consider which type of riders will be using each station. He elaborated by saying that there are commuters who are most concerned with parking and egress, versus another group who is more concerned with accessibility to downtown. He also said that the design of downtown stations needs to be different from the P&R stations because of the various rider-types that will be accessing each station.

**Question:** How much do we need to consider cost?

**Answer:** We want to look at the concepts, not the cost.

**Question:** Can we do anything to make the electrical cabinets smaller or more aesthetically pleasing?

**Answer:** The cabinets have gotten smaller over time, yet they still require 5 feet of clearance due to the dangerous nature of electrical currents. We have looked at placing them on private property adjacent to the street (rather than on the sidewalk), but that poses logistical

problems. These boxes need to be accessible 24/7 to maintenance staff which might not be possible on private property.

**Question:** What will 17<sup>th</sup> Street look like once light rail is incorporated?

**Answer:** CRC staff will be working with City of Vancouver staff to approach the 17<sup>th</sup> Street design carefully and with full attention paid to maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood. King encouraged members to visit 17<sup>th</sup> Street in order to make educated recommendations.

**Parking Structure Design Preferences:**

- Carter said that she likes the design continuity that is created when parking structure pillars align with street trees.
- Vicki Vanneman stated that she likes how the Hotel Deluxe parking garage reflects the character of the adjacent hotel.
- Members prefer not to have elevators in the corner of the parking structures.

**Concerns:**

- McCarthy stated that the Hotel Deluxe parking structure was designed with too many safety measures and looks like a prison.
- Members expressed concern about parking structures being used during off-peak hours.
- Lee Coulthard stated that the P&Rs should be designed strategically in order to capture heavy traffic in the future.
- Bob Williamson said that he is concerned about the terminus P&R's size and location. Specifically, Williamson wants to know if other large parking structures have been built in the middle of a park.

**Question:** Which of the parking structures on the walking tour in Portland are comparable to the proposed terminus parking structure?

**Answer:** None.

**Question:** Can we break the Central Park parking structure into several smaller garages?

**Answer:** The project is looking at a single structure for the terminus parking facility due to economies of scale and simplicity (two parking structures would be confusing to drivers).

**Question:** Could the terminus P&R be designed to look like several different buildings?

**Answer:** We will look into it.

McCarthy asked about the proposal from the Vancouver Working Group (VWG) to position the southern-most P&R outside of the SR-14 loop rather than inside of it. He stated that he prefers this option because it has greater development potential.

**Comment:** This P&R location is still undecided. Staff from CRC, C-TRAN, and the City of Vancouver are currently taking the VWG's recommendation into consideration and conducting an internal study.

**Question:** Are we looking at mixed-use functionality at the Mill District P&R?

**Answer:** Yes, transit-oriented development is a key factor in invigorating downtown's vibrancy and life, as well as providing safety.

Todd Horenstein asked why first floor development has not been proposed at the Central Park P&R (besides perhaps a C-TRAN safety office). Horenstein said that there will be a high volume of pedestrians coming to/from the Marshall Center, Hudson's Bay High School, and Clark College.

**Answer:** The project is interested in working with Clark College and private businesses to develop first floor retail or offices at the Central Park P&R.

**Question:** How will the P&Rs be monitored to make sure they are only used by people who are riding transit?

**Answer:** The exact system needs to be determined; however a vehicle monitoring or Smart Park system may be used.

Williamson stated that the Central Park P&R is a concern for Clark College because they currently do not charge students for parking and are worried that commuters will displace students from Clark College lots if the parking structure requires payment.

### **Closing Remarks**

**Wesley King**

Becker proposed that CRC staff send a survey to VTAC members asking about design preferences. For example, "Do you prefer a flat roof of LRT shelters?" or "Should the Washington Street streetscape design resemble the McLoughlin Boulevard streetscape design?"

Barrentine said that a survey is too narrow and would limit design exploration.

King asked the committee to reflect about the walking tour, today's presentation, and the committee's discussion. King said that design preferences and comments should be emailed to Belokonny by Wednesday, August 4, 2010 so that CRC staff can incorporate them into the creation of preliminary station designs. King stated that these designs will be presented at the September VTAC meeting.

VTAC will take a month-long hiatus in August and resume meeting in September. In the meantime, Lienhart and Belokonny will look at land uses around LRT stations in Hillsboro, Oregon to find examples of suburban to downtown area transitions.

