

Date: May 14, 2009
To: Project Management Group
From: Leah Robbins *AF for LR*
Subject: Recommendation – 17th Avenue Station Locations

The Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) includes two light rail stations on SE 17th Ave. at SE Rhine St. and SE Holgate Blvd. The City of Portland (COP) recommended that staff optimize station locations by shifting the Holgate station away from the intersection to help address concerns with freight access at the SE 17th Ave. and SE Holgate Blvd. intersection.

As the station shifted north, overlap with the Rhine station was apparent. TriMet, COP, PDC, and Metro staff evaluated combining the stations into one station new SE Boise St. (see attached matrix) and reviewed these with the community. The community did not receive these options favorably and cited the need for maintaining redevelopment opportunities and neighborhood connectivity.

Economic Development Potential

By combining the stations into a single station near SE Boise St. many property owners and businesses believe that this new location would be undesirable for redevelopment due to the limited available land and business exposure. In addition, it would minimize the potential for redeveloping the area around SE Holgate Blvd. and SE Rhine St. The best opportunities for redevelopment occur with two stations on SE 17th Ave.

Station Access and Connectivity

The Nos. 17 and 70 bus lines serve the stations along SE 17th Ave; combining the stations has minimal impact on the bus routes. However, eliminating the station at SE Holgate could impact transfer opportunities on the No. 17.

Neighborhood access to the stations was slightly impacted with the one station option and contributed to longer walking distances for some patrons. The best neighborhood connectivity is served with two stations.

Ridership

Metro evaluated the impacts to regional ridership and discovered that minimal ridership was gained throughout the system but lost local ridership with one station. In addition, the timesavings for transit was minimal at 45 seconds saved. There is not a strong advantage for combining the stations.

Cost Analysis

Retaining two stations along SE 17th Ave. is right-of-way neutral. However, optimizing the station from a split platform to a single, center, platform will save the project approximately \$1.5M.

Recommendation

Staff recommends retaining two stations along SE 17th Ave., with a split platform at SE Rhine St. and a single platform at SE Holgate Blvd. on the north side. (Note that further traffic analysis of the north side station is underway to confirm optimal placement for neighborhood connectivity, traffic operations, and redevelopment opportunities.)