

Mill Plain BRT
Vancouver, Washington
Small Starts Project Development
(Rating Assigned November 2019)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 10 Miles, 21 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$49.86 Million
Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):	\$24.89 Million (49.9%)
Annual Operating Cost (2022):	\$1.47 Million
Existing Corridor Ridership (Warranted):	3,100 Daily Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	High

Project Description: The Clark County Public Transit Benefit Area (C-TRAN) proposes to implement bus rapid transit (BRT) connecting downtown Vancouver and east Vancouver. The project is expected to operate primarily in mixed traffic, except two short exclusive lane segments that are currently being evaluated, each of which would not exceed 1,000 feet in length. The project includes seven vehicles, level boarding stations, improved station amenities, better pedestrian access to stations, off-board fare payment, branded transit vehicles, enhanced safety and security at stations, and transit signal priority. The service is planned to operate every 15 minutes on weekdays in peak periods and on weekends, and every 30 minutes on weekday evenings.

Project Purpose: The project corridor includes several major employment areas and key activity centers including downtown Vancouver, Clark College, PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center, Vancouver Clinic, and Columbia Tech Center. C-TRAN is pursuing the project to address several existing transportation deficiencies and future growth. C-TRAN anticipates the Project will: 1) improve travel time and reliability in the corridor by reducing delay caused by traffic congestion; 2) improve mobility for residents who do not have access to a car or are in poverty; and 3) enhance transit safety and access by improving lighting and security at stations, and increasing the overall attractiveness of transit.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: The project entered Small Starts Project Development in February 2019. The locally preferred alternative was adopted by C-TRAN and included in the region's fiscally constrained long-range plan in March 2019. C-TRAN anticipates completion of the environmental review process in early 2020, receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement in late 2020, and the start of revenue service in October 2022.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal:		
Section 5309 Small Starts	\$24.88	49.9%
FHWA Flexible Funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program)	\$4.20	8.4%
Local:		
C-TRAN Capital Funds	\$20.78	41.7%
Total:	\$49.86	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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LAND USE RATING: Medium

The land use rating reflects population density within one half-mile of proposed stations, employment served by the proposed BRT line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- The average station area population density is 4,400 persons per square mile which corresponds to a Medium-Low rating by FTA benchmarks. Station area employment totals 31,700 which corresponds to a Low Rating. The average daily parking cost for the downtown and uptown districts is approximately \$4 to \$10, which corresponds to a Medium-Low rating. The proportion of LBAR housing in the station areas compared to the proportion in Clark County is 2.57, which corresponds to a High rating.
- The westernmost segment of the corridor includes Downtown Vancouver and Central Park and is characterized by compact urban development and park space with community facilities. Parking lots however, create gaps in the urban fabric. East of downtown the corridor is suburban in nature with low-density housing, commercial development with large parking lots, and office parks.
- The project alignment's main roadway has narrow sidewalks without landscape buffers between the sidewalk and the roadway. The corridor has limited access points to adjacent neighborhoods. Local streets are wide, winding, and rarely have sidewalks.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-Low

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-Low

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* Regional, county, city, and district plans support transit-oriented development in the corridor. Portions of Mill Plain Boulevard are designated for mixed-use. Proposed densities were generally not provided.
- *Supportive Zoning Near Transit Stations:* Residential zones along the corridor vary and allow densities ranging from Low to High. Land adjacent to most stations is zoned for commercial use, but commercial floor area ratios were not included. Work is underway to update the Zoning Ordinance.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* The Vancouver Transit Overlay applies to the downtown area and is an incentive-based program that allows for the reduction of transportation impact fees in exchange for design and mobility improvements. The City offers a Multi-Family Tax Exemption for the City Center and plans to extend this exemption to the Mill Plain Boulevard corridor. Community outreach took place as part of the Vancouver Comprehensive Plan update.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-Low

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* C-TRANS's Fourth Plain BRT, the Vine, has bolstered growth in the Fourth Plain corridor, and many of the policies that supported the Fourth Plain BRT will also support the Mill Plain BRT. Several development proposals and development projects are underway. These include educational facilities, office space, and a multi-family development.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* There is opportunity for development in portions of the project corridor, but details were not provided. Corridor-specific economic conditions were not identified.

Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium-Low

- Vancouver has an Affordable Housing Fund which to date has awarded \$10 million to 19 projects to create or preserve 610 units of affordable housing. Impact fee waivers may be approved for up to 80 percent of park and traffic impact fees for affordable housing. A waiver of school impact fees may also be provided.



MILL PLAIN BRT - LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

