

# FTA leader lauds South Waterfront development

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A federal transportation administrator heaped praise Thursday on Portland's economic development efforts in the South Waterfront.

Yet during an event designed to tout work created by the Obama Administration's stimulus packaged, Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff conceded he wasn't sure exactly how many transportation-related jobs the stimulus created.

"I know that it created thousands of jobs and preserved thousands of jobs," said Rogoff, in town to tour South Waterfront with Portland Mayor Sam Adams and other local officials. "The stimulus itself made another 84 percent available for our programs during a time when other agencies were cutting back on their own investments."

Rogoff visited the Southwest Moody Avenue reconstruction project, which is nearing completion. As he and other leaders spoke, at least ten cranes dotted the background. The cranes are working on projects that will soon fill the banks around the Ross Island Bridge.

The \$51 million Moody work is being backed by \$23 million in Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grants, which come via stimulus funds, from the **U.S. Department of Transportation**. The new street was elevated to 14 feet, to accommodate potential new construction, and will feature three traffic lanes, dual streetcar tracks and a bike path. It's set to be completed in March.

The new Collaborative Life Sciences building, in which **Oregon Health & Science University** and other state universities will play a big part, will sit along Moody Avenue just north of the Ross Island Bridge.

Local leaders hope the work along Moody will energize the South Waterfront, an area where developers continue to build despite spotty results.

Rogoff pointed out that the streetcar work will feature block rails, a component on which the street car rides, built in Bethlehem, Pa.

"This is the first streetcar site to use those new block rails," Rogoff said. "Those haven't been manufactured in the United States in decades."

Rogoff said Obama officials believe Portland can set examples for other places that could add streetcars. Those cities include Atlanta, St. Louis and Washington, D.C.

"It's not just jobs that we're excited about, it's the way you brought about this development," he said, pointing to the new life sciences center site. "Oregon Health & Science University will add thousands of jobs to this space that, before, was abandoned."

Adams and Rogoff were, in a rare appearance, joined by Jay Zidell, owner of **Zidell Marine Corp**. The company has spent \$20 million cleaning up the shoreline property it owns near the South Waterfront district.

The Moody project "is a good example of the work needed for our economic recovery," Zidell said.