



June 24, 2008

Columbia River Crossing
c/o Heather Gundersen
700 Washington Street, Suite 300
Vancouver, WA 98660

RE: PUBLIC COMMENT

Dear Committee Members:

Subject: 110 W. 13th Street, 108 W. 13th Street and LRT

B-016-001

Here are a few thoughts I would like to bring to your attention regarding the Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS).

B-016-002

In the DEIS on page 2-36 there is a section regarding a curb or raised rail for LRT. This will deter any vehicle access to my property and therefore, I am opposed to this idea.

On page 3-248 in the DEIS, exhibit 3.8.19 Potential Access Impacts with Washington-Broadway Couplet and LRT, it is stated in the table that 108 W. 13th Street and 110 W. 13th Street will not be adversely impacted with LRT on Washington Street. The fact is, it will be adversely impacted. It is apparent to me, that no one from your offices actually took the time to visit my property.

I need to bring to your attention that the only way to park a vehicle onto the property is from Washington Street. There is no alternative access to my private property from Mill Plain Blvd. (See attached aerial map of 110 W. 13th Street)

CRC will need to get a permanent easement from the property owner with the Mill Plain access for my property use.

I have attached two photos of both of my properties for you to view. As you can see from the photo there is only one access point to enter onto my property, which is from Washington Street.

B-016-003

Also, I am very concerned that the DEIS has made no mention of security on LRT, (See attachments: Appendix J page J-6, DEIS 3-89, 3-87, 3-194 and 1-5-7), for its riders. Foster Hidden House, 110 W. 13th Street is a registered historic property. I am aware though the news media that vandalism is a problem on LRT routes, especially in Gresham. I am most concerned about patrons of LRT being assaulted. Violence and vandalism on LRT lines needs to be addressed to include a solution in the Final Environment Impact Statement. (See attached news articles)

Sincerely,

William Hidden

2904 E. Evergreen Blvd. • Vancouver, WA 98661 • (360) 906-7121 • Fax (360) 906-0957

B-016-001

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments on the I-5 CRC DEIS.

B-016-002

Following the selection of the LPA in July of 2008, the CRC enlisted the help of community members - residents, business owners, transit-dependent populations and commuters - who had interest in light rail planning to form the Vancouver Working Group (VWG). Following approximately 4 months of coordination, in addition to public open houses and walking tours, the VWG recommended the Washington-Broadway Couplet through downtown Vancouver to C-TRAN and City of Vancouver staff. Per the [VWG report], this alignment was preferred largely because it spread the potential impacts and benefits across two streets, as opposed to concentrating them on a single street. The light rail alignment would travel down the center of both Washington and Broadway, with traffic lanes on either side of the guideway. All access points on Washington or Broadway, including access to 110 W 13th Street, would not be eliminated, but would become right-in-right-out only following construction.

B-016-003

The CRC project is using design strategies that have been proven to reduce the potential for crime at stations and on trains. In addition, CRC has received input from advisory groups, jurisdictions, and the public to design a system that will enhance safety and security. Recommendations include, but are not limited to, locating stations near residential and commercial buildings, controlling pedestrian access to stations through the strategic placement of entrances and exits, fencing, lighting, and landscaping, lighting stations so that all activity is easily visible, and designing a clear line of sight into and out of the station.

The CRC project is working with the City of Vancouver and Portland

Mill Plain station would include space for local buses, providing connections between high-capacity transit and the local bus network.

Exhibit 2.3-18
Downtown Vancouver, Two-Way on Washington Transit Alignment Option



A couplet on Washington and Broadway Streets would route northbound travel on Broadway Street and southbound travel on Washington Street. A replacement river crossing would allow the transit guideway to connect to Broadway as far south as Sixth Street, although it could use Seventh, Eighth, or Ninth Street instead. A supplemental crossing would require the transit guideway to use Seventh, Eighth, or Ninth Street. Light rail would likely run on the left side of the street. Bus rapid transit would run on the right side of the street. One or two lanes of vehicular travel, and left-turn lanes would be next to the transit guideway. On-street parking would be located on blocks without stations.

Exhibit 2.3-19
Downtown Vancouver, Washington-Broadway Couplet Transit Alignment Option



police, C-TRAN and TriMet security to guarantee passenger safety at stations and Park and Ride facilities, as well as on light rail trains. The project team has developed a security plan for the transit component of the project, which outlines a variety of potential safety measures, including, working with local government to develop supportive land-uses near transit stations, enforcing fare payment, installing Closed-Circuit TV (CCTV) at light rail stations, Park & Rides, and on trains, and patrolling stations and trains by Transit security and local police officers. For more information about how safety and security associated with light rail is being addressed in by the CRC project, see Chapter 3 (Section 3.1) of the FEIS.

Exhibit 3.11-21 (page 1 of 2)

Transit Noise Impacts and Potential Mitigation in Northern Vancouver



Exhibit 1-3. Summary of Potential Indirect Effects on Historic Resources

HSID#	Tax Lot	Address	Building Name/Use	Construction Date	Potential Significance	Key Seg. A: Regional Potential Effects	Key Seg. A: Specific Potential Effects	Key Seg. B: Regional Potential Effects	Key Seg. B: Specific Potential Effects	Transit: Broadway-Washington-Bradyway Two-way Washington Potential Effects	Transit: Broadway-Washington-Bradyway Potential Effects	Transit: I-5 Alignment w/ I-5 Street Potential Effects
381	29-133-2480	DRVA	US Bi-Jules	c.1971/1988	NR	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
7	4529000	208 E	Commercial	c.1935	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
8	4529000	507 Cornelia	Commercial/Residential	c.1940	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
21	4790000	500 Main	European style	c.1920	NR Listed	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
10	4790000	515 Washington	Smith Town	c.1968	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
148	3882000	313 E 7 th	Normandy Apartments	c.1925	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
108	3882000	502 E 13 th	Fort Apartments	c.1930	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
11	4790000	114 8 th	Scrolled Building	c.1930	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
13	4790000	117 7 th	Commercial	c.1925	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
16	4790000	814 Main	Stouffer Building	c.1906	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
17	4790000	820-828 Main	Commercial Building	c.1910	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
19	4790000	518 Main	Verucave National Bank	c.1905/1925	CC Listed	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
26	3882000	803 Main	US National Bank	1912	NR Listed	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
37	3882000	1001 Broadway	Spokane Savings & Loan	1934	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
38	5182000	112 7th	Wesleyan Newspaper Exchange	1934-1935	NR Listed	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
39	3882000	102 European	Old Courthouse Building	c.1925	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
23	2604000	801 Main Street	National Bank of Commerce	1942	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
14	4790000	528 W LVF B	Residence	1910	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
36	4710000	101 St 1st St	W. Arthur Fisher House	1913	NR Listed	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access
109	3882000	801 Broadway	Emery Lodge	c.1960	Eligible NR, CC	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	None Visual	Visual Access	Visual Access	Visual Access

Kiggins Bowl terminus option, but would be avoided by all other terminus options.

Transit Alignment Options (with all Alternatives)

OFFSET OR ADJACENT

Neither the offset nor the adjacent transit alignment option across Hayden Island would result in impacts to NRHP-eligible or listed historic resources. Preliminary research has not identified any archaeological sites this portion of the project area.

TWO-WAY WASHINGTON OR WASHINGTON-BROADWAY COUPLET

Neither the two-way Washington nor the Washington-Broadway transit alignment option through downtown Vancouver would result in acquisition related impacts to NRHP-eligible or listed historic resources. Transit guideways and stations could introduce new visual elements to downtown and potentially eliminate parking and access. See Exhibits 3.8-19 and 3.8-20 for potential access impacts to historic resources from the Washington-Broadway couplet as a result alignment would be center running, and would therefore not result in any access impacts to historic resources. There may be some challenges getting to an historic property if a vehicle is traveling on the other side of the transit line. The driver would have to remain on Washington until the opportunity to make a left-hand turn. These impacts could result in an effect to the setting of these resources if not designed appropriately, or if alternate access and parking is not provided.

Exhibit 3.8-19

Potential Access Impacts with Washington-Broadway Couplet and LRT

Address/Description	Access(es) Lost	Alternative Access	Preliminary Finding of Effect ^a
801 Main St	1, to side parking lot (from Broadway)	Yes, from 8th or 9th	No Adverse
102 E Evergreen (Old Columbian Building)	1, to back parking (from Broadway)	Yes, from 11th	No Adverse
Hidden Brick Factory	1, to back parking (from Washington)	Yes, from Mill Plain Blvd	No Adverse
108 W 13th St (a Hidden House)	1, to back parking (from Washington)	Yes, from Mill Plain Blvd	No Adverse
110 W 13th (a Hidden House)	1, to back parking (from Washington)	Yes, from Mill Plain Blvd	No Adverse

Source: Historic Built Environment Technical Report.

^a Potential findings of effect are will be reviewed by the Washington D&MP and Oregon SHPO once the review of eligibility is complete.



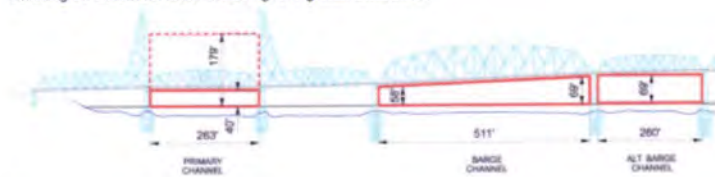


**110 West 13th Street
Foster Hidden House**



**108 West 13th Street
Carriage House**

Exhibit 3.2-3
Existing I-5 Columbia River Crossing Navigation Clearances



Source: CRC Navigation Technical Report 2008. Drawing not to scale.

With the exception of some specialized vessels that use the river infrequently, commercial, cruise and recreational vessels require vertical clearances of less than 90 feet from the surface of the water to the bottom of the bridge deck. The project team, in consultation with the Coast Guard, established a vertical minimum of 95 feet clearance, so that new structures could be built without a lift-span. Higher vertical clearances would have violated restricted airspace for flight navigation.

Exhibit 3.2-4
Summary of Vertical Clearance Requirements and Frequency of Use

Vessel Type	Clearance Requirement	Approximate Annual Frequency
Tugs and Tows	40 feet to 58 feet	> 500 trips
Sailboats/Recreation	76 feet to 88 feet	24 trips
Marine Contractors	100 feet to 110 feet	Infrequent
Marine Industrial	65 feet	6 trips
Cruise/Passenger	50 feet to 60 feet	25 trips

Source: Parsons Brinckerhoff Inc., 2004.

The Coast Guard, which approves construction or alteration of the bridges, has stated that navigation conditions cannot become worse than existing conditions, if the CRC project designs are to receive permitting. They have requested at least a 300-foot navigation clearance between bridge piers, which would require bridge spans of between 400 and 500 feet. For Alternatives 4 and 5, because of seismic retrofits required to the piers of the existing bridges, the primary channel would have an available clearance of only 200 feet. The Coast Guard, as the permitting agency, has stated that piers for all adjacent new structures must align with the piers on the existing I-5 bridges. This would most directly apply to the Supplemental crossing (Alternatives 4 and 5).

Existing Aviation Safety

Two airports are located near the CRC area. Portland International Airport is located about three miles southeast of the project on the Oregon side of the Columbia River. It is the major regional airport and serves large commercial passenger and freight service, private craft, and Air National Guard fleets. Planned expansions include both potential runway extensions and the addition of a new runway.

3.2 Aviation and Navigation

When proposing changes to the river crossing, project staff considered the beneficial or adverse effects of the project on aviation and navigation. Two goals of the CRC project are to minimize hazards to Columbia River navigation and to minimize hazards to air navigation from Pearson Field. However, these goals conflict, as recommended clear heights for river navigation intrude on recommended clear airspace for Pearson Field. Some obstruction of both river and air traffic is inevitable, but the project has worked to balance these two interests fairly.

The information presented in this section is based on analyses found in the Aviation and River Navigation Technical Reports.

3.2.1 Existing River Navigation and Aviation Conditions

Existing River Navigation Safety

The I-5 bridges cross both the main channel of the Columbia River and a channel on the south side of Hayden Island known as North Portland Harbor. Because both channels are designated Federal Navigable Waterways, the U.S. Coast Guard must approve construction or alteration of bridges across either of them. Currently, navigation is limited for both waterways by the I-5 crossing and by a BNSF railroad bridge located about one mile downstream to the west of the I-5 crossing (Exhibit 3.2-1).

Exhibit 3.2-1
I-5 and BNSF Railroad Bridges



Near the CRC area, North Portland Harbor supports marinas of floating homes and primarily non-commercial boats, as shown on the south side of Hayden Island in Exhibit 3.2-1. West of the I-5 crossing, large ocean-

3.6.5 Potential Mitigation Measures

During the planning and design process, the CRC team has attempted to avoid and minimize effects to public services and utilities by modifying alignments where possible and considering access and travel times during construction and operation of the project. This process of minimizing impact will continue as designs are refined.

The project team will continue to work with the local service providers to alleviate concerns about transit projects near schools and other sensitive uses. The transit guideway can be designed in a way that separates it from local traffic, but allows emergency vehicles to cross into the guideway to access emergencies and navigate around local traffic. The project team has contacted the City of Vancouver Fire and Police departments, the Clark County Fire Marshall, the City of Portland Police Bureau and Fire and Rescue, emergency services staff at local hospitals, as well as local schools. Future coordination will focus on identifying potential mitigation measures that would assure safety during construction and operation of the project. See the Public Services Technical Report for more information regarding this coordination.

The displacement of publicly owned facilities, such as the ODOT permit Center, FHWA Western Federal Land building, or WSDOT maintenance facility could be mitigated by functionally replacing the property acquired with another facility that would provide equivalent utility.

If the stacked transit/highway bridge design moves forward, the design team would address the unique fire, life, safety and security concerns associated with operating transit within the structure of the bridge though the type of the structure will be identified in the FEIS. This would include a Safety and Security Management Plan developed in accordance with federal requirements and in close coordination with the transit agencies, the cities of Vancouver and Portland, Clark and Multnomah counties, the ports of Vancouver and Portland, and all associated police and fire departments, during the preliminary and final design, construction and operation of the project. The plan would provide reliable emergency access, develop alternate plans or routes to avoid delays in response times, and institute other features as necessary so that safety and emergency services are not compromised.

The project team would work closely with utility service providers to reduce the number and extent of service outages during construction or relocation activities, and to provide advance notice when such outages might occur. Any utility relocation would occur in accordance with state and federal policy. Detailed Composite Utility Plans that show existing utilities, and propose temporary and permanent utility relocations could be developed after the selection of a locally preferred alternative.

It would be beneficial to the project to develop agreement(s) with affected utility owners for utilities to be relocated, were feasible, prior to the start of the project. It is possible that some of the unavoidable utility relocations may provide the opportunity for substandard infrastructure to be brought up to standard.

than statewide averages for comparable facilities. Incident evaluations generally attribute these crashes to traffic congestion and weaving movements associated with closely spaced interchanges. Without breakdown lanes or shoulders, even minor traffic accidents or stalls cause severe delay or more serious accidents.

- **Substandard bicycle and pedestrian facilities:** The bike/pedestrian lanes on the I-5 Columbia River bridges are 6 to 8 feet wide, narrower than the 10-foot standard, and are located extremely close to traffic lanes, thus impacting safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. Direct pedestrian and bicycle connectivity are poor in the BIA.
- **Seismic vulnerability:** The existing I-5 bridges are located in a seismically active zone. They do not meet current seismic standards and are vulnerable to failure in an earthquake.

1.4 Compliance with SAFETEA-LU

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the five-year period 2005-2009. SAFETEA-LU includes many provisions for USDOT and includes a section (Section 6002) dedicated to the environmental review process.

SAFETEA-LU requires the development of a coordination plan to outline how the CRC project will work with the public, stakeholder groups, and local, state, and federal agencies with an interest in the project. Appendices A and B of this DEIS document how this project has worked with agencies, tribes, and the public to date.

Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU added a new category of participants in major transportation projects that allows state, local and tribal agencies to have a more formal role in the environmental process of these projects. These agencies are called "participating agencies." The CRC project team sent out participating agency invitations in January 2006 to Tribal Governments with an interest in the project area, and to various state and local governments. Nineteen agencies and Tribal Governments accepted the invitation to be participating agencies. These agencies include:

- City of Vancouver
- Clark County Community Development Department
- Clark Public Utilities
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
- Portland Fire & Rescue
- Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement
- Portland Police Bureau
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Portland Parks and Recreation
- Portland Bureau of Water Works

Exhibit 1.3.2
Bicycle and Pedestrian Path



- Portland Bureau of Development Services
- Portland Planning Bureau
- Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
- Portland Development Commission
- Vancouver Housing Authority
- Washington Department of Ecology
- Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

The CRC project has also worked with another group of state and federal agencies that are likely to have permitting or approval authority over one or more elements of this project. This group is referred to as the Interstate Collaborative Environmental Process group, or InterCEP. The InterCEP group has assisted the project in many ways, including identifying applicable environmental information early in the analytical process and providing technical expertise on state and federal regulations, such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Work with InterCEP has increased communication with these agencies, avoided duplication with other federal, state, tribal, and local procedures, and established a mechanism for addressing intergovernmental issues.

On January 25, 2006, the InterCEP Agreement was signed by WSDOT, ODOT, FHWA, FTA and 12 resource agencies from Oregon, Washington, and the federal government. This agreement formally established the InterCEP group, defined obligations of the signatory agencies and the CRC project, and described the process for communication and collaboration within this group.

The following resource agencies signed the InterCEP Agreement:

- National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Washington State Department of Ecology
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
- Oregon Department of State Lands
- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Participating agencies and InterCEP agencies have been given opportunity for formal comment on several important elements of this project:

- Purpose and Need – InterCEP agencies had an opportunity to comment on the Purpose and Need in November and December,

2005, through meetings. The Purpose and Need was sent to the participating agencies in the invitation letter, and discussion was held at a meeting in late January, 2006.

- Methodologies – The CRC project solicited input on the methodologies used to analyze the various environmental effects of each Alternative in the DEIS through the development of Method and Data Reports. All cooperating, participating and InterCEP agencies were integrally involved in developing these reports from March 2006 through October 2006.
- Range of alternatives – The CRC project held several meetings with the InterCEP and participating agencies during the fall of 2006 and winter of 2007 to discuss the range of alternatives to be evaluated in the DEIS.

1.5 Vision and Values

The CRC project co-lead agencies, with the help and recommendation of the CRC Task Force, developed a vision for how to address the CRC's Purpose and Need, and the values they would follow to develop a solution. These values were instrumental in the development of evaluation criteria used during the development of the range of alternatives evaluated in this DEIS (see Section 2.5 for more information on this process).

The following describes the CRC project vision:

The Columbia River Crossing Vision provides the foundation for developing criteria and performance measures that will be used to evaluate the I-5 Bridge Influence Area alternatives. The Columbia River Crossing Project NEPA process will include consideration of: crossing infrastructure; multimodal transportation; connectivity; high capacity transit; land use; funding; community and business interests; under-represented, low income and minority communities; commuter and freight mobility; maritime mobility; and the environment.

Values that have guided this project's development and framed identification and evaluation of alternatives are noted below.

Community Livability

- Supporting a healthy community.
- Supporting a healthy and vibrant land use mix of residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, cultural, and historic areas.
- Supporting aesthetic quality that achieves a regional landmark.
- Recognizing the history of the community surrounding the I-5 bridge influence area, supporting improved community cohesion, and avoiding neighborhood disruption.
- Preserving parks, historic and cultural resources, and green spaces.



The Oregonian

Man bashed with lock at MAX station

Transit - No arrest has been made in the latest incident on the Yellow Line

Saturday, June 21, 2008

WADE NKRUMAH

The Oregonian Staff

TriMet said Friday that it is investigating an assault along its light-rail Yellow Line that left a 47-year-old California man with a cut in the head.

Mary Fetsch, a spokeswoman for TriMet, said Stephen Eckles, of Windsor, Calif., was hit with a U-shaped bicycle lock by an unknown suspect in a seemingly random confrontation about 11:15 p.m. Thursday night. The incident happened at the North Prescott Street MAX station platform.

She said Eckles suffered a minor cut over the left ear and declined transportation to the hospital. He reported the incident to a security guard working under contract for TriMet, Fetsch said.

"The victim was waiting for a southbound train at the Prescott Station when the suspect de-boarded from a train and walked toward the victim, yelling at him," she said.

Eckles described the man as white with blond hair, in his late 20s to early 30s, about 5-foot-10 and 175 pounds. Fetsch said TriMet police are reviewing security camera video to try and identify the suspect.

The incident is the second in the past two weeks at the Prescott Street station involving an assault. On June 9, a 28-year-old white woman from Vancouver on her first light-rail trip said she was attacked by five black teenagers in a racially charged incident in which she was referred to by her race and in profane language.

"We had more security out there, and yet, the six security officers that were out there just happened not to be at that station at that point," Fetsch said of the most recent incident.

Still, Fetsch said, the Yellow Line is not more crime-prone than other parts of TriMet's bus and rail system. "The question is, what do you do?" she said.

"We're looking at stepped-up missions and staffing, looking at having personnel more on the Yellow Line, and looking at how do we deploy our security personnel to respond to these incidents."

Fiscally speaking, she said, it's unrealistic for TriMet to place a security officer on every light-rail train.

"It's prohibitively expensive," Fetsch said. "It's very similar to, do you need a security officer on every corner of every city street?"

"We have a safe system. We still have incidents happen every single day -- a handful every day -- throughout the entire system. How do we move forward given the incidents on the Yellow Line? We're looking to improve and expand on what we're doing so that we can prevent these kinds of things."

Wade Nkrumah: 503-294-7627; wadenkrumah@news.oregonian.com

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Teenager arrested in robberies at Ore. transit stations

6/13/2008, 1:03 p.m. PT

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Portland police have arrested a teenager they think was involved in two robberies at transit stations this week.

The 14-year-old faces robbery and intimidation charges.

In this first incident, police say, five teens punched and robbed a 28-year-old woman from Vancouver, Wash., who was taking her first-ever ride on a MAX light-rail train on Monday.

In the second, a day later, the mother of a teenager called police to report that her child had been robbed at gunpoint at a bus stop.

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The Oregonian

North Portland MAX attack renews fear, safety worries Teens' assault of a Vancouver woman raises concerns of more trouble to come this summer

Friday, June 13, 2008

DYLAN RIVERA
The Oregonian

An assault by five teenagers on a North Portland MAX train this week revived worries about mass transit safety since several high-profile incidents last winter.

Teenage boys and girls punched, used racial epithets and stole the purse of a 28-year-old Vancouver woman who was taking her first-ever MAX ride early Monday evening. The woman, who is white, had just had a conversation with the teens, who are African American and were harassing another woman, according to Portland police.

"It was completely traumatizing and absolutely horrifying for me," said the Vancouver woman, who did not want to be identified for fear of retaliation. "It seemed like forever."

The attack renewed calls for more security on the region's light-rail system. And it raised warnings that the close of the school year this week could be the beginning of a summer of criminal activity by some teenagers.

News of the woman's assault on the MAX Yellow Line, on North Interstate Avenue, triggered quick association with a November attack at a Gresham MAX stop that sparked regionwide outrage. A 16-year-old boy on Thursday was sentenced to 9½ years in prison for that attack, in which he used a baseball bat to bludgeon a man, then 71.

Weeks after the beating, a 19-year-old man was stabbed in the chest at the Rockwood Transit Center, and on Christmas Eve a woman was groped at a MAX stop in Gresham.

The timing couldn't be worse. Motorists in Portland and nationwide are turning to mass transit in record numbers -- May ridership was up more than 4 percent -- to avoid high gas prices. And with two new rail services under construction -- and extensions to Vancouver and Milwaukie in the planning stages -- fear of crime threatens to stymie rail expansion.

Sam Schwarz, vice president of the Amalgamated Transit Union chapter that represents TriMet drivers, said the agency needs to hire more fare inspectors and supervisors who enforce rules of conduct on trains and buses.

"By enforcing the law and the TriMet codes, they would probably reduce the incidents," Schwarz said. "The drivers and the transit workers don't feel 100 percent safe."

TriMet employees usually suffer more harassment from teens during summer, Schwarz said.

Yet it is the public's perception of risk -- and TriMet's manner of dealing with the incidents -- that was brought to the fore by this week's attack on the Vancouver woman.

Mary Fetsch, a TriMet spokeswoman, said the agency responded by beefing up patrols by transit police.

fare inspectors and supervisors in the area.

"Unfortunately, we will never be able to prevent all incidents," Fetsch said. "We move over 330,000 people a day on our entire transit system. So what we watch for is, what's happening? Do we need to put additional security personnel and presence at a certain location?"

The November beating in Gresham had sparked cries for greater police presence throughout the MAX system. The agency has grown its transit police force from 28 officers to 41, and plans to hire two more by July 1. It added two transit police precincts, contract security guards, closed-circuit TV cameras and improved lighting and sight lines at MAX platforms. It also changed its policies to allow 50 uniformed supervisors who ride MAX trains to check for fares.

TriMet has also contracted with rider advocates, former gang members who work with youth to prevent gang activity on the MAX system.

Police said they have arrested four youths ages 14 to 16 suspected in the Monday assault. A fifth teenager is still at large, and officials released security camera video of the incident in hopes that the public can help identify the thin, 5-foot-6 suspect wearing light-colored clothing and going by the name Adrian.

Police said the teens initially called the Vancouver woman racially derogatory names. Then, as the train approached a station at North Interstate Avenue and North Prescott Street, they started punching her, police said.

The woman said a boy stole her purse and ran from the train after it stopped. A mix of boys and girls repeatedly punched her, and some girls hit her with purses. She said she also was hit with a can of beer.

She said the attack escalated when the group turned on her while harassing another, older woman, who had asked the teens to tone down their act. There was no transit security on the train, she said.

"I did not intervene," the Vancouver woman said, adding that she had tried to ignore them. "They got in my face."

"Finally, I just said, 'I don't care what color you are, if I want you out of my face, I'd tell you to get out of my face.'"

That's when the teens got physical. She said she tried to fight back but was punched and stepped on.

"Then they took my purse, and then they ran out" of the train, she said. "And then I was standing at the door, on the phone with 9-1-1 because nobody would call."

The four teens are accused of robbery, assault and intimidation. The intimidation count stems from the alleged racial comments, said Sgt. Brian Schmutz, a police spokesman.

Fetsch, the TriMet spokeswoman, said the train operator alerted transit dispatchers that there was a fight on board the train and to call police.

Aimee Green, Wade Nkrumah and Joseph Rose of The Oregonian staff contributed to this report. Dylan Rivera: 503-221-8532; dylannrivera@news.oregonian.com

June 12, 2008 - Portland, Oregon

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**TEMPORARY DUMPSTERS
MAKING HOME
IMPROVEMENTS EASY**

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NOW**

Teens beat up and rob first-time MAX rider in North Portland



Story Published Jun 12, 2008 at 9:01 AM PDT
Story Updated Jun 12, 2008 at 10:25 AM PDT

By KATU Web Staff

PORTLAND, Ore. - A woman who was defending another transit rider from harassment was attacked and robbed by a group of teens Wednesday evening according to police who are still looking for one suspect in the case.

Police say the victim, a 28-year-old woman and single mother, was riding the North Portland MAX line for the first time at about 6:45 p.m. when she saw a group of teens verbally harassing an older rider.

When the woman moved to intervene, police say the group turned on her, beat her up and stole her purse.

When the train stopped, some of the suspects left the train but others continued to attack the woman.

According to a press release by Portland police, North Precinct officers arrested 14-year-old Nigel McKenzie, 15-year-old Akeem Oliver, 15-year-old Angela Dow and 15-year-old Tiyana Clay on one count each of robbery in the second degree, assault in the third degree and intimidation in the first degree.

Charges against Akeem Oliver were dropped on Thursday. Police also said that Dow and Clay will be prosecuted as adults.

Investigators are still looking for one suspect, another teen reportedly named Adrian, who was seen on security video running from the station with the victim's purse.

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Police are looking for the person on the right who ran from the train with the woman's purse.

keep you safe.
www.secureselfdefense.com

He is described as a 14-16 year old black male using the name "Adrian." He was wearing light colored clothing, is approximately 5 foot 9 inches tall and has a thin build.

The victim, who asked not to be identified, suffered a small cut to her face but later went to the hospital after the incident complaining of severe head pain.

Her condition has not been released.

The brother of the victim told KATU News, that no one on the train came to the assistance of his sister. He said that if others had joined his sister's side, they could have faced down the group of teens.

"It's the saddest thing," Jordan Walbridge said, "when you stand up for someone and in return, nothing."

Walbridge said he would like to see more security on the trains, especially with ridership increasing due to gas prices.

also said that it was probably his sisters first and last time riding the light rail system.

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Nearly 10-year sentence for teen in MAX stop beating

Posted by [mhaberman](#) June 12, 2008 11:24AM

A 15-year-old boy who bludgeoned a 71-year-old man bloody and unconscious at a Gresham MAX stop last year was sentenced to 9½ years in prison this morning.

Abel Antonio Chavez-Garcia told Judge Eric Bergstrom that he regretted the Nov. 3 attack.

"Nothing I can do about it anymore," said Chavez-Garcia, now 16, baby-faced and bearded. "I regret what I did."

Laurie Lee Chilcote, the man the teen beat, didn't appear in Multnomah County Circuit Court, but prosecutor Don Rees read a letter aloud. In it, Chilcote spoke of his will to recover.

"I do want this immature, uneducated young person to know I am not intimidated by his criminal behavior," the letter stated. "I will recover eventually, but will he?"

Chilcote wrote that he hoped Chavez-Garcia would use his time in youth prison to grow into a responsible adult. "If not, his life will only get worse," wrote Chilcote, now 72. "What a waste."

Chavez-Garcia, who shook his leg and fidgeted with his fingers through parts of the hearing, pleaded guilty to first-degree assault in the November beating. He also pleaded guilty to second-degree robbery for an Oct. 13 incident in which authorities say he assaulted another teen and stole his bandana.

In the November attack, Gresham police said Chilcote was followed by three teens when he left the MAX train at the Gresham Central Transit Center. Chavez-Garcia taunted him by calling him an old man. With the others watching, Chavez-Garcia beat him, even after he lay motionless on the ground. A detective found Chilcote unconscious at a crosswalk near the station, at Northeast Eighth Street and Kelly Avenue, bleeding from the head.

Nine days after the attack, Chilcote spoke of it from a wheelchair at OHSU. He suffered double vision, and one side of his face was paralyzed. He had trouble hearing, speaking and swallowing.

The attack generated public outrage, not only because of its violent nature, but because of concerns over safety on MAX trains. At the time, Gresham was the only city along the MAX line that didn't have surveillance cameras. TriMet has since installed some cameras.

In this case, the attack happened about 9:30 p.m. on a Saturday night and there were witnesses around. A fellow passenger dialed 9-1-1. Chavez-Garcia was spotted and arrested a few blocks away.

Chavez-Garcia's attorney, Gary Bertoni, said his client had a troubled upbringing.

"People ask 'Why did this happen?' . . . Was he just acting big in front of his friends?" Bertoni said.

Bertoni said showing off may have had something to do with it, but he also thinks alcohol and his client's borderline low IQ contributed.

birdmangriff says...

I don't want to seem like my comments involve "hate"...far from it. They revolve solely around protecting meone else. I don't care if they are black, white, red, yellow, green, brown, blue (you get the idea).

Posted on 06/12/08 at 6:20PM

MastersQuill says...

I couldn't help but notice that no one is calling this a Hate Crime. Apparently Hate Crimes are only those committed by whites against other skin colors. My feeling about Hate Crimes is that any brutal attack like this is cloaked in hate.

Actually, unless we talk with the child, we will never know why he did it. The fact is...he beat and almost killed an innocent, unprotected elderly man and must suffer some consequence. As for deportation, I fully agree with another comment...he should be deported now. We can't solve the world's problems but we can deal with this one correctly.

Posted on 06/14/08 at 1:14PM

karstenpdx says...

Why all the immigrant bashing? LOTS of vicious criminals have been hatched right here in the Good Ol' US of A. Banning all immigration would have stopped this one jerk from coming here, but so would banning all births. Or incarcerating all boys between the ages of 13 and 21 just as a precaution. Banning immigration would punish vast numbers of innocent people and would demolish our agricultural, carpet and meat packing industries.

As to deporting the animal rather than jailing him: first, he'd be right back in the US in no time at all, so the public woud not be protected. And second, he deserves punishment, which deportation would not provide. In fact, he deserves 30 years in jail--ie, his entire youth.

Finally, to Masters Quill: if the little monster had given any indication that his crime was motivated by race (for example, calling the victim "dirty white ***"), he would have been charged with a hate crime. The law does work both ways. And no, not all hateful violence is a "hate crime".

Posted on 06/15/08 at 12:35AM

shaznasty says...

Once again in greater Portland the jail staff and the courts failed to notify INS that they had an illegal in custody allowing this guy and his ilk to keep offending..Los Angeles County has a team that continually checks incoming inmates and if he's suspected of being an illegal immigrant , INS is advised and a hold is placed..in fact INS has staff at the Central Jail ..

I can see no reason why this can't be done there..except lately I read that the Sheriffs who run the jails are too busy elsewhere...

Posted on 06/15/08 at 1:41PM

pjbalaska says...

I'm familiar with many towns, in Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada. Most of these kinds of stories, and other senseless crimes, involve illegal aliens or their anchor babies. We've got to get a handle on this invading, violent alien culture making its way into our country. This kid is....a kid. He didn't come here by himself. ICE should gather up his entire family and send them home.

Posted on 06/15/08 at 6:21PM

cowboysrule says...

Blaming things on his 'upbringing'. What a joke of a human. Take responsibility for what you do and stop acting like an idiot.

Posted on 06/16/08 at 5:36PM

Footer

TriMet, Gresham plan for 10 more MAX cops

Posted by [jholman](#) February 28, 2008 21:50PM

After months of bickering about safety on the MAX light rail system, [Gresham](#) and [TriMet](#) have agreed on a way to add police to address the problem.

By April 1, they will create an eastside precinct of TriMet's Transit Police Division, to be based in Gresham. Initially, it will have six officers but will grow to 10 by July 1. The 10 officers, including one supervisor, meet the staffing level that Gresham police have said would help end what they call a culture of lawlessness on the light-rail system.

"I'm excited that we got to the number that the professionals are telling us we need to be," [Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis](#) said. "We'll continue to look at it and make sure we're producing results the public wants us to produce."

Bemis ordered two of his city's officers to patrol MAX trains in Gresham in November, the same week a brutal beating at a Gresham transit station raised public concern over safety on light-rail trains. Several other incidents since then, and scrutiny from the Legislature and other suburban cities, have kept pressure on TriMet to address security on light rail.

For complete coverage, see Friday's Oregonian.

-- [Dylan Rivera](#); dylanrivera@news.oregonian.com

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [East Multnomah County](#)

Comments

Footer

Previous stories: TriMet adds security on westside MAX

Posted by [jcasey](#) January 14, 2008 17:47PM

*From The Oregonian of Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2007 -- **TriMet may add 5 MAX officers:** In a tentative deal, the transit agency agrees to dedicate police to the west side*

*From The Oregonian of Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2008 -- **Five-person force coming to westside MAX:** The board is expected to set up a special precinct to improve riders' security*

*From The Oregonian of Thursday, Jan. 10, 2008 -- **TriMet works on MAX security:** The board adds westside police, questions eastside enforcement*

*From The Oregonian of Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2007 -- **TriMet may add 5 MAX officers:** In a tentative deal, the transit agency agrees to dedicate police to the west side*
By David R. Anderson

TriMet officials have tentatively agreed to dedicate five police officers to patrol Washington County MAX light rail and other commuter lines, Hillsboro Police Chief Lila Ashenbrenner said.

Details are not final, but the transit agency would assign its five unfilled positions in the Transit Police Division to the west side, she said. It's also unclear when the positions might be filled.

The proposal appears to be responding to county law enforcement officials, who have criticized TriMet for diverting too many officers to downtown Portland and the eastside MAX.

The transit division has money for 36 officers but only has 31 working because of vacancies.

TriMet officials on Monday wouldn't comment on the proposal because it wasn't finalized, said Mary Fetsch, an agency spokeswoman. General Manager Fred Hansen said Friday that he is committed to improving security on the westside MAX.

"Having a focused police presence on the west side is very important," Hansen said.

In a speech to the City Club of Portland, Hansen proposed a 10 percent increase to the annual transit police budget of \$5.2 million. That appears to be a separate proposal from the designated westside officers.

Beaverton Police Chief David Bishop has suggested a separate westside transit division of 12 officers, paid for by TriMet. He first suggested the idea in a letter to TriMet on Nov. 1, days before a pair of attacks at Gresham MAX stations that have added urgency to the discussions.

On Monday, Bishop said he had not heard of TriMet's plan for five more officers on the west side. But he said he considered it "seed money" and a "good show of faith."

"If it's four or five, that would be the beginning," Bishop said.

Local agencies, including Beaverton, Hillsboro, Tigard, Tualatin and sheriff's offices in Washington County and Clackamas County could supplement the five officers with additional officers they pay for, Bishop said.

Ashenbrenner credited TriMet for responding to local concerns.

"This is certainly a good-faith start to get us where we want to be," Ashenbrenner said. "It looks promising. Now it's in the fine details."

That will include who supervises the unit. Ashenbrenner said the five-officer detachment would act as a westside precinct, under the existing command structure. But Bishop has said he wants the unit supervised by local commanders, while still cooperating with the current transit division.

From The Oregonian of Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2008 -- **Five-person force coming to westside MAX:** The board is expected to set up a special precinct to improve riders' security
By Dylan Rivera

Reacting to the growing perception that MAX train security is lax, the TriMet board today appears poised to establish a westside precinct of the transit police force, filling five officer vacancies in an effort to assure rider safety.

The officers --two each from Hillsboro and Beaverton, and one from Washington County --would spend most of their time on MAX light-rail trains and transit stations west of the Oregon Zoo station. They could begin work by the end of the month.

The added police would signal not just a boost in security but also a new level of collaboration among suburban communities and a TriMet that could change the look and feel of the light-rail system.

Stung by a stabbing and a beating at light-rail stations in November, TriMet is attempting to win over police agencies that have for years been critical of its handling of security. Over the next two years, the agency plans to add nine more officers on top of the westside effort.

It hopes to add an eastside precinct as well in coming months. More fare inspectors have been added and better lighting at transit stops has already have been implemented.

The westside precinct represents a compromise between a Washington County effort to break away from TriMet with its own transit police force and TriMet's belief that transit police should be handled by a single regional agency.

"I think it's a beginning," said Beaverton Police Chief David Bishop. "It's certainly going to be an enhancement to what we've had."

The move comes as TriMet is under fire. A 41-year old woman went to news media Tuesday to say that she had been sexually abused Dec. 24 at a Gresham MAX station and complain that neither TriMet nor Portland or Gresham police had warned the public about the attack.

Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis said the attack shows that TriMet needs to send its police attention eastward as well as to the west.

"The most recent violent attack on Christmas Eve reiterates that the line isn't safe," Bemis said. "These issues aren't happening on the west side. Why they'd be putting a westside precinct ahead of an eastside precinct to me is questionable."

The new officers represent the first of three planned increases in the number of officers in the Transit Police Division. The westside precinct would fill five vacancies, bringing the total number of officers to 36. TriMet plans to build the force to 44 by 2010, when the MAX Green Line opens along Interstate 205 in Clackamas County.

The vacancies had gone unfilled because of local police staffing shortages and also because some suburban agencies did not want to be part of TriMet's regional policing effort. TriMet pays the police salaries, and had budgeted for 36 officers this year.

Before the current precinct effort, Hillsboro police had initiated their own patrols and declined to contribute officers to the transit police.

TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen has said publicly that he wants to consider an eastside precinct as well. He said Monday that he hopes to establish one in coming weeks or "a month and a half at the longest."

It was unclear why exactly the effort for a precinct got started on the westside rather than in the Gresham area.

But pressure from westside police agencies to break away from TriMet galvanized the transit agency. At a safety summit in November in Hillsboro, Beaverton's Bishop explained the dissatisfaction police felt with TriMet and their perception that police they contribute are sent elsewhere in the TriMet system.

"I really expressed very strongly, we didn't want to see that balkanization," Hansen said. "Those were the beginning positions . . . so what we did is find common ground rather than battleground."

Hansen credited Hillsboro Police Chief Lila Ashenbrenner with easing the talks, offering up the idea of a precinct as a compromise and suggesting vacant office space her department has in the Tanasbourne area.

Police vacancies in the contributing agencies could take as long as a year to fill, said Chris Skinner, deputy chief of Hillsboro Police.

"Definitely, it is a sacrifice for us to do that, no doubt about it," said Skinner. "We're going to pull those two positions from our existing staffing. The good news is, with the funding from TriMet we'll be able to replace them down the road."

Rick Van Beveren, who represents Washington County on the TriMet board and helped negotiate the pilot precinct, said the new precinct should boost the police presence on the entire system.

"This was one way of freeing resources to be devoted on the east side," he said. "What we're saying is we're going to take care of the west side so you can deploy resources as needed elsewhere."

From The Oregonian of Thursday, Jan. 10, 2008 -- **TriMet works on MAX security:** The board adds westside police, questions eastside enforcement
By Brad Schmidt and Dylan Rivera

As TriMet vowed to increase the presence of police on westside MAX rail lines, the transit agency struggled Wednesday to establish its level of commitment to enforcement on lines east of the Willamette River and its policy for sharing news of violent crime.

Prodding questions from TriMet's board to the agency's staff came days after a 41-year-old woman told of being sexually assaulted at a Gresham MAX stop and complained that it went publicly unreported for two weeks. TriMet's police division arrested 28-year-old Mario Santiago-Montelongo following the Christmas Eve incident, the third high-profile transit attack in Gresham since November.

Although officers from TriMet and the Gresham Police Department responded quickly to the incident, neither agency notified the public in the coming weeks, spreading confusion about who should take responsibility and raising questions Wednesday about where such responsibility should lie.

Lynn Lehrbach, a new TriMet board member representing east Multnomah County, suggested the board delay its westside project until an eastside precinct is established. George Richardson, who represents Northeast Portland, shared similar concerns.

"I hope we're letting the public know we're addressing issues on the east side as well," Richardson said. "The public will say, 'What about the east side?'"

But the five-member TriMet board approved the hiring of five additional police officers --two from Beaverton, two from Hillsboro and one from Washington County --who will form a westside precinct to begin operating late this month or in early February.

On Monday, Gresham Police Chief Carla Piluso and TriMet officials are expected to discuss planning for an eastside precinct. In November, a 71-year-old man was beaten with a baseball bat and a 19-year-old was stabbed, both after riding MAX trains through the city.

TriMet clarified its policy on news dissemination for high-profile transit crime. TriMet spokeswoman Mary Fetsch said it is the responsibility of law enforcement in the jurisdiction where crime occurs to notify the public, even if TriMet's police force is the primary agency responding.

The Christmas Eve incident involved Gresham police, transit police --which are funded by TriMet but are directed by the Portland Police Bureau --and later Portland investigators. Piluso said her department did not drop the ball but vowed to work with TriMet to keep the public informed.

"We need to get a communication link going to clarify that," she said.

Federal immigration authorities on Wednesday placed a hold on Santiago-Montelongo, lodged at Inverness Jail pending trial for a sex-abuse criminal charge.

The woman reiterated her frustration with how authorities released information. The Oregonian does not name victims of sexual assault, but in an interview Wednesday, the Portland resident expressed new disdain for the lack of contact she's received from TriMet.

"They haven't even called to ask me if I'm OK," she said. "There was not a single, 'How are you doing? Sorry. We're trying.' Nothing. ..."

"The people who are getting hurt, I can assure you that we have ideas about how to make our transit system safer," she added. "But (TriMet officials) haven't called."

TriMet's Fetsch said the agency has not contacted the woman because she is the victim of an alleged sexual assault and her identity and contact information are protected. Fetsch noted that the district attorney assigned to the case, whose salary is paid by TriMet, has been in near-daily contact with the woman and that she could pass safety suggestions to him.

For the westside precinct -- a one-year pilot project -- office space has been found by the Hillsboro Police Department and equipment has been ordered, said board member Rick Van Beveren.

"This could be a model for an eastside precinct," said Van Beveren, who represents Washington County. "I think it's a great start."

Categories: [Breaking News](#)

Comments

Footer

Christmas Eve attack on woman adds to MAX line crime woes

Posted by [amcaunier](#) January 08, 2008 14:46PM

A 41-year-old woman says she was sexually abused at a Gresham MAX platform on Christmas Eve, the third transit-related attack in the city since November.

The reported abuse happened about 8:30 p.m. at 181st Avenue and East Burnside Street, after the Portland resident left a holiday gathering in Gresham. According to Multnomah County court documents, a man approached her on the platform, asked for a cigarette, then grabbed and restrained the woman while reaching under her clothing and groping her chest.

The victim says she screamed, "No!" at her attacker and kicked him in the shin until he let go. She called 9-1-1, and police responded as the suspect was leaving.

Mario Santiago-Montelongo, 28, has been charged with first-degree sexual abuse, a Measure 11 crime carrying a mandatory prison term. He is being held at the county's Inverness Jail on \$250,000 bail. Deputy District Attorney John Copic said federal authorities also are investigating Santiago-Montelongo's immigration status.

The Oregonian does not identify sexual abuse victims. The woman spoke with the newspaper today, more than two weeks after the incident, after she took the unusual step of contacting media when neither TriMet nor police agencies released information.

"No security, nobody came to my rescue," the woman said. "I was making so much noise. ... I want women to be more aware that they need to be careful."

The woman added that TriMet and local politicians are not doing enough to keep the MAX line safe. "You get these citizens protected," she said.

In December 2006, 19-year-old Javier Arteaga was stabbed to death by an 18-year-old at a Gresham transit station.

In 2007, Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis announced Nov. 2 that police would begin patrolling MAX in the city because coverage by TriMet's Transit Police Division was inadequate. The next day, a 71-year-old Sandy man was beaten with a baseball bat after he got of a MAX train near downtown Gresham.

Then on Nov. 29, a 19-year-old man was stabbed in the chest after getting of a MAX train at the Rockwood/East 188th Avenue station.

In response, TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen for the first time began publicly acknowledging security problems during safety summits. TriMet has committed to increase the number of uniformed Transit Police and private security officers. The transit agency also is making changes at MAX platforms, including better lighting and security cameras, the latter of which is scheduled for installation at the 181st platform this year.

No additional measures are planned because of the Christmas Eve incident.

"We already know there are safety issues, and we're addressing them," TriMet spokeswoman Mary Fetsch said today. "Unfortunately those steps didn't prevent this assault."

-- Brad Schmidt; bradschmidt@news.oregonian.com

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [East Multnomah County](#), [Portland](#)

Comments

hackian says...

anybody notice that all this happens in Gresham, and far far out NE portland? this isnt a max problem, it is a crappy part of town problem. Gresham is a horrible place, this has nothing to do with the max. blame gresham not the max!

Posted on 01/08/08 at 3:48PM
Footer

"Quality of life crimes" keep riders off MAX, police say

Posted by [jholman](#) November 29, 2007 18:53PM

The challenge of riding a MAX train is not so much that you might be attacked but that you might feel unsafe or even threatened - at least that's the consensus of law enforcement experts.

Menacing behavior and disorderly conduct are more persistent public safety concerns on the region's light rail system than the threat of violence on board, Gresham leaders and Portland police officials told the [TriMet](#) transit agency Thursday.

But there are too few police officers on the light rail system to deter or interrupt threatening behavior that make families feel unsafe riding the system, Gresham Chief Carla Piluso said. "Those quality of life crimes that are keeping people off the trains," Piluso said. "We've had a steep increase in complaints about that in the last 18 months."

([Click here for an interactive map](#) showing MAX stops and crimes reported by TriMet.)

The concerns came up at the first of two safety summits organized by TriMet in response to the beating of a 71-year-old man at a Gresham transit center. A second summit in Hillsboro is set for today and a third in Clackamas County is being planned in coming weeks.

While the meetings were set to hear concerns about violence, police on Thursday were quick to insist that violent offenses are not the main problem on the transit system.

When transit riders dial 9-1-1, they get a quick response from either local police or the centralized transit police, said Piluso and Portland Chief Rosie Sizer.

And while the purported purpose of Thursday's meeting was to hear east Multnomah County concerns, Portland Chief Sizer and her staff weighed in at the meeting as much as Gresham officials and Multnomah County Sheriff Bernie Giusto, who also serves on the board that governs TriMet.

Mike Crebs, East Precinct Commander for the Portland Police Bureau, said the main safety issue is "people being obnoxious and loud and yelling" and making other riders feel uncomfortable.

"If they ask them to be quiet, the rider gets slapped or hit," Crebs said. "It isn't like people are being stabbed all the time ... People are confined on that system and they paid a ticket to get on there and they have a right to ride that in peace."

The two hour meeting laid bare many complaints police and Gresham officials have with the way security is conducted by the transit agency, especially on TriMet's light rail cars, where train operators are more isolated from riders than drivers are on buses.

The meeting raised a range of problems, questions and potential solutions.

Several police officials said they wanted a more frequent police presence - in uniform and undercover - to deter criminals from riding the transit system. But the region's police departments struggle with inadequate

funding for officers, said Donna Henderson, who heads the transit police operation. And when they have money, they struggle to lure qualified candidates into the profession: The Portland Police Bureau has 50 vacancies.

When transit police officers respond to incidents and make arrests, it can diminish the time they spend patrolling railcars. Sizer suggested a trade off: Transit police could focus on patrolling light rail cars, if local police agree to make arrests.

Gresham Police Capt. Tim Gerkman said suburban police agencies would want some assurance that patrols would grow beyond the six officers on duty during day shifts. As many as 40 railcars operate during rush hours.

Could increased enforcement of fare payment help discourage misbehavior? TriMet and Gresham have said they will experiment by enclosing a rail station so that proof of payment is required to enter.

TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen said he heard reports that drug dealers were sure to pay fares to avoid being caught by law enforcement. But police in the room said fare evaders are more likely to cause trouble on the transit system.

"The ones that are giving the community problems aren't paying their fares," Henderson said.

Could a code of conduct - beyond no smoking or skateboarding at transit stops - discourage menacing behavior? Could it ban bad behavior without violating protected free speech rights, or discriminating against minorities and teenagers?

When officers write tickets intending to ban a violator from the transit system, the accused can get right back on the train or bus, because they have 10 days to appeal. Hansen said he would look into the legality of more swift bans.

Gerkman and Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis insisted that the Gresham-area's older transit stations be retrofitted to have more lights, fewer hiding places for criminals and fewer gathering places for rowdy teenagers. Hansen said the agency would work on retrofits.

Giusto and Sizer both urged all agencies to stick with a united system, saying it would be more efficient than having each city patrol its section of the regional transit system on its own. Washington County officials have said they are considering their own transit police agency.

Gresham officials have been outspoken in recent weeks about their dissatisfaction with public safety on the MAX.

But apparently for the first time Thursday, Portland's Sizer told Hansen in public that TriMet had been in denial about safety concerns until recent weeks.

"There's been a lot of denial in terms of any crime issues on the transit system for a long time," Sizer said. "It's created a dynamic where people feel like they have to speak louder and almost be obscene to be heard. It's almost been about marketing."

- Dylan Rivera

dylanrivera@news.oregonian.com

Brad Schmidt of The Oregonian staff contributed to this report.

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [East Multnomah County](#), [Washington County](#)

Comments

cdion555 says...

Here's the Gig. In San Diego we have the opposite as Max in Portland. Max invested in a lot of high tech cameras on every train, and even at most of the Max stations. In San Diego none of the trains have any cameras, neither do most of the stations. (Although I wish we did!)

What we have here in San Diego is a LARGE force of transit police constantly riding the trains and patrolling the platforms. This seems to work very well considering our neighborhoods are a lot rougher than anything Portland has (Yet).

A lot more transit police would solve the whole problem and just a 3-4 dollar per month increase in the monthly pass would pay for it. I think most riders wouldn't mind the additional fare increase - especially if they knew they could ride in safety and they were really getting something for their money.

FM

Posted on 11/29/07 at 8:02PM

leftybch says...

.....It's all about these characters covering their ass while the riders suffer the vermin that free load and hassle decent people. Another meeting to discuss things 3 weeks from now ? Typical manure from those feeding at the public trough. Isn't there someone being paid by the public that has the balls to step up and start cracking heads ? To wit.....NO.

Posted on 11/29/07 at 10:39PM

Gewzeppi says...

See how many Tri-Met bigwigs actually ride Max or a bus every day ...

Posted on 11/30/07 at 1:51AM

BadBoyBrown2 says...

It's very clear that the TriMet management and Board have been a lot more interested in expanding their light rail "empire" than dealing with routine, but important matters such as public safety, fare collections, and keeping pass machines operating.

Just last week, my girlfreind attended a major state agency meeting at the Oregon Convention Center. Though she had a pass to ride the MAX, the fare pass machines on BOTH SIDES of the tracks were not

03013

35 of 44

operating. How does one pay their fare when the machines don't even operate. This is inexcusable. Maybe it's time to put some real public heat on the TriMet Manager and the Board until public safety on MAX gets turned around.

Posted on 12/02/07 at 1:55PM

Footer

Police have busy night on Westside MAX

Posted by [rgregory](#) November 09, 2007 16:25PM

BEAVERTON -- Beaverton police made a series of arrests on [TriMet](#) buses and trains Thursday night, citing people for offenses ranging from public indecency to hurling obscenities at other passengers to possession of methamphetamine.

One of the persons arrested had to be subdued with a Taser, police said. The four cases occurred within a 24-hour period, said Sgt. Paul Wandell, a Beaverton police spokesman.

The first incident took place at 3:50 p.m. at the Beaverton Creek MAX Station. Two women called 9-1-1 to report that a man at the station shouted profanities at them, Wandell said.

Police arrested Jeremy Keith Bufton, 26, of Aloha on accusations of second-degree disorderly conduct and unlawful possession of methamphetamine, after police found two baggies of the drug on him, Wandell said.

About a half-hour later, police were dispatched to the Beaverton Transit Center for a report of an intoxicated man shouting obscenities at MAX passengers.

Police arrested Brian Ray Lankford, 39, whom Wandell described as a transient, on allegations of interfering with public transportation.

At 9:33 p.m., police returned to the Beaverton Transit Center, this time with a complaint from a bus driver that Christopher Lee Ragland, 35, of Hillsboro boarded her bus and wanted to be taken home immediately. Ragland had no ticket, the driver told police, and began shouting at passengers.

He was ordered off the bus by police officers, who had to use a Taser stun gun to persuade him to comply. Ragland, like the previous two, was taken to the Washington County Jail, where he was held on accusations of interfering with public transportation and second-degree disorderly conduct.

Beaverton police went to the transit center a third time at 5:34 a.m. Friday with a report of a man exposing himself on a bus carrying about 30 passengers.

Wandell said Justin Michael Krell, 30, whom police described as a transient, was accused of public indecency, interfering with public transportation and second-degree disorderly conduct and jailed.

--John Snell; johmsnell@news.oregonian.com

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [Washington County](#)

Comments

joe12pack says...

"Police arrested Jeremy Keith Bufton, 26, of Aloha on accusations of second-degree disorderly conduct and

unlawful possession of methamphetamine, after police found two baggies of the drug on him, Wandell said."

Unlawful possession of methamphetamine? Is there such a thing as lawful possession?

Posted on 11/09/07 at 6:55PM

ghudavid says...

Well Beaverton is doing it,Gresham is doing it, Where is Rosies's Raiders and the Tri-Met "SECURITY"

Posted on 11/10/07 at 3:51AM

luke2duis says...

Trimet Insecurity!

Posted on 11/10/07 at 7:54AM

Layne says...

"...hurling obscenities at other passengers..."

"Two women called 9-1-1 to report that a man at the station shouted profanities at them, Wandell said."

This is funny coming from cops who swore oaths to support the people's exercise of their liberties, including free speech.

Here the rest of the story begs to be told, but likely never will. Like if these "Two women" provoked the guy.

Posted on 11/10/07 at 10:46AM

marksp8 says...

I ride the MAX everyday and it seems that the "MAX Inspectors" only concentrate their efforts in the nicer areas. Why is that? Maybe they don't want to be in harm's way? Or maybe if they issue citations in the rougher areas nobody there will pay anyway so why bother? Or maybe both reasons.

If they don't get control of the crime and unsafe conditions, this will quicly spin out of control.

"About to give up on MAX"

Posted on 11/10/07 at 11:48AM

kintropy says...

03013

38 of 44

Four MAX security people were hanging around the Hawthorne Farms stop Friday night. It was the first night I had seen them out in such high numbers in one spot, and I saw several more on my way to the airport. Maybe all the press is helping push for more security activity?

Posted on 11/10/07 at 9:19PM

Footer

Three teens indicted in Milwaukie beating of homeless man

Posted by [jrose](#) August 25, 2007 13:15PM

A Clackamas County grand jury has indicted three teenagers suspected of viciously beating a homeless man at Milwaukie's [Jefferson Street boat ramp](#) on Aug. 1.

On Friday, Samuel Earl Morton, 19, a transient; Shawn Glancy, 16, of Portland; and Rauno Helmik, 17, of Gresham were indicted on charges of first-degree assault and attempted murder in the beating of 43-year-old Andrew Gonzalez. Morton, who was arrested Aug. 17, was also indicted on a charge of unlawful use of a weapon.

Glancy and Helmik, were arrested Thursday and will be formally charged as adults, police said. The pair are in custody at the Donald E. Long Juvenile Detention Center. Morton is being held at Clackamas County jail in lieu of \$250,000 bail.

Police were first called to an area north of the Jefferson Street boat ramp at about 1:35 a.m. Aug. 1. When they arrived, they found a badly beaten man in a rocky area by the Willamette River. He was taken to OHSU Hospital with serious head and hand injuries.

Gonzalez told investigators that he had met three young men earlier in the evening and at some point they assaulted him. He underwent surgery and was released a few days later.

A motive in the assault is still not known. "I'm sure that will probably come out during trial," said Officer Kevin Krebs, a Milwaukie police spokesman. Media reports of the beating led to tips that helped police find the three suspects, who were known to hang around a nearby TriMet transit station, Krebs said.

Categories: [Breaking News](#)

Comments

TheTruth4All says...

It's disgusting and shameful what these three have done to Andrew Gonzalez. The court system MUST prosecute these individuals to the fullest extent of the law.

And to think, they "befriended" Gonzalez earlier in the day! Cruel, mean and sadistic individuals like these have likely beaten small animals or children smaller than them.

This type of behavior only escalates, and it's clear they have no respect for humankind. One can point to their upbringing and an unsatisfactory home-life, but there is NO EXCUSE for this. Some type of counseling should also be issued.

03013

I hope others feel this way as well, and put their "two cents" in to show we will not accept this. Stand up and protect the future of your community!

Posted on 08/26/07 at 9:58AM

Footer

Obituaries D6 | Editorial: Don't bring guns to school D8 | Breaking news online: Oregonlive.com/news

METRO

311 NOVEMBER 13, 2007

NEWS FROM THE PORTLAND AREA AND THE NORTHWEST

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MAX security 'too late for me'

Safety | "I'm smashed to pieces," says the man beaten at a stop; he has harsh words for the line and his attacker

BY BRAD SCHMIDT
and GOSIA KOZNIACKA
THE OREGONIAN

The 71-year-old man beaten this month at a Gresham MAX platform called his attacker a coward and blamed TriMet for shoddy security on its light-rail system.

Speaking publicly for the first time, Laurie Lee Chilcote rested in a wheel-

chair as he answered questions Monday at OHSU Hospital. He is listed in "good" condition but in reality is far from it.

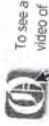
The Sandy resident has double vision; paralysis on one side of his face; and trouble hearing, speaking and swallowing. He said his body hurts from "head to toe." He also will need to relearn to walk.

Since the attack, Chilcote has asked himself what would make a teenager swing a baseball bat at an elderly man, as Gresham police say 15-year-old Abel Antonio Chavez-Garcia did on Nov. 3.

Please see **MAX ATTACK**, Page D5



MICHAEL LLOYD/THE OREGONIAN
Laurie Lee Chilcote, 71, spoke publicly Monday for the first time following his Nov. 3 assault at a Gresham MAX station.



To see a video of Laurie Lee Chilcote talk about the beating he suffered at a Gresham MAX station, go to <http://blog.oregonlive.com/multimedia> and look for the headline "MAX beating victim talks to reporters."

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LLOYD

Rossell's observations in a Sept. attending veterinarian.

MAX attack: Suspect's mom says his friends bad influence

Continued from Page D1

More pressing, Chilcote questions why TriMet did not promote higher safety standards before his beating.

"It's about time," Chilcote said. "It's too late for me. I'm smashed to pieces. It's a noble effort but too late."

Chilcote and his family have hired a lawyer to represent them in possible lawsuits against the city of Gresham and TriMet. Although they refused Monday to talk about specifics, Chilcote shared some of his memories. Attorney Larry Sokol said he hoped some good would result from the senseless beating.

"Instead of spending time and enormous amounts of money thinking about how to expand the (transit) system," Sokol said, "why not spend time and money thinking about how to make the existing system safe?"

Chilcote — a dedicated youth volunteer — said he remembered seeing a teen open his coat before the attack and reveal a weapon, which police later said was a baseball bat.

Chilcote remembers being elbowed as he got off the MAX train at Gresham Central Transit Center. And he said he was "very lucky" that a bystander stopped the beating.

"It all happened so fast, and I couldn't believe it while it was happening," Chilcote said. "What was the point of it? Obviously an attack of that nature is cowardly. It's not the kind of behavior for a young man in the prime of life to be inflicting — whatever his problem hap-

pens to be — on another human being."

Chavez-Garcia is scheduled to appear at 4:30 p.m. today at Donald E. Long juvenile center, said Sgt. Claudio Grandjean, a Gresham Police Department spokesman. A grand jury met Friday and indicted him on charges of attempted murder, first-degree assault, first-degree criminal mischief and unlawful use of a weapon.

Chavez-Garcia is the oldest of four children and has lived in Gresham for 10 years, his mother, Anna Garcia, told The Oregonian in an interview conducted in Spanish on Monday.

Garcia said that her son rode MAX to attend Helensview School, an alternative high school in Northeast Portland, and that teachers were concerned he associated with "cholos," the Spanish word for gangsters.

"We're angry, because here at home he was behaving so well, and it was his friends who were telling him to do things. I told him, 'Leave them.' But he didn't listen to me," Garcia said.

"Before we came here, my mother ... told me, 'Be careful, don't let your son go out on the street, don't let him walk around with people, because things are different there. Bad things happen,'" Garcia said. "And now her warnings came true."

Chilcote hopes to leave the hospital this week and enter a rehabilitation center. The family vows to move forward.

"He's starting to get mad now," sister Caren Topliff said. "Which is good because he'll fight harder."

Said Chilcote, offering humor before being wheeled back to his room: "What a mess. ... It isn't always easy being me."

Brad Schmidt, 503-294-5940;
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METRO

Teens attack 71-year-old by Gresham MAX station

BY ASHBEL S. GREEN
THE OREGONIAN

GRESHAM — A 71-year-old Sandy man was getting off a MAX train Saturday night when three teen boys followed him, one taunting him by "calling him 'old,'" Gresham Police Chief Carla Piluso said Sunday.

One of the teenagers, a 15-year-old suspected gang member, then took the baseball bat he was carrying and bludgeoned the man, police said, sending him to the hospital. Police arrested the youth and booked him on an accusation of attempted murder.

The victim was in stable condition at OHSU Hospital, Piluso said, refusing to name the man or his accused assailant.

Piluso said the incident reinforces Gresham Mayor Shante Bemis' announcement Friday that city police would begin patrolling MAX trains to combat crime.

The attack occurred just before 9:30 p.m. at Northeast Eighth Street and Kelly Avenue.

A fellow passenger called 9-1-1. Another passenger came to the aid of the man but fled when she feared the attacker would come after her, Piluso said.

Police arrested the suspect a few blocks away without incident. "It wasn't as if he fled," Piluso said. "He just left."

The East Multnomah Gang Team and Gresham detectives know the identities of the suspect's friends and will continue to investigate.

Bemis announced that city police officers will begin riding trains starting Wednesday because statistics showed a lot of the city's crime occurs near MAX lines.

Ashbel S. Green
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EDITORIALS

THE OPINION OF THE OREGONIAN EDITORIAL BOARD

It's TriMet's problem, too

Mayor Shane Bemis has done exactly the right thing in deciding to boost police patrols on light-rail trains

We're accustomed to a certain amount of dilly-dallying from local governments. So it can be startling to see how quickly leaders can cut through the typical blather and make a difference when they decide to do something.

Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis, for instance, may soon need the sort of label you find on medication, half in boast, half in warning: "fast-acting." Last Friday, Bemis announced that Gresham police officers would soon begin patrolling light-rail trains.

"It's time to take matters into our own hands," Bemis said. "We're going to . . . protect our citizens so people feel safe riding the system." Clearly, Gresham's mayor is unhappy with the level of security TriMet provides — he took note last Friday of TriMet's failure to realize it has "issues" — but he's also not content to stop at finger-pointing. Bemis realizes Gresham has a problem with mounting gang violence that won't be solved unless Gresham takes the lead.

At a summit Bemis convened last spring, Gresham police said they'd identified 114 gangs in Gresham. Robberies and assaults are both on the upswing. Increasingly, it appears, there's a gang presence on Gresham light-rail trains, too, that is, at the very least, intimidating eastside riders. As The Oregonian's Casey Parks reported Saturday, Gresham statistics show a link between the trains and the city's crime problems, even though the crimes certainly aren't all committed on board MAX. But 84 percent of gang crimes, 40 percent of fights and 42 percent of drug crimes occur within a few blocks of the trains.

As of Wednesday, there'll be a Gresham police presence on



As of Wednesday, there'll be a Gresham police presence on MAX trains.

THE OREGONIAN

MAX, to counterbalance the gangs, and there's good reason to think this will help. Sadly, though, it won't come soon enough for Laurie Chilcote. The 71-year-old Sandy man, known by some as "Grandpa Laurie," depends on light rail to get him to and from his volunteer job in Southeast Portland with the Police Activities League.

He's so dedicated that he took an algebra course just to be-

come a better math tutor for the kids he works with. Not only does Chilcote not drive, but also The Oregonian reported online on Monday that he doesn't even walk too steadily, thanks to a devastating accident 20 years ago. In short, he's the perfect victim for bullies to zero in on, and that's exactly what seems to have happened Saturday night.

It wasn't all that late either, around 9:30 p.m., when Chilcote got off at a Gresham MAX station and was bludgeoned with a baseball bat. As of Monday, he was listed in fair condition.

Chilcote's sister reported that he had previously complained about violence on MAX trains, and was particularly worried about the safety of kids riding them.

Bemis deserves credit for taking action, but TriMet also needs to own up to its share of the problem. It needs to redouble its efforts to crack down on violence and intimidation on the trains. What happened to Chilcote is certainly real enough, but the problem isn't just actual crime; it's a deterioration in the perception of safety for people who are riding light rail.

Bemis has already called one summit. It's TriMet's turn to call the next one. No finger-pointing. No dilly-dallying.