

**CORE AREA PARKING DISTRICT BOARD MEETING OF JULY 28, 2010**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Monique Beikman  
Michael Cooper  
Bill Jordan  
Ryan Miller

**STAFF:** Carol Rutherford  
Eric Underwood  
Doug Rux  
Kay Brown  
Mike McKillip

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**5.0 REGULAR BUSINESS****5.1 High Speed Rail Presentation:**

Mike McKillip, City Engineer, reviewed a Power Point Presentation (see attached copy). Two of these proposals could impact Tualatin. This presentation was initially given to City Council members at a work session in April. Mr. McKillip was then directed to do similar presentations to all City committees to make them aware of this proposal and obtain feedback. If this process is successful, it could be used for other projects in the future including the SW Concept Plan, Basalt Creek, and the Highway 99 corridor.

For the past 6-8 months City staff has been involved in discussions with ODOT, Lake Oswego, Oregon City, Wilsonville, and Clackamas and Washington counties. Open houses have been held throughout the areas that could be impacted. ODOT drafted goals for the program which stress the importance of on-time performance and the cost/benefit ratio.

The current travel time between Portland and Eugene is 2 hours, 35 minutes. High Speed Rail (HSR) would cut a half hour off that time. HSR is viewed as trains traveling in the 79-110 mph range. This is extremely faster than the freight trains that travel around 35 mph and top out at 45 mph. Commuter rail (WES) reaches speeds of 55-60 mph. The Federal Government has designated areas throughout the United States for the proposed high-speed corridors (see slide). The corridor that could impact Tualatin would run from Eugene to Vancouver, British Columbia where Amtrak now operates.

Mr. McKillip reviewed the draft goals as depicted on slide #7. Options for the location of high speed rail include:

1. Using the Union Pacific tracks on the eastside going through Woodburn, Oregon City, Milwaukie etc. which is the route currently used by most freight trains.
2. Oregon Electric Line which travels on the west side through Wilsonville, Tualatin, and Tigard. This option would require a connection in Tualatin to route the train to Milwaukie prior to going downtown. It could require the construction of a viaduct to connect to the east/west tracks in the Community Park. Another option could be to route trains via SW 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue or in another area further west from downtown Tualatin. This line could also impact Lake Oswego if the trains were to travel along State Street.
3. The third option was created by Brad Perkins and Rudy Niederer and is the "Cascadia High Speed Railvolution." This would involve the construction of a new rail line along I-5 and include a new rail station in Tualatin. It could then cross over the freeway to other tracks around SW Pilkington and northeast to a tunnel into Sellwood across the river. A new station would be constructed in the area of the Rose Quarter and Interstate Avenue rather than the trains going into Union Station. Electric high-speed trains are proposed in this scenario.

Union Pacific has been supportive of Option #1 as depicted on four slides. They want the passenger service and already depend on freight. An appropriate balance between these two services must be achieved with a focus on safety while not compromising the freight service.

Mr. McKillip reviewed the five steps involved in the entire process. Currently ODOT is addressing the first and the second steps. The Federal Government has allocated a significant amount of stimulus money for these projects. However, they are not interested in funding research or the environmental impact studies required prior to beginning construction. He also reviewed the "Next Steps" and the State money required to qualify for funding. Revenue generated from the gas tax cannot be allocated for this project.

The next two slides outline the benefits and impacts of this service.

*Benefits:*

- Quicker access Portland to Eugene, Seattle, and Vancouver BC
- Attract businesses that do world-wide work
- Remove some vehicles from I-5
- Provides options for Portland-Eugene travel
- Viaduct eliminates three at-grade rail crossings in downtown Tualatin, eliminates wayside horns and improves safety
- Rerouting eliminates three at-grade intersections and wayside horns and improves safety

Impacts:

- Noise (more trains)
- Traffic (if current alignment is maintained)
- Parking (if a station is located in Tualatin Town Center)
- Community Park (loss of space, visual, and noise)
- Large elevated structure through downtown could dramatically change the ambience of the area.

Mr. McKillip reviewed two slides which highlight twelve (12) opportunities that could occur as a result of this project. It is likely that the Blake Street overcrossing will be removed.

He reviewed the options on how to gain further information on this subject and encouraged Board members to contact him or Kaaren Hofmann with any questions or suggestions.

Mr. Cooper inquired if this project would need to go out to the voters for approval. Mr. McKillip responded “no.” If the funding is in place, it would be handled similar to a freeway or light rail project. The government has the right to exercise eminent domain if easements or new track alignments are required. Councilor Beikman stated that money is limited, and we are in competition with the entire United States. Councilor Maddux and Councilor Beikman attended a class on this subject in the Washington DC area. There are numerous communities that are interested in HSR. Oregon is not close to being ready, and the chance of Oregon being awarded funds right now isn’t very high. Also, this proposal is for “higher speed” rail service, not “high speed” as in other parts of the country. In the last round of funding, the State of Washington was awarded \$590 million to begin incremental upgrades on the rail lines along the Vancouver to Seattle corridor.