Lake Oswego to Portland Transit Project

Lessons Learned

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Overview

• Project Location and Context
• Corridor History and Project Background
• Project Development
• Public Engagement
• Redefining the Streetcar
• Connections to the Downtowns
• ROW Conflicts and Physical Constraints
• Project Status
Portland Streetcar
Lake Oswego to Portland Project Location
Corridor History

- Rail line opened in mid 1880s
- Built to move timber, iron ore and people
- First passenger service began in 1887
- Operated as passenger service until 1929
- Freight service continued until 1980s
- Limited excursion trolley service continues today
Tunnel Location
Project Background

• Rail line purchased from SP by government consortium in 1988
• In 1996 ODOT determined expanding roadway not feasible
• Streetcar extended to South Waterfront in 2006
• Consortium decides time is right to study an HCT connection using rail line
State Hwy 43 – Parallel Route
South Waterfront Streetcar Extension
Project Development
AA and DEIS

• Metro and TriMet managed the project in coordination with Cities of Lake Oswego & Portland

• URS – Lead consultant for both AA & DEIS

• Portland Streetcar Inc. provided project oversight

• No clear direction on who would own/operate the line
Project Alignment

• North end (Portland)
  – Rail corridor vs. in-street
  – Existing condo and commercial development
  – Some redevelopment opportunities
North End
In-Street Alignment
North End
Rail Alignment
Project Alignment

• Middle section
  – Parks
  – Riverside homes
  – Private Crossings
  – Trestles/tunnel
Middle Section: Parks and Riverside Homes
Middle Section: Private Crossings
Middle Section:
Tunnel and Trestles
Project Alignment

• South end (Lake Oswego)
  – Planned redevelopment of light industrial area
  – Developing suburban downtown
  – Good redevelopment opportunities
South End: Suburban Center
Public Engagement

• Citizen Advisory Committee
• Design Workshops
• Individual Resident Outreach
• Neighborhood Opposition
  – Hired Political Strategist and Traffic Engineer
  – Former U.S. Senator
  – Political Issue in Lake Oswego
Redefining How Streetcar Operates

• Public Perception of Streetcar
  – Urban circulator
  – Relatively slow
  – Frequent stops
  – Urban/high density
Urban Streetcar in Portland
Redefining How Streetcar Operates

- Proposed Extension – Rapid Streetcar
  - Higher speed (17 mph compared to 8 mph)
  - Less frequent stops (1/2 mile and greater)
  - Condos, single-family, suburban
Streetcar Simulation
Indirect Connections to Downtowns

- Downtown Portland
  - Direct connection to PSU
  - Transfer or walk required to access employment/retail center
  - Faster and more reliable, but less direct than current bus service
Indirect Connections to Downtowns

• Downtown Lake Oswego
  – Modern/redeveloping suburban downtown
  – Station access requires crossing high traffic state highway
  – Major activity centers several blocks away
  – 300 space park and ride
Downtown Lake Oswego
Downtown Lake Oswego
Design Issues, Right-of-Way Conflicts and Physical Constraints

• Costs increase when designed to operate as frequent corridor service
  – Double-tracking
  – Retaining walls
  – Physical separation
  – Park-and-ride lot
• Proximity to condominiums/homes
  – Management plan for driveway crossings
  – Visual, noise, safety concerns
• Tunnel rehabilitation
• Trestle replacement
• Adjacent bridge replacement project - coordination
Project Location
Refinement Phase

• Reduce costs
• Fewer park-and-ride spaces
• Station modifications
• More single-tracking
• Fully develop a minimum operable segment
Project Status

- DEIS completed in 2010
- Lake Oswego and Portland city councils select streetcar as LPA with conditions
- Refinement Phase Final Report in early 2012 addressing conditions
- Action on project is deferred
- Last week’s election brought anti-streetcar majority to LO City Council
Key Lessons Learned

• Need a strong political champion for the project
• Decide on owner/operator before getting too far
• Owner/operator will need to live with key decisions:
  – Cost
  – Operations
  – Design
• Identify key community leaders and engage with them early
Key Lessons Learned (cont’d)

• Use designers/architects in small group meetings with affected property owners and residents
• Clearly communicate how project differs from urban circulator streetcar
• Optimize one-seat rides linking key origins & destinations
Thank You

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