

**Franklin Street Redevelopment Study Phase II**  
**Public Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**April 3, 2014, 5:30-7:30 pm**  
**Merrill Rehearsal Hall**

**Committee Members:** Markos Miller, Christian MilNeil, Jaime Parker, Jon Graback, Chris O'Neil, Ethan Boxer-Macomber, Elizabeth Hoglund, Sally Oldham, Alex Landry, Hugh Nazor, Kevin Donoghue, Bill Hall, Steve Hewins

**Absent Committee Members:** Sam Cohen, Bob Stevens, Hank Berg, Mark Adelson

**Staff:** Mike Bobinsky, Jeremiah Bartlett, and Bruce Hyman, City of Portland Public Services; Alex Jaegerman, City of Portland Planning Department; Carl Eppich, PACTS; Darryl Belz, MaineDOT; Tegin Teich, IBI Group; Don Ettinger, Gorrill Palmer; Carol Morris and Scott Hastings, Morris Communications

*The meeting started at 5:41 pm.*

Markos Miller, Committee Co-chair, opened the meeting by thanking people for their flexibility in being able to attend the meeting in spite of the change in date. He felt that the meeting was an important opportunity for the PAC to weigh in before the consultants conducted their analysis of the feasibility of the three alternatives. He stressed that the three alternatives were not fixed plans but merely buckets for holding the different features and that these features could in most cases be mixed and matched in a final alternative. With that in mind, the PAC was asked to do two things: make sure that no features that should be included in the analysis had been missed, and remove any that are unnecessary. He then turned the floor over to Mike Bobinsky, Director of Public Services for the City of Portland.

Mike also thanked the committee for their attendance. He explained that the city really wanted to hear what the PAC had to say regarding the groups they represented points of view, and he wanted to make sure that everyone is on the same page going into the analysis phase of the project.

Carol Morris of Morris Communications then reviewed the agenda for the meeting and again stressed that the three alternatives should be taken as collections of parts rather than rigid plans. She also emphasized that none of the components of the alternatives have yet been tested, and the next step for the consulting team is to model and analyze the components of the three alternatives, noting that this analysis would be a big help in guiding everyone to the best combination of components. She also reminded the PAC again that the final alternative would most likely be a combination of different components from all the alternatives, so it is not a choice among the three. Carol then turned over the floor to Tegin Teich of IBI Group.

Tegin explained that they were at the meeting today to make sure that the alternatives are in order before the team begins to evaluate them. Based on previous feedback from the PAC and from the public meeting, the alternatives being evaluated were two versions of the Urban Street and a modified version of the Urban Parkway. The Multi-Way Boulevard alternative has been removed due to feedback expressed at the public meeting as well as concerns expressed by the technical staff. She mentioned that while the options themselves have not yet been vetted by analysis, the team has looked closely at roundabouts at the north end of Franklin Street to see if they warranted further analysis. This examination ruled out using a roundabout at Franklin St and Marginal Way to control traffic due to property impacts, vehicle and bike/ped safety issues and the scale required to serve the demand.

Tegin then reviewed the meeting materials provided to the PAC. They included a handout on transit options, a handout detailing key topics taken from the public outreach and a table comparing the three alternatives based on a list of criteria. Maps of the three alternatives were also provided.

Tegin began by noting that the Urban Street Option 1 alternative focuses on reducing roadway width and reconnecting all the cross streets. She noted that all three alternatives have two through-lanes in each direction from Marginal Way to Congress St. and one through-lane in each direction from Congress St. to Commercial St.

A discussion ensued about the medians. In Urban Street #2 there is a central median alternating with turn lanes. In Urban Street #1, the additional cross streets means that the median is dropped but the space is used for turn lanes. The Urban Parkway option has a wider median with few breaks for turn lanes/cross streets.

Urban Street #1 has the most space given over to exclusive pedestrian use. Urban Street #2 has more space given to non-car modes and part of this is a cycle track separated from the street and from the pedestrian sidewalk. The team has been looking carefully at how separated bike facilities function at intersections; currently they are leaning toward bikes in the cycle track joining with pedestrians to navigate intersections.

The Urban Street options favor a bus shuttle for transit. In Option 1 this would run on parallel streets to avoid conflict with bicyclists. In Option 2 it would run down Franklin St.

In addition to a full reconnection of all cross streets for all modes, Urban Street #1 looks at changing Federal and Newbury to two-way streets. There would be parallel parking on Franklin from Congress to Commercial Street. Urban Street #1 shows mostly 3-4 story development focused on nodes at major intersections, which may have higher buildings. Separate from the transportation work, the team is looking at form-based codes and mixed-use overlays to get an idea of how they might work in the corridor. Urban Street #1 is the alternative depicting the maximum new developable space and the road is pushed to the west.

A question was asked about Lincoln Park's potential in terms of gaining space.

Tegin explains that in Urban Street #1's role of showing the maximum new developable space, the park gains no new land. Other alternatives do have the park gaining space. Tegin noted again that pieces are interchangeable and in the end the park could gain land while using the road cross sections seen in Urban Street #1.

A committee member said that he felt that certain issues needed to be decided before other things could be productively discussed; namely street alignment, road width, and road cross-connections, in that order. They felt that by presenting options as part of alternatives things were being unnecessarily lumped together. They felt more conversation was needed about road widths and alignment before other things were decided.

Tegin agreed that some aspects did heavily influence other aspects. She said that after the technical evaluation, the various measures of effectiveness would be used to more objectively assess the different arguments for each component. She added that packaging the different components into three separate alternatives was necessary in order to run the traffic modeling.

Carol added that a lot of study team work was yet to be done on the best way to present and evaluate the choices post-evaluation.

A committee member felt that they had heard a lot of support at the public meeting for a compromise road alignment that was not shown in the current alternatives. He felt that the Urban Street #2 option came the closest to the compromise except in Bayside where it should be pushed more west to make use of the existing building wall of Whole Foods. He felt it should then go more east around Franklin Towers and Lincoln Park but swing to the west to provide developable land for the India St. neighborhood.

There was some discussion about whether this exact alignment was feasible based on topographical and regulatory constraints. It was determined that further research was required.

A committee member commented that they did not think a general consensus had been reached on the road alignment but did note that they liked the previously mentioned compromise alignment.

A committee member representing Greater Portland Landmarks (GPL) noted that from GPL's perspective none of the three alternatives as presented were something they would advocate for. They strongly felt that the street section, including sidewalks, should be much narrower with the 22' sidewalk shown being completely unnecessary. They also wanted to restore Lincoln Park as much as possible. Aside from land used for the park they were interested in seeing as much development as possible and felt that the cross streets should be reconnected. New development and new connections would help to activate the space with more people. She was also interested in the potential for two-way traffic on Federal and Newbury Streets, as that would encourage more use around the courthouse.

Carol asked for clarification on GPL's stance on the park expansion.

The committee member replied that the option with the largest expansion of the park was acceptable. GPC understands that a full restoration is not possible.

Tegin asked for some more information on what sidewalk width would be appropriate.

The committee member responded that they felt 10' sidewalks would be appropriate.

After some discussion it was decided to go through the rest of the meeting topic-by-topic rather than alternative-by-alternative.

Tegin started this with a look at vehicle right-of-way width. In all alternatives there would be one through-lane in each direction from Congress St. to Commercial St., plus turn lanes where needed. All lanes would be 11' wide. Urban Street #1 would also have bike lanes with a painted buffer. Urban Street #2 and the Urban Parkway options would instead have 4' shoulders.

Darryl Belz of MaineDOT noted that the state requires 5' shoulders. The city would have to get 4' shoulders approved as a design exception. This would be very possible but is another step everyone should be aware of. *UPDATE: Darryl has reported back that a design exception is NOT needed for 11-foot travel lanes and 4-foot shoulders.*

Tegin pointed out that the numbers provided were the road widths including bike lanes and shoulders as appropriate. These widths varied along the corridor but the Urban Parkway option had the widest road width due to a wider median.

There was some discussion about shoulders vs. bike lanes. Bikes would be allowed in shoulders but shoulders would not have the painted buffer as offered in the bike lane and would not necessarily count as new bicycle infrastructure when evaluating the alternatives.

A committee member asked would it be possible to ask for 2' shoulders instead? He pointed out that trimming the width of the roadway by a mere 2' on each side, along the 4000' length of the street, means the difference between spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to pave and maintain 16,000 more square feet of pavement, compared to selling that 16,000 square feet and collecting property taxes on 1/3rd of an acre's worth of new downtown housing and offices. The difference of 2 feet is a difference of roughly half a million dollars' worth of net project costs in the short term and tens of thousands of dollars in the city's budget each year for the next five decades or so. He said that whether or not engineers consider this a practical consideration, it absolutely is a consideration for elected officials and for taxpayers who will pay for this project.

Tegin said that in addition to safety concerns, wider shoulders would give more flexibility in future changes to the road. Also, she pointed out that while 4' shoulders would likely be approved by MaineDOT, 2' shoulders might be harder to get approval for.

A committee member noted that they wanted to echo previous opinions that the narrowest width possible was desirable. He wanted to be clear that this wasn't just road width but the width of the whole right of way including sidewalks and bike lanes.

The group moved on to discussion of the median. Urban Street #1 has very little median anywhere in the corridor, Urban Street #2 had some median, mostly acting as pedestrian refuges, and the Urban Parkway had by far the most median. The Urban Parkway includes more median in order to allow space for future transit and in the meantime provides a central cycle track.

A committee member asked what the tradeoffs were in having a larger median.

Tegin responded that a larger median restricts options for road alignments and reduces the amount of developable land opened up. And in this option they wanted to show fewer conflicts for the purpose of the analysis, so it was not as desirable to reconnect cross streets.

A committee member asked for clarification on the space for transit, asking if it is correct that even in the Urban Parkway model this space was only preserved between Marginal Way and Congress St. He also asked if it is possible to retain the center cycle track but reduce the median width.

Tegin answered that they were correct about the space reserved for transit. The median width around the cycle track was largely dictated by safety standards.

Another question was asked about how the median affects cross street connectivity.

Tegin responded that the wider and more substantial the median the less cross streets could be reconnected for vehicles, although pedestrian-access cross streets were still possible. The center cycle track also meant added conflicts at any cross streets.

The group then moved on to pedestrian infrastructure. As was before mentioned, Urban Street #1 has up to 22' wide sidewalks. Urban Street #2 moves the bike path between the sidewalk and the road so while the sidewalks are narrower, the bike/pedestrian zone is wider. The Urban Parkway option has narrower sidewalks at 12' wide. Tegin asked if the group felt narrower sidewalks were a priority.

A committee member responded that it depended somewhat on zoning, as retail areas need more sidewalk than residential areas.

Another committee member felt that narrower sidewalks should be put next to Lincoln Park with land being used for the park rather than wide sidewalks.

There was a brief discussion about the expansion of the park. It was reiterated that the park could be expanded in any of the alternatives though none restored it to its original size.

A committee member said that they felt 12' sidewalks were sufficient for commercial areas and that they would work for residential areas as well for consistency's sake. They did want to make sure that crosswalks were made easy and intuitive to use. They felt that the plans showed many crosswalks that did not take the direct route across a road and that people would not stay in the crosswalks if they were built that way.

A committee member agreed and said that he would like to see crosswalks being more direct across intersections.

Tegin appreciated the input but noted that that level of detailed planning would take place in the future during a detailed design phase. For this study, they are currently more interested in the number of crossings rather than the exact location of them. She did say she would talk with the consultant team so that they would keep that in mind.

Don Ettinger of Gorrill Palmer noted that crosswalks in the Urban Parkway alternative that crossed the central cycle track were purposely offset to minimize conflicts.

Another committee member agreed that they would like to see more direct crosswalks and added that more innovative crossing treatments would be appreciated when the design stage came around. They also wanted to see the Bayside Trail brought more into line as it crosses Franklin.

Tegin responded that they had spent a lot of time thinking about how to improve the Bayside Trail crossing. She felt there was the most leeway in addressing it in the Urban Parkway option due to the way the Marginal Way / Franklin intersection is being treated. This alternative removes through-movements on Marginal Way across the intersection and so allows the intersection to be signalized.

The committee member responded that they were not really in favor of that intersection treatment but wanted to make sure the Bayside Trail was kept in mind.

There was some discussion about the Urban Parkway intersection treatment at Marginal Way/Franklin and it generally met with disapproval. Alex Jaegerman, from City of Portland Planning, felt that if the Urban Parkway alternative hinged on this treatment it should probably just be disregarded. It was pointed out that the city has an agreement with MaineDOT to prohibit left turns at the intersection if traffic ever begins to back up onto the highway before resorting to prohibiting through-movements on Marginal Way. There some debate about the need to worry about this at this time.

A committee member noted that the intersection treatment shown would push a lot of traffic onto Somerset St. They felt that this would change the character of the street detrimentally. Somerset St. is already being rebuilt to 11' lanes with 2' shoulders and they felt the added traffic would be a deterrent to walking, biking, and general street life.

The group moved on to the topic of bike infrastructure. Urban Street #1 would have 5' bike lanes with a painted buffer. Urban Street #2 would have a 10' cycle track on one side of the road, separated from traffic by parked cars. It would have a 4' verge on either side separating it from parked cars and the sidewalk. The Urban Parkway would have a two-way cycle track down the center of the road inside the median. Urban Street #1 looks at putting bike lanes on the cross streets while the other two alternatives use shared lane markings.

A committee member commented that how bikes are accommodated has an impact on right-of-way width. He also noted that they felt the Mindmixer responses showed a general approval of bikes being separated from traffic.

Another committee member agreed that there seemed to be some preference for separated bike facilities but noted that they were not in favor of two-way cycle tracks.

There was some discussion at this point about the confidence level of various potential bike users and how these groups would feel about the various bike options. There was little consensus.

A committee member asked how the cycle tracks would interface with the two trailheads at either end of the corridor. They wondered if the ability for bikes to access these trails from Franklin could be measured and incorporated in the measures of effectiveness.

Tegin responded that it would be hard to measure but assured the committee that a lot of thought was and would be put into the problem of how bicyclists would interface with the cycle tracks and the trailheads.

A committee member pointed out that in the Urban Street #2 option, the cycle track might be better on the west side as it would interface better with the Back Bay trail. The Marginal Way intersection is the most complicated and so it is more desirable to have this connection provide easy access to the Eastern Prom trail at the Commercial St. end.

Tegin agreed.

Markos asked if there is an alternative that would model a non-buffered bike lane.

Tegin clarified that in the Urban Street #1 alternative the bike lane was only buffered by paint, not by a physical barrier.

Markos responded that this was sufficient to fulfill his desires to see a non-separated bike alternative.

Tegin asked for people to prioritize other aspects of the project that they felt were most important, as time was running short.

A committee member commented that in the situation with all the cross streets connected, the signals would have to be carefully timed in order to handle traffic. Further it would be important to keep the turn lanes long enough to keep turning traffic from contributing to backups.

There was some brief discussion about this. It was mentioned that some roads could be right in/right out at peak hours. Tegin noted that the traffic modeling would look into signal timing and right in/right out options.

A committee member felt that even if the streets are not all connected in an alternative, they should be designed so that it would still be possible to connect the streets in the future with minimal reconstruction of Franklin.

Tegin answered that was a good idea but also pointed out that there are some areas with significant grade issues and that some alignments would make some connections challenging.

The committee member responded that they understood and that they just wanted to make the pitch for it.

A question was asked about turn lanes at the Lancaster intersection.

Don responded that in all options the current dedicated right-turn lane would be removed. The right through-lane would become a right turn and through-lane. He also pointed out that the lane is wider at this point to accommodate truck turning movements.

A committee member representing the India St. Neighborhood voiced the opinion that the table's wording of a Federal St. connection "limiting" open space was incorrect and that instead it would eliminate the opportunity for new open space. He said that the India St. neighborhood would like to see two things come out of this plan; usable open space at Federal and Franklin, and Franklin Street moved to the west to open up developable land within the India St. neighborhood.

Tegin noted that even with a full connection, there would still be some space opened up at that location for public open space. There was some debate about this as it was felt that that space would be highly desirable for development.

A committee member asked to see a new right-of-way on the elements table comparing trail connections across the alternatives.

Another committee member noted that the current alignment of the Fore Street / Franklin Street intersection favors vehicular movements turning onto Franklin and can make it hard to safely cross the intersection towards India St. They would like to see the plan look at ways to improve this situation.

A committee member felt that the development penciled in for the corridor, particularly around Lincoln Park, was too tall. Rather than 5-story buildings, she would like to see 3-4 stories that relate to the historic development pattern. She did note that they were not opposed to looking at 5-story buildings but that they wanted to make sure 3-4 story buildings remained an option.

Tegin responded that building heights coming out of this study would be rough recommendations and the City would have to look more closely at them in the future. They had put in the 5-story building note around Lincoln Park because the Congress St. intersection was seen as an important development node.

A committee member asked that in a scenario that sees full or nearly full reconnection of cross streets, would these reconnections adversely affect traffic, particularly if pedestrians have push button priority?

Jeremiah Bartlett, Transportation Systems Engineer for the City of Portland, said that the short answer was, "It depends." The study's next step was to look at the traffic implications of all the alternatives. The city is already addressing these concerns around pedestrian movements. In many places they are using concurrent pedestrian movements rather than exclusive phasing and this helps to keep vehicles and pedestrians moving.

A committee member asked if there would be a layer created showing development recommendations.

Tegin responded that they would be creating a rough sketch of what they saw as development opportunities. The weight of the study was on the transportation part of the project but they would be blocking out development potential.

She then thanked the committee for their input, and said that the team would make modifications based on what they heard that day and then move ahead to test the alternatives.

Carol took the floor and reviewed the next steps. The committee will receive minutes of the meeting as well as a list of the modifications the team would be making as a result of the discussion. The next committee meeting will be scheduled soon for around the middle or end of June. The next public meeting would be scheduled for shortly after that.

*The meeting ended at 7:37 pm.*

## **Addendum: Adjustments and Additions Made to Concept Plans Based on Meeting Discussion**

### **General:**

- Additional discussion with the PAC will take place on the general alignment of the roadway via Google Groups before the next meeting in June.
- The team is asking the PAC for input on classification of neighborhood streets and activity centers for the purposes of the evaluation.
  
- The team will reach out to the bike/ped committee and community before finalizing recommendations.
- The team will also be meeting with City operations heads (Fire/Police/Emergency) prior to the next PAC Meeting for their input.

### ***Input from PAC Meeting and Resolution (shown in italics):***

- **Move bike facilities in Urban St #2 to opposite side of road (west):** *Agreed*
- **Realign Fore St. to be safer:** *A challenge but ideas in process now*
- **Align cross walks with sidewalks:** *This level of design is not necessary at this conceptual phase but has been noted.*
- **Dislike of Median at Marginal Way in Urban Parkway –** *Instead of modeling this worst case scenario, the two phases of turning movement restrictions in the Bayside Crossing agreement will be modeled. Urban Street #1 will have no turning restrictions, Urban Street #2 will restrict left turn movements from eastbound Marginal Way to Franklin/I-295, and Urban Parkway will have the restriction in Option 2 AND restricted left turn movements northbound Franklin Street onto Marginal Way westbound.*
- **Sidewalk widths:** *Sidewalk widths will not be modified for the purposes of evaluation, as a range of widths are included and the related MOEs tend to focus on the length of sidewalk facilities. In final recommendations, sidewalk widths will vary depending on location given feedback (e.g. need less sidewalks in front of Lincoln Park).*
- **Use existing street wall where available:** *Generally agreed to maximize use of existing street walls. We will look into shifting alignment east at Lincoln Park then west between Federal and Newbury, maximizing the park on one block and development on next, but there are likely some technical limitations.*
- **Shoulder widths/design exceptions:** *A narrower shoulder design exception will likely be hard to achieve given the extensive existing right of way. Darrl Belz, MaineDOT will provide feedback. For now the evaluation will include the 4' shoulders.*
- **DOT request to show one option where Pearl Street not reconnected between Fox/Somerset and Marginal Way:** *Connection will be removed on Urban Parkway.*
- **Understanding how much land is reclaimed with the different alignments and making sure developable lot size is considered:** *Agreed, part of existing MOEs*
- **Designing all perpendicular streets with possible future reconnection:** *There are potential cost and other implications, but will keep this in mind for recommendations.*

- **Varying the scale of development across from Lincoln Park:** *Agreed, will show one option with 3 story development across from Lincoln Park (Urban St # 2).*
- **Add comparison of trail connections to elements table:** *Agreed*
- **Prepare list of minimum guidelines/standards for PAC:** *Agreed.*