Lake Oswego to Portland Transit Project

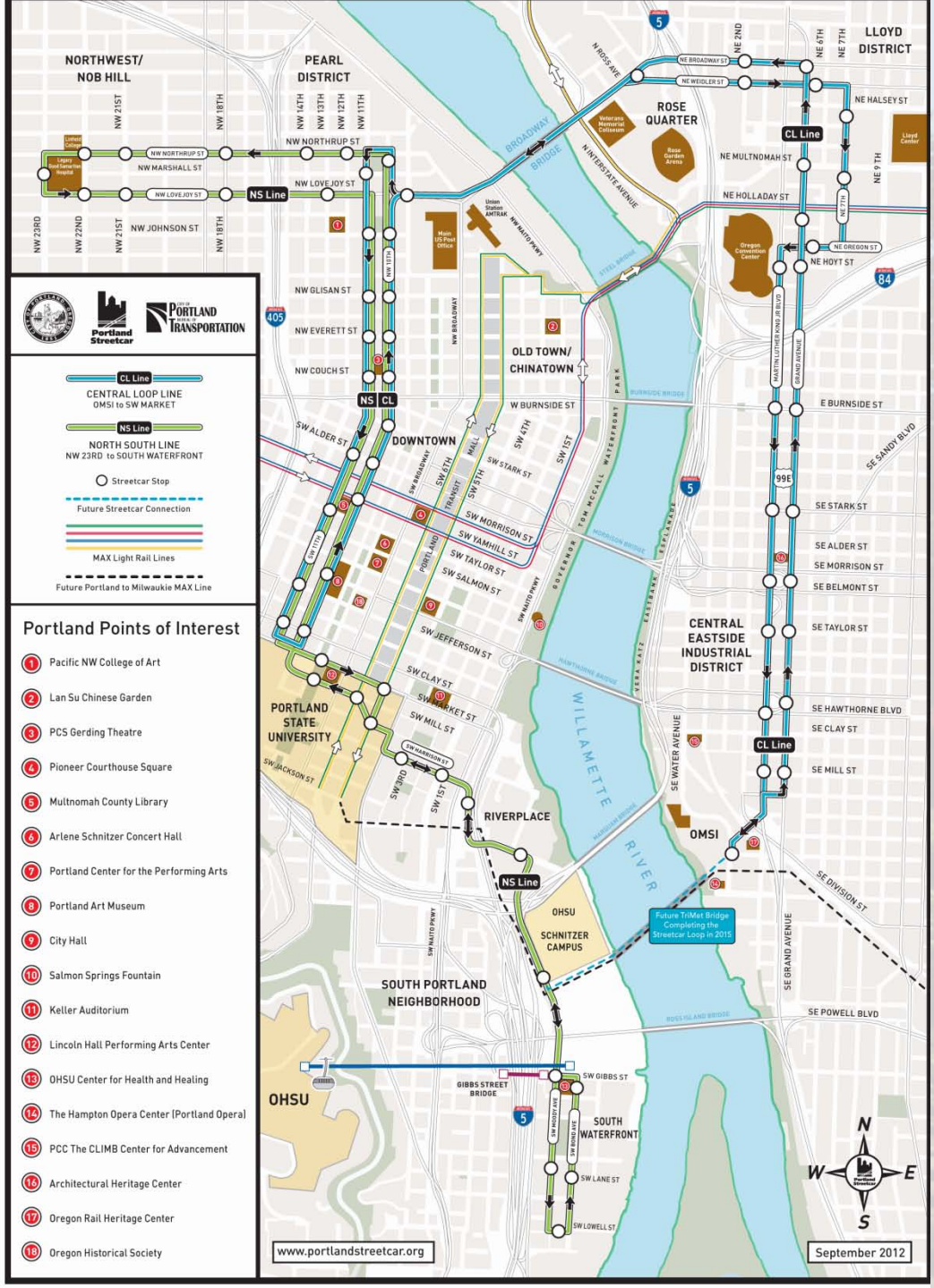
Lessons Learned

John Cullerton
Senior Project Manager, URS
2012 APTA/TRB Light Rail Conference

Overview

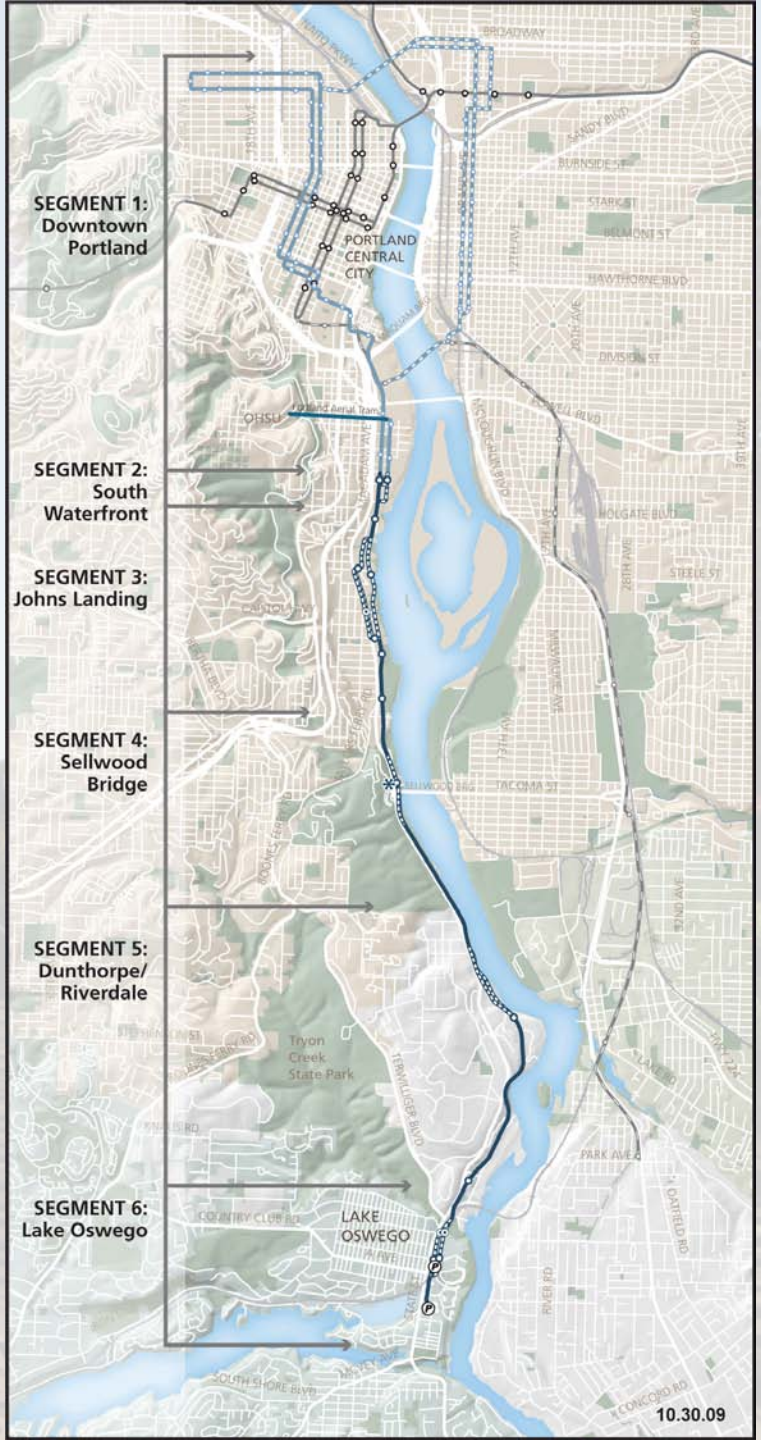
- Project Location and Context
- Corridor History and Project Background
- Project Development
- Public Engagement
- Redefining the Streetcar
- Connections to the Downtowns
- ROW Conflicts and Physical Constraints
- Project Status

Portland Streetcar System



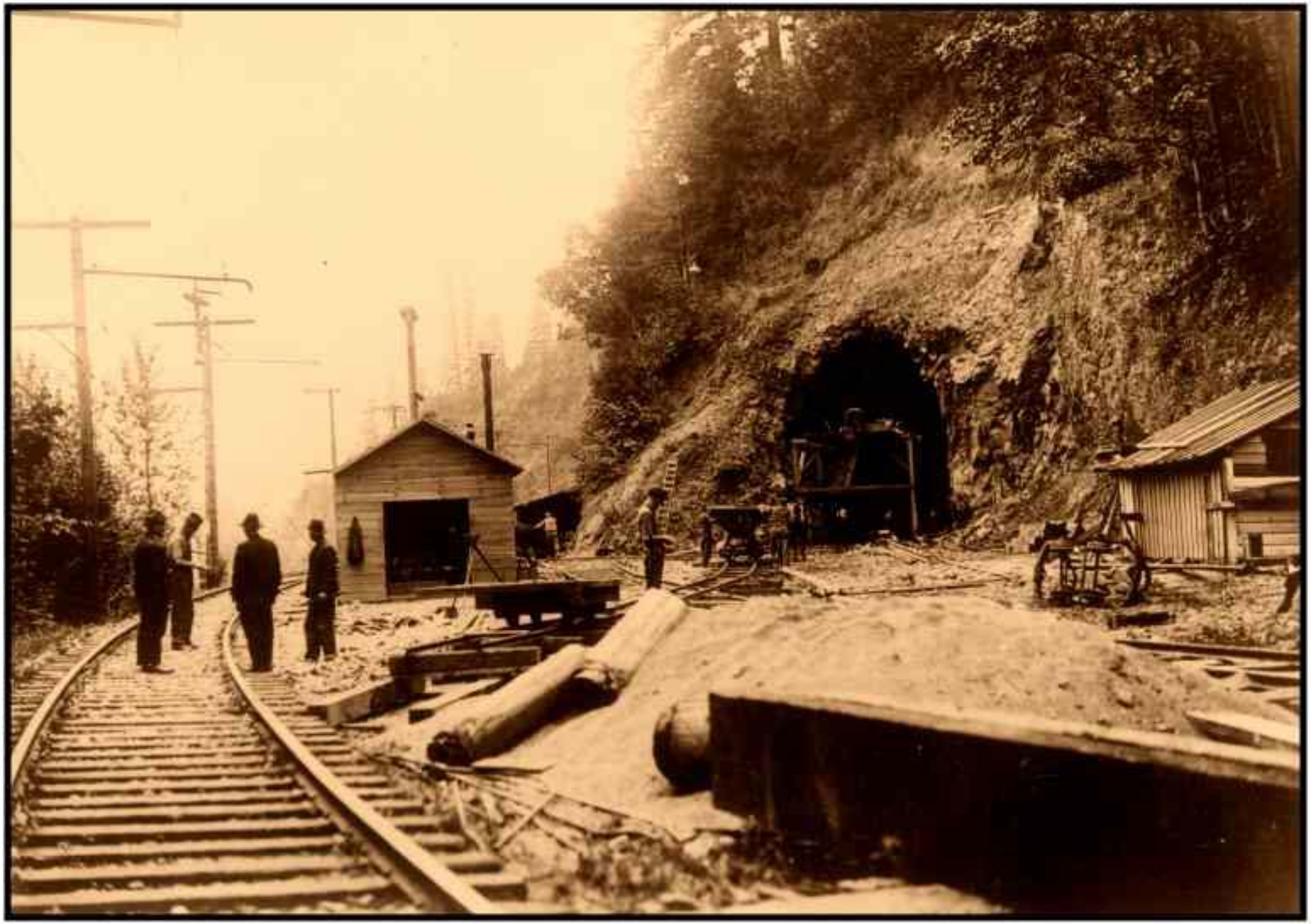
Portland Streetcar

Lake Oswego to Portland Project Location

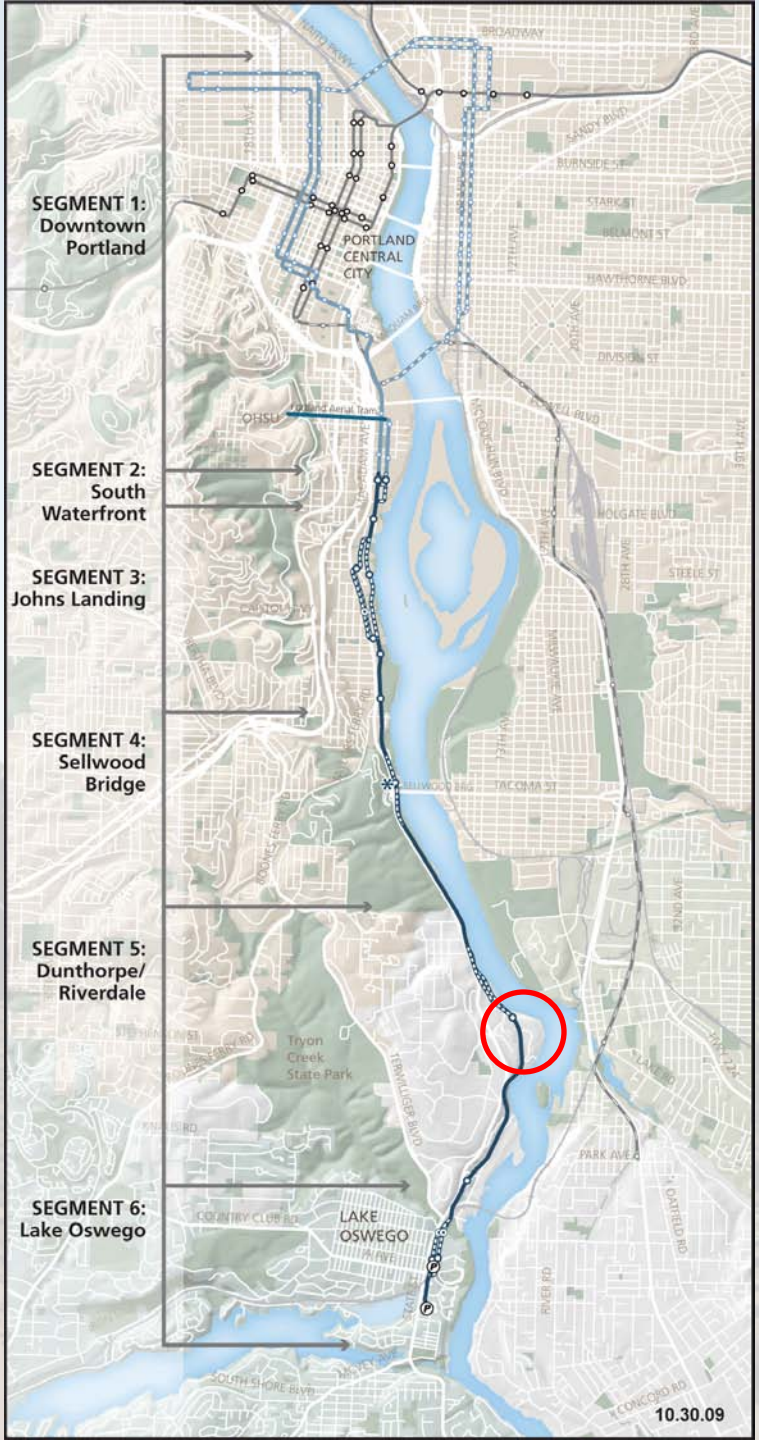


Corridor History

- 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

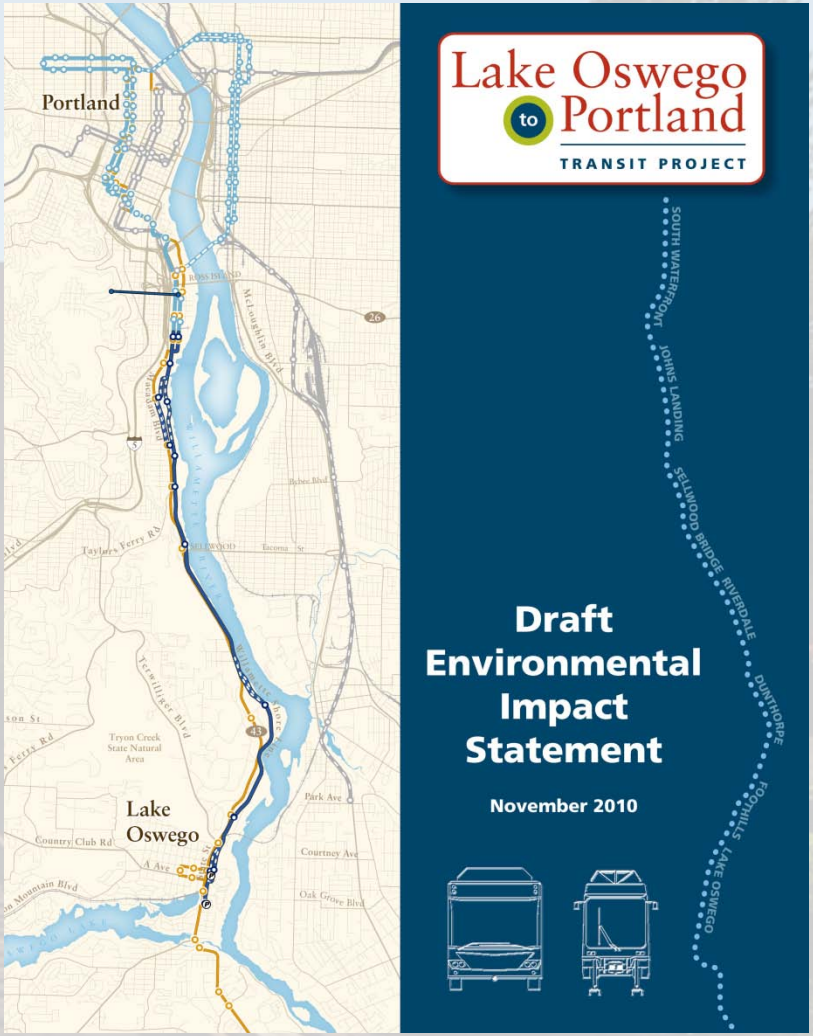
- Rail line purchased from SP by government consortium in 1988
- In 1996 ODOT determined expanding roadway not feasible
- Streetcar extended to South Waterfront in 2006
- Consortium decides time is right to study an HCT connection using rail line

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

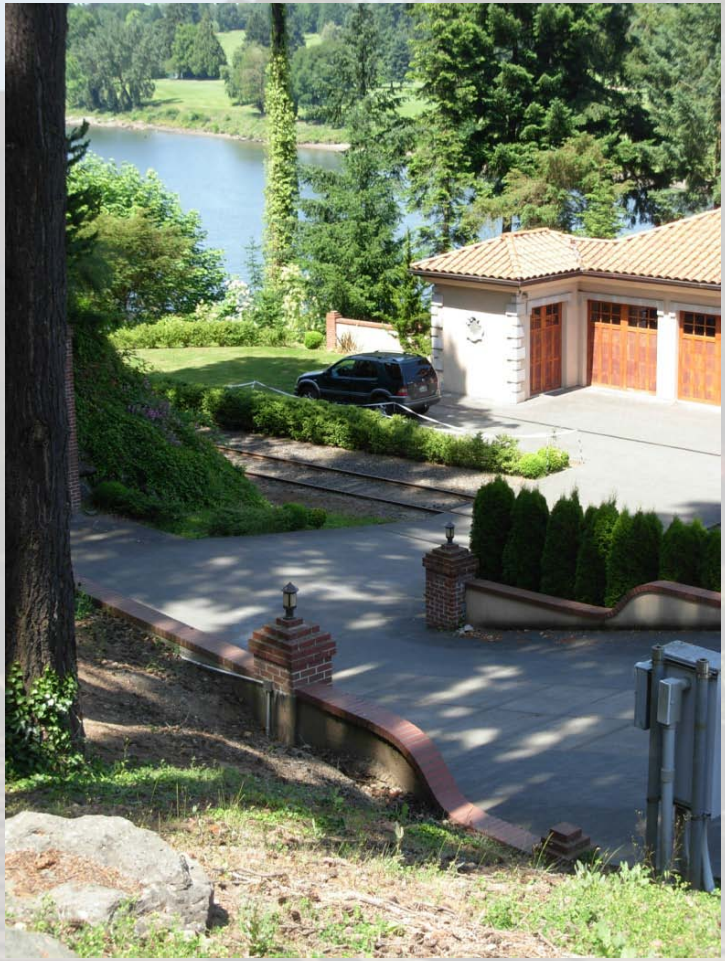
North End
In-Street Alignment

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

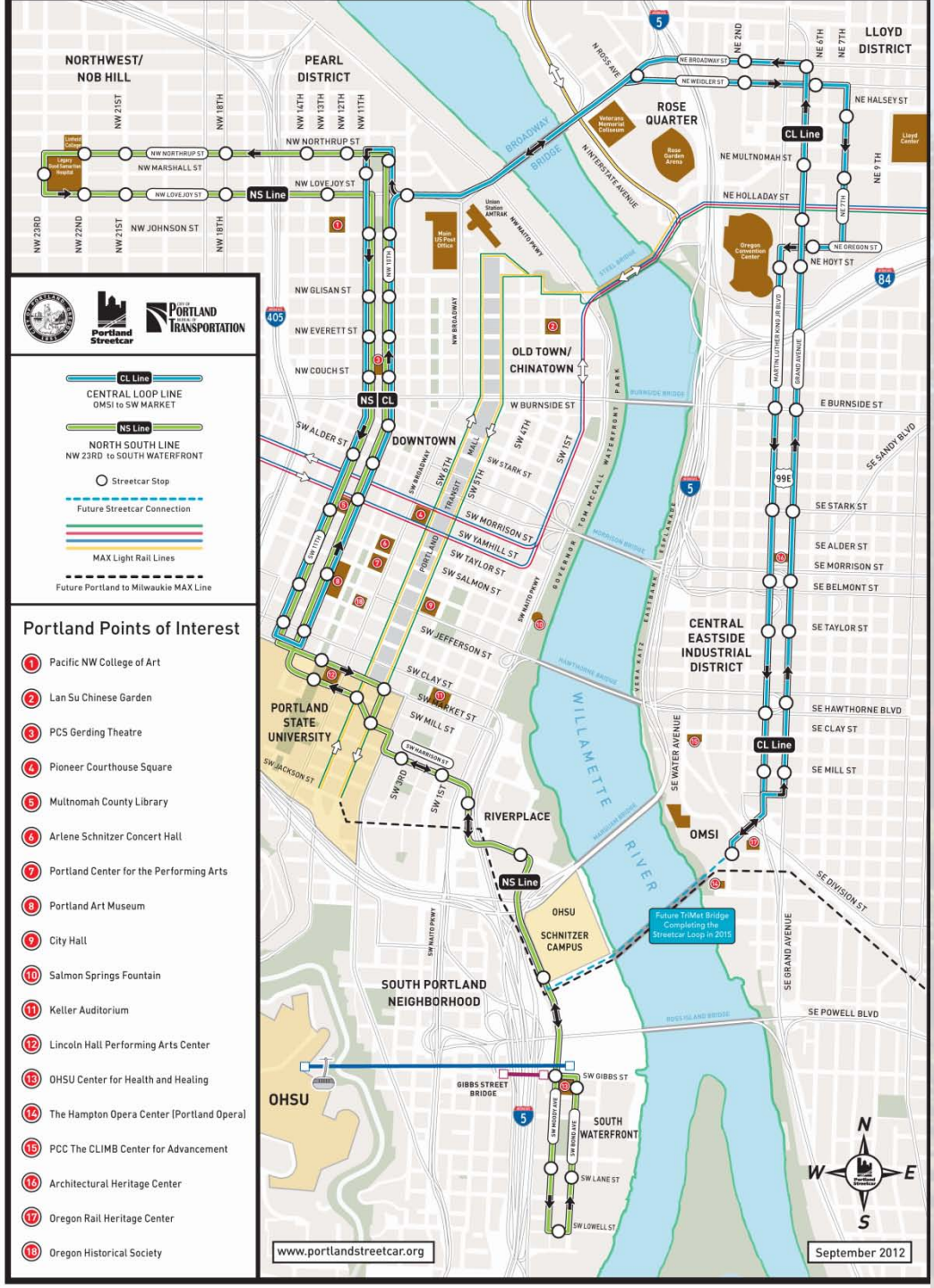
- Proposed Extension – Rapid Streetcar
  - Higher speed (17 mph compared to 8 mph)
  - Less frequent stops (1/2 mile and greater)
  - Condos, single-family, suburban

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

Downtown Portland



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

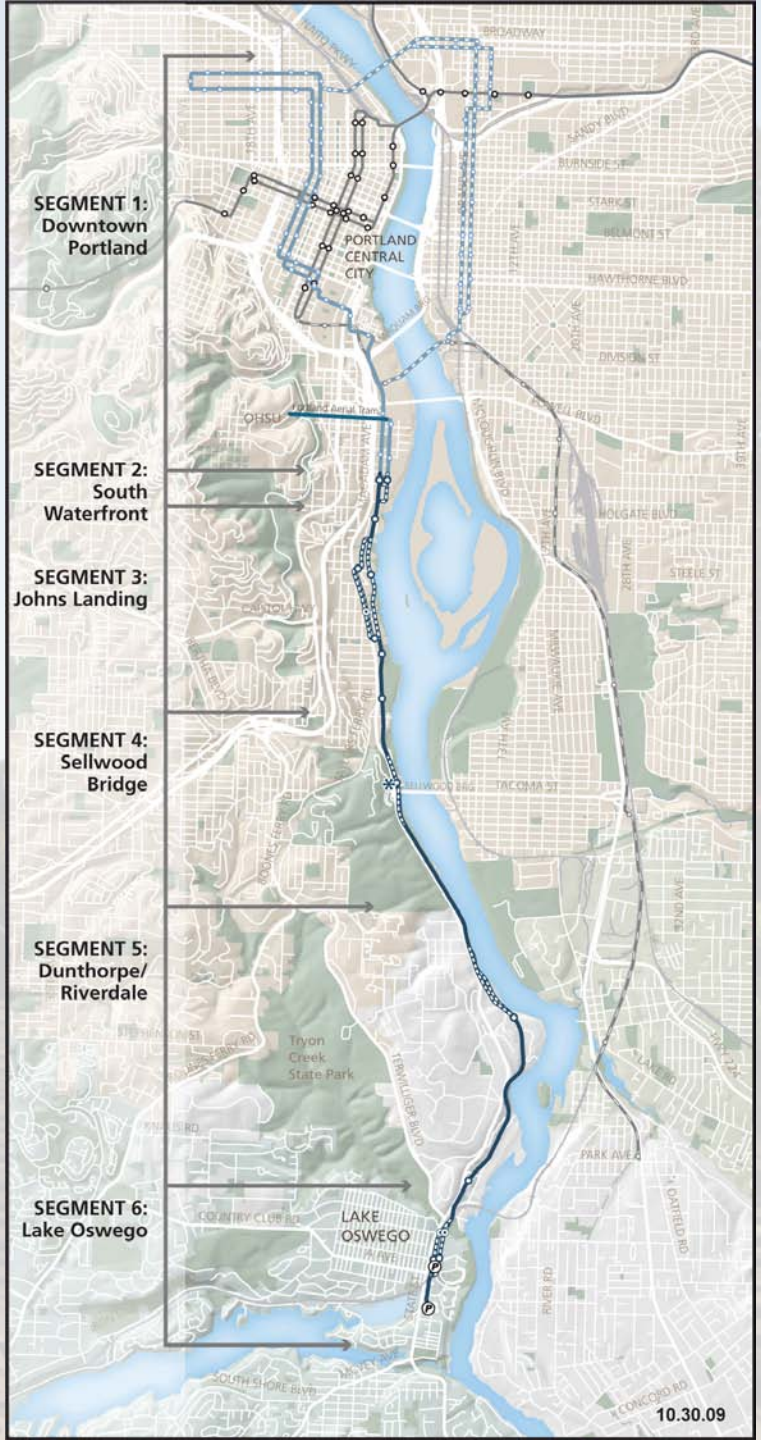
Downtown Lake Oswego

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

John Cullerton

URS Corporation

john.cullerton@urs.com