

Sam
Adams
Mayor

Tom
Miller
Director

**North Williams Traffic Operations and Safety Project
Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting**
August 2, 2011, 12:00 – 1:30 pm
Legacy Emanuel Hospital, MOB West Conference Room

Meeting Notes

SAC members in attendance

Debora Leopold Hutchins, Sistas Weekend Cyclers, Committee Chair
Allan Rudwick, Neighbor
Irek Wielgosz, King Neighborhood Association
Jana McLellan, Port City Development Center
Karis Stoudamire, Boise Neighborhood Association
Laurie Simpson, Eliot Neighborhood Association
Nathan Roll, Metropolis Cycle Repair
Pamela Weatherspoon, Legacy Emanuel Hospital
Paul Anthony, Humboldt Neighborhood Association
Steve Bozzone, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition
Susan Peithman, Bicycle Transportation Alliance

New SAC members in attendance

Pastor Matt Hennessee, Vancouver Ave. First Baptist Church
Noni Causey
Gahlana Easterly
Michelle DePass
Ken Doswell, Betty Jean Couture
Jazzmin Reece

SAC members absent

Ben Foote, Neighbor
Diana Moosman, MOSI Architecture
Jerrell Waddell, Life Change Christian Center
Jorge Guerra, Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
Jrdn Freeauf, Eddie Murphy Cabinets
Martha McElligot, Jesuit Volunteer Corps

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Shara Alexander, Neighbor
Tom Ancil, Ancil Heating & Cooling (new member)
Mychal Tetteh (new member)
Dwight Terry, Terry Family Funeral Home (new member)

Members of the public in attendance

Donna Harris
Donna Maxey
Chris Yeagers
Ed Abrahamson
Russ Willis, citizen cyclist
Alex Chien, Bicycle Transportation Alliance
Avel Louise Gordly, property owner
Faye Burch, property owner
Joe Clinkenbeard, North Williams resident
Carla Danley, resident, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Accessibility in the Built Environment,
Portland Commission on Disability
Jefferson Mildenerger, Native American Rehabilitation Association Clinic
Joshua Cohen, Fat Pencil Studios
Brian Myhr
Steven Gilliam, Oregon Action, Northeast Coalition of Neighbors
Rachel Gilmer, Urban League of Portland

Project Staff present

Ellen Vanderslice, Project Manager, Portland Bureau of Transportation
Michelle Poyourow, Public Involvement Consultant
Adrian Witte, Alta Planning + Design Consultant

1. Introductions

Michelle Poyourow opened the meeting announcing changes to the committee structure and membership to further the goal of creating an inclusive committee.

Ellen Vanderslice introduced Debora Leopold Hutchins as the new committee chair. Ellen had realized that, although the committee initially chose to operate without a chair, in order to be truly inclusive the committee should have a representative involved in setting the agenda and defining the process. She asked Debora to consider chairing the committee because Debora bridges the issues and can see the many different perspectives involved. She has the community concerns in her heart and understands the need for safety on North Williams. Debora had come to her and Michelle Poyourow with concerns about the process and had then helped the project team improve the process.

Deborah then asked for support from the stakeholder committee. She recognized her charge of moving the project forward and expressed appreciation for the community for being here. She stated that she understands that there is more than just transportation at stake here, and she wants to move the process along. She thanked everyone for making time to be there that day.

2. Summary of Public Outreach since June

Michelle summarized the meetings and conversations project staff had attended since June. A handout briefly described the outcomes of the following outreach activities:

- Community Meeting: Billy Webb Elks Lodge
- Community Meetings: Safety discussions at Emanuel Hospital
- Good in the Neighborhood
- North/Northeast Business Alliance
- Interstate Urban Renewal Area Transportation Sub-Committee
- Boise Neighborhood Association
- Tubman Academy for Girls
- PDC, ODOT and the StreetSmart campaign

Michelle then described outreach efforts planned for the next two months:

- Tabling at Aug. 20th African American health walk
- Aug. 23rd Crosswalk Enforcement Action at North Williams and Morris (Portland Bureau of Transportation, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition and Portland Police Bureau)
- Tabling at Aug. 31 Dawson Park concert
- Organizing a Community Forum to continue the discussion of this project, transportation issues, and the impacts on the community, probably in September

Ellen expressed interest in leading some community walks with the committee, and asked what times work best for them.

Members expressed the importance of seeing the street at peak usage times, at the height of the safety concerns. Others offered that the issue of peak speeding is not at the same time as peak traffic. Ellen will try to organize a time on Tuesday August 16th, the week before the crosswalk action. She will be in contact to finalize plans.

Susan Peithman offered to take people on a bike ride up N Williams if they want to experience it that way.

[Subsequent to the meeting, the committee chair and project staff suggested scheduling a walk and a bike ride in September, in lieu of the Committee's usual sit-down meeting.]

3. Agenda Approval

Debora called for a brief discussion of the agenda for the day. She clarified that as a committee they can set the agenda, and she will meet with Michelle and Ellen to finalize it. Members may contact any of the three of them with suggested agenda items.

She asked for any additions, or deletions of today's agenda. Allan Rudwick asked that she make sure there is time for the committee to have a discussion, and Debora confirmed that the agenda offers that time.

All SAC members approved the agenda.

4. Summer Safety Campaign

Ellen Vanderslice announced that Bureau of Transportation is running a citywide summer safety campaign to educate people about avoiding risky behaviors on the roads, called *StreetSmart: go safe*. The campaign uses signs, advertisements and enforcement to get the message across. She explained that she's hearing many concerns from everyone about the behavior of other users, and while the North Williams project is focused on physical changes to the street, the City is open to trying to change behavior on the street using education or enforcement.

There could be a North Williams safety campaign to tag along with *StreetSmart: go safe*. The exact form of this is still evolving, but one specific action is planned so far: a crosswalk enforcement action scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 23, 5:30-7:00 pm at N Williams and Morris (adjacent to Dawson Park).

This will be the first time that the City does a crosswalk enforcement action at the evening peak traffic hour. The street will be set up ahead of time with signage and cones to illustrate the safe stopping distance. The decoy pedestrian will leave the curb and enter the crosswalk while there is sufficient time for approaching drivers and cyclists to see her and stop. If people don't stop, the police officers may give them a warning, a citation or an invitation to attend a safety diversion class.

Ellen is interested in more input about what other safety campaign activities we can do on North Williams. We have an opportunity in September to do some back-to-school education activities.

Michelle DePass asked how the police determine whether someone gets a warning or a citation in such a crosswalk action, and Ellen replied that she did not know but will discuss at the City. Michelle is concerned that the police could be racially profiling travelers on North Williams in this enforcement action and asked if Ellen can investigate how they ensure that doesn't happen, and whether it is possible to track the race of people cited and warned. Another SAC member suggested that this may be an opportunity to get other information from people driving and biking up Williams, such as where they are headed, where they live, and so on. Ellen said she will ask about what information the City can track. She noted it seems like a good opportunity to gather some of that information if we can get it. The question was asked whether the committee can come to the crosswalk enforcement action and watch, or even participate. Ellen said the committee is welcome to come and observe.

5. Committee Expansion

Debora opened a discussion on committee expansion. She was concerned that there was a disparity on the committee, and that she felt the committee was not equally balanced when there were only four people of color among 18 members. No matter which way any vote would go, she didn't think it would be equitable to have that kind of representation.

Ellen Vanderslice spoke regarding the City's view of the expansion. She noted that the first objective on the project was to have an open and inclusive process, and that the City wants to model that in this project. If the team didn't get the stakeholders committee right at first, it's time to get it right now. The objective is to be inclusive and have a committee that can shape a solution for Williams that meets the community's needs.

Ellen described what the expansion means for the existing committee, saying the City recognizes the work people have put into the project since February. She said the project team doesn't want the existing committee to get discouraged with these changes. The expanded committee will revisit some questions, and she hopes those continuing can contribute to the fresh effort with an informed perspective. She noted that, in the initial process, the project team had not asked the SAC to agree on a shared set of outcomes, but this will be a high priority for the rechartered

committee. Regarding the timeline for the committee's work, she couldn't say how long the process will take, but promised it will not go on forever.

Debora asked Michelle Poyourow to read the list of new committee members who have accepted an appointment on the SAC. With Debora's help and feedback from others, the project team identified two groups of people originally underrepresented: people of color, and small business owners. Over the past two months the project team has been reaching out to people who might be willing to serve. The following people have accepted:

Tom Anctil, Anctil Heating & Cooling
Matt Hennessee, Pastor, Vancouver Ave. First Baptist Church
Noni Causey
Gahlana Easterly
Michelle DePass
Kenneth Doswell, Betty Jean Couture
Mychal Tetteh
Jazzmin Reece
Dwight Terry

Michelle noted that Debora and the project team are also trying to recruit an SAC member who is both a resident and who uses a mobility device. This would bring the total number of SAC members to 28.

An SAC member asked whether the group was going to reevaluate the committee's decision making process. Debora responded that they would be revisiting this with the addition of the new committee members.

Laurie Simpson asked how the City is paying for the extended process, whether we are using the budget that would go to physical improvements. Ellen said the extension will cost more money, but it's important to have a good process. The North Williams project is part of a larger Bureau of Transportation program, and there may be some flexibility within that program to move some limited additional funding to the North Williams project.

At the beginning of the process, Ellen said, she had explained that the limited budget of \$370,000 was dedicated for planning and construction. That amount is consistent with a project that involves mainly striping and signage type changes, and possibly some signal timing or signal changes. If more substantial changes are needed (such as changes involving concrete or curbs) the project team will need to identify or request additional funding.

Jana McLellan asked how much of the budget has been spent to date. Ellen replied that she didn't have the up-to-date total but will get it. [Subsequent to the meeting, Ellen prepared this analysis: "The North Williams Traffic Operations Safety Project received \$185,000 in FY 10-11

and \$185,000 in FY 11-12 for a total of \$370,000. That amount is intended to cover total project costs, including the project development costs, any design, and any construction or implementation. During FY 10-11, which ended June 30, 2011, approximately \$45,500 was spent on the project, and during July 2011, approximately \$3,300. Unspent funding from FY 10-11 for this project has been carried over to FY 11-12. A balance of approximately \$321,200 remains available for this project as of August 1.]

Allan Rudwick asked if the committee should meet for longer than 90 minutes, in order to get more done at each meeting. Debora asked for feedback from other committee members. Jana McLellan suggested that subcommittees or workgroups be formed to make the committee meeting time more efficient. Debora said that we could poll the members to see if a longer meeting or different meeting time is preferred.

Steve Bozzone welcomed the new committee members to the group, and said he was glad we are opening up the process. With Debora's permission, he invited them to join the existing SAC members at the committee table, and those who were present took seats around the table and joined the discussion.

Michelle DePass suggested that the group consider other models beside the democratic model for decision making, as majority rule is not necessarily the most effective way to go forward.

Debora welcomed the new committee members, and suggested that project staff prepare a member packet that has meeting minutes and copies of the hand outs for all the SAC meetings so far. Staff agreed that they would do that for all SAC members, not just the new ones.

6. Recap of Project Team's Technical Assumptions and Approach

Ellen Vanderslice provided a quick background on the project up to this point.

Why Williams?

Why are so many bicyclists on Williams? From a policy point of view, the Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030, adopted in February 2010, made a recommendation that Williams be classified as a Major City Bikeway, part of a larger network of Major City Bikeways across the city. Williams was recommended for this new designation for several reasons:

- Inner North and NE has the highest bicycle ridership in the city of Portland
- North Williams is one of the only routes where people riding bicycles can access much of North and Northeast Portland without climbing a big hill
- There are now at least 3,000 people riding bicycles each day on Williams in the warm months

Some issues were raised that started this project:

- The high volumes of people riding bicycles, combined with three bus lines (one high-frequency) lead to traffic conflicts between buses and people bicycling
- High volumes of people bicycling leads to cyclists using the auto lane to pass others on bicyclists, which can be unsafe and stressful for everyone in the current conditions

Once the Williams project began, other traffic operations safety issues surfaced:

- Existing conditions analysis confirmed neighbors' complaints that speeding is a problem: more than half of motorists in the southern section of the street exceed the speed limit, which is 30 mph
- Despite the crossing improvements that have been built since 2006 through the investments of the PDC, people still find it difficult to cross the street

Existing Conditions:

The project team separated Williams into five segments based on the different characteristics and opportunities of each segment.

Segment 1 – NE Weidler St. to the freeway ramp – high traffic volumes, high bicycle volumes

Segment 2 – Freeway ramp to Russell St – Lower traffic volumes, high bike volumes, high bus demand

Segment 3 – Russell St to Cook St – Low parking demand on the west side, much TriMet lift activity on the east side

Segment 4 – Cook St to Skidmore St – This is the challenging part: higher traffic volumes, and high demand for automobile parking

Segment 5 – Skidmore St North – Low traffic volumes

With that background, the project team began to look at what traffic engineering tools they have to address the traffic safety issues. Ellen noted this list focuses on tools for infrastructure changes, rather than educational tools for behavior changes:

Improving crossing conditions for people walking:

- Lane reduction, so that people have only one auto lane to cross
- Width reduction, so that people don't have as far to walk across the street
- High visibility crosswalks
- Additional curb extensions

Ellen noted the project team had not done a deep analysis so far as to where pedestrian improvements are needed and she'd like the committee to revisit this.

Reducing traffic speed:

- Visually narrow the street, so the street feels like you should drive slower on it

- Slower traffic signal progression, so that people driving slower are rewarded with green lights
- Travel lane reduction to one lane, so that people wanting to speed are stuck behind a slow driver

Reducing conflicts between people bicycling and buses:

- Right hand Cycle Track with bus bays (the team had looked at this, but Ellen explained that after meeting with TriMet the team determined this option probably has fatal flaws)
- Buffered bike lane to provide more room to navigate around stopped buses
- Left Side Bikeway (not favored by the SAC when it was discussed in the spring)

Reducing conflicts between people driving and parking, and people bicycling:

- Buffered bike lanes would allow passing and opening car doors safely

Ellen said that many of the tools for these safety improvements require more space, and the space has to come from somewhere. Initially the project team looked at converting one travel lane in segments 2 and 5, and converting the west-side parking in Segment 3, based on the traffic volumes and parking demand. In Segment 4, the initial thought was that traffic demand meant keeping two motor vehicle travel lanes. The project team heard resistance from neighbors, businesses and churches to reducing on-street parking.

A number of people have raised questions about alternate routes, such as NE Rodney. Ellen said the project team is open to discussing whether improvements on other routes could be part of this project, but that Williams is likely to continue to attract many cyclists.

Ken Doswell asked Ellen how forward-looking this process will be. He said his business is on Williams and Fremont, where new development is going in with low on-site parking provisions. Other new developments may be similar and will change the street. Is whatever we do here still going to be good in five years?

Ellen responded that she has posed this question to staff at the Bureau of Transportation who forecast future traffic volumes. Their forecast model is not very sensitive to small scale development, but it is good for general big picture employment changes. This analysis shows half a percent a year in traffic volume increases over the next 20 years. Michelle clarified that the traffic forecasting does take into account zoning on empty lots, and the model assumes that these locations will develop to their potential uses in the future. So the model does incorporate future development, but not such site specific growth as Tasty n'Sons being very busy on Sunday mornings.

Jazzmin Reece asked what the Transportation System Development Charge (TSDC) fees paid by the new developments going in on Williams are going towards. Ellen responded that she would find out.

Noni Causey asked for more information about the bike plan. Michelle DePass said that since we're referencing the bike plan, she'd like to know who was on the committee that advised on that process. She noted that if we're going to use that document to drive our path, we may be using a document that has flaws in terms of the public participation process.

Ellen said that the *Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030* was adopted by City Council in 2010. It contains a recommendation that the Transportation System Plan (TSP) be updated to include the new street classifications recommended in the bike plan, including a hierarchy for the bike network (with some streets being Major City Bikeways, such as Williams). The process to amend the TSP and add the bike plan elements to it is still underway. Michelle Poyourow offered to send information about the Portland Bicycle Plan to Michelle DePass and others on the committee. [<http://portlandonline.com/transportation/bicyclemasterplan>]

Susan Peithman said she realizes we're looking at the policy components of this, but it is different than the real world application. She suggested that projects like this are where the policy is interpreted into something on the ground, in the real world. She noted that looking at the on-the-ground users of this street is really valuable, and asked about the projected increases for walking, bicycling and taking transit. Ellen responded that the City doesn't have a good way to forecast bicycle travel, but the 'bike-shed' of Williams is large, so the potential for growth is there. As ridership continues to grow in North and Northeast Portland, Williams is a critical link.

Michelle DePass asked whether we know the rate of change for bicycle growth over the recent past, even if we don't have a model or a forecast. Michelle Poyourow responded that the City has counted bike traffic on Williams most of the last ten years, so the committee will be able to look at the trend line. [Reports on bicycle counts are available online here: <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=44671&>]

Allan Rudwick pointed out that the City did a study in 2006 of Vancouver/Williams traffic safety that some of his Eliot neighbors encouraged him to look at. He observed that bicycling has exploded since that study was done, but that it would still be useful for the committee to read it. Michelle Poyourow said that she would include that study in materials given to the SAC in the next months.

An SAC member commented that the group shouldn't limit itself to thinking of the street now as how it has to be. There are a lot of folks that could drive on I-5, but they take Williams because I-5 is jammed; and there are a lot of bicyclists that stay off Williams because it's not comfortable. She suggested the committee keep in mind that not everyone who wants to be on Williams is using the street now, and that isn't how it always has to be.

8. Wrap up and next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 6, noon to 1:30 pm, location TBA. [Since this meeting, project staff and Debora decided to have a “walking meeting” for the SAC in September instead of the usual sit-down meeting. Date and time to be determined.]

Debora wanted to hear from the committee how to move forward. Suggestions she’s heard include subcommittees; changes to the decision making process; setting up some timeline expectations to lead to process completion. Debora asked the SAC members what they want to see on the agenda next month.

Allan Rudwick asked if there would be a catch-up meeting for the new members, so that they can review materials the other SAC members went over earlier. There was general agreement to this suggestion.

One SAC member commented that the committee should focus on shared goals, a collective vision, and the decision making process. These activities can take some time, but it would be a really good healthy discussion. Another member suggested that it’s important to have everyone on the same level. Perhaps a workshop would be a good way to get everyone on the same page about the technical subject matters and public responses.

Noni asked whether she correctly heard Ellen say that the city has not fully solidified the classification of Williams as a Major City Bikeway. Ellen said that is correct, although it’s a recommendation in the adopted bike plan, it is not official city policy until it is adopted into the Transportation System Plan (TSP). Noni asked if the Williams process is contingent on the TSP process being finished, and when it will be finished. Ellen responded that whether or not there is a policy change, there is the reality of large volumes of bicyclists, and real safety issues that need to be solved, so the Williams process is not contingent on the TSP being updated. The TSP update is supposed to happen in 2012. The TSP update is ultimately voted on by City Council. Michelle DePass asked whether the people working on the TSP update are the same people who worked on the bike plan. Ellen replied that they are different, but there is a public involvement element to the TSP update, which the team will share with the committee.

7. Public comment

Avel Louise Gordly: My family property is on N Williams (Segment 5). As I take a trip up the corridor, I take a trip along a path of a community that has been erased. Our house was bought by my parents in 1949, not outright because the area was redlined. A Jewish man bought the property and then turned it over to our parents. My sister and brother in law now own the property.

In 2002, when my father was ill in Emanuel Hospital, two white speculators came to his bedside and asked if he wanted to sell his property.

You're going to make decisions that inform public policy for years to come. You must have some guiding principles for your decision making. You must act in a way that is right, and just and fair.

Forgive me if I sound like I'm lecturing. I've lived here for 64 years, and I've seen some things that are not right, and not just and not fair. You need to keep asking questions about public policy, and whose interests are being served. Ask who is making the assumptions.

You are an advisory committee giving advice to whom? And can your advice be overruled or vetoed? What power do you have, do you understand what that is?

You must have some guiding principles to frame the way that you move forward. It must be right, it must be just, and it must be fair. This is about building the community that serves the needs of all.

Scott Lieuallen: You're talking about the next meeting in September, which might conflict with your later community-focused meeting. You may want to have the community meeting before the next stakeholder advisory meeting.

Also, please reconsider the opportunity for the left side bikeway, to resolve a large conflict between bikes and busses.

Chris Yeagers: I live a few blocks off of Williams and have kids. Crossing Williams is a chore. Any changes you make that can slow down traffic, would be appreciated by me and my neighbors. The longer we push this out, are we putting at risk some other child? There are a lot of people that make decisions about where to shop and where to send their kids to school, based on how hard it is to cross the street; there are other factors in those decisions too, but how hard it is to get across Williams is one of them.

Donna Maxey: Out of this process, maybe we should develop a protocol for changing the process at the city.

Also,

- Rodney sounds good, how does it impact the residents and Williams traffic?
- For the committee members, how do you make sure you represent more than your own personal ideas?
- During the safety campaign, this might not make revenue, but maybe you can ask some questions to the motorists while they stop. You can ask them to take the survey or get a citation.
- Where is the information on design options posted? (Ellen replied that it is posted on the project website: portlandonline.com/transportation/Williams)

Carla Danley: When we did introductions we were limited to 3 words, which I think is problematic because we need to know who is in the room. I was identified as a member of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and you need to understand what that is.

It is a committee charged with informing the city in its efforts to implement the Bike Plan for 2030. Our BAC meetings are open to the public. We meet at city hall the 2nd Tuesday of the month. August meeting is going to be a ride, but September is a meeting.

I also serve on the Accessibility and the Built Environment committee of the Portland Commission on Disability. My husband is a wheelchair user. I spend every day thinking about wheelchair access, and safety.

I am a property owner in North Portland, I don't have a car and I use my bike to commute downtown every day.

I am a cofounder of the brand new Major Taylor Cycling Club in Portland.

I am not a third generation Oregonian, I'm a new resident, and I observed that people in Portland working on bicycle policy were very powerful, so I got involved. The BAC looks very different today than it did in years past.

What would happen if the bikeway was moved to Rodney? People don't understand the Vancouver/Williams couplet is a bicycle freeway. People understand what a freeway is for cars, but not what it means for bicyclists.

I like a proposal to make Rodney car free.

The future is moving toward separated facilities, like the cycle track on Broadway by PSU. This can be a problem for people with disabilities because it puts you into conflict with bicyclists while you wait, and it exits people with wheelchair ramps into the cycle track.

Ed Abrahamson: As a former bureaucrat. I really applaud this process. I've been through a number of them, and the fact that you've taken a look back and changed the process is great.

Another process going on right now is the Central City Plan, N/NE Quadrant Plan. They are looking at major changes to the transportation system here. I think there needs to be a real dialogue between these processes.

Joe Clinkenbeard: I think it's great that the committee has been expanded this way. I would like you to consider more pedestrian interests on this committee, I'm not sure if it has an adequate distribution of pedestrian focused interests.

Is there anything in the pipeline for focusing on pedestrian improvements? (One committee member replied that she will definitely make a point to look out for pedestrians in our work, and Ellen noted that we have a representative from the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition on the committee, Steve Bozzone. Michelle added that we are hoping to have someone who lives on Williams and uses a wheelchair or has a disability join the committee.)

Avel Louise Gordly: I suggest that we have two comment periods, one before and one after the meeting. I suggest that we meet in the evening, for those that cannot attend during the day.

Jefferson Mildenberger: My biggest problem is parking. I run the Native American Rehabilitation Association clinic. We see 150 people a day. Right now we can't get enough of our customers in, and I'd like to see some parking solutions brought forward.

Debra thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 1:39 pm.

--Meeting notes taken by Nick Falbo; edited by Michelle Poyourow and Ellen Vanderslice.--