

Sam  
Adams  
Mayor

Tom  
Miller  
Director

**North Williams Traffic Operations and Safety Project  
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**  
January 10, 2012, 12:00 – 2:00 pm  
Oregon Red Cross, 3131 N Vancouver Ave, Training Room 11  
**Meeting Notes**

**Summary of actions taken or planned in this meeting:**

- The Committee adopted their desired Outcomes and Measures for North Williams safety improvements (see “Adopted Top Ten Outcomes and Measures,” attached).

**Meeting attendance**

**Committee members in attendance:**

Debora Leopold Hutchins, Chair  
Allan Rudwick  
Ben Foote  
Diana Moosman  
Gahlana Easterly  
Irek Wielgosz  
Jana McLellan  
Jazzmin Reece  
Jerrell Waddell  
Jrdn Freeauf  
Karis Stoudamire  
Laurie Simpson  
Matt Hennessee  
Melissa Lafayette

Michelle DePass  
Mychal Tetteh  
Nathan Roll  
Pamela Weatherspoon Reed  
Paul Anthony  
Shara Alexander  
Steve Bozzone  
Susan Peithman

**Committee members absent:**

Caitlin Wood  
Dwight Terry  
Kenneth Doswell  
Noni Causey

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**Members of the public in attendance:**

Amy Lubitow  
Ed Abrahamson  
David Lee  
Scott Lieuallen  
Evelyn Murray  
Kristin Atkinson  
Joshua Cohen  
Thad Miller  
Arnold (last name unclear)

**Media in attendance:**

Jonathan Maus, BikePortland.org  
Sarah Mirk, The Portland Mercury

**City and project staff in attendance:**

Ellen Vanderslice, Portland Bureau of  
Transportation, Project Manager  
Rich Newlands, Portland Bureau of  
Transportation  
Dan Layden, Portland Bureau of  
Transportation  
Wendy Cawley, Portland Bureau of  
Transportation  
Joan Brown-Kline, Public Involvement  
Consultant  
Michelle Poyourow, Public Involvement  
Consultant  
Adrian Witte, Alta Planning & Design  
Carol Herzberg, Portland Development  
Commission

**DETAILED MEETING NOTES**

**1. Welcome, introductions (Committee Chair Debora Leopold Hutchins)**

Debora called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm, welcomed everyone, and facilitated introductions.

**2. Check-in (Debora)**

- a. Review agenda

Debora solicited comments or questions about the agenda. There were none. Debora mentioned that the notes from the previous minutes had been distributed to the Committee and the public by email.

- b. “Honoring History” Working Group

Ellen reported that this Working Group will be meeting on the next two Thursday evenings, at 7:00 pm, at Friends of the Children. She encouraged any Committee member who was interested in joining it to contact her.

- c. Questions, announcements and comments from the Committee

Ellen announced that she will be retiring at the end of April, and she introduced Rich Newlands, who will take over as Project Manager for the North Williams project when Ellen leaves. Rich has been at the Bureau for 20 years and for the last seven has been managing the implementation of transportation projects, and transitioning from one project manager to another when the project is transitioning to the implementation phase should go relatively smoothly.

### **3. Review, discuss and decide on recommendation of Outcomes Working Group (Debora)**

Debora asked Jana McLellan to present the recommendation of the Outcomes Working Group to the Committee.

Jana told the group that the Working Group had met two weeks ago to discuss what outcomes should be the project's top priorities.

They started with the results of the ranking exercise that the whole Committee did with Ellen after the January meeting, in which they ranked each possible outcome as an A, B or C in terms of its importance, with an equal number of outcomes in each group. When Ellen graphed the sum of everyone's rankings, there was a big jump between the lower-ranked outcomes and the top ten ranked outcomes, so they decided to work on those top ten. (The results and graph were attached to the meeting minutes from the January 10 SAC meeting.)

The Working Group discussed each of those top ten outcomes, how they would know if the outcome had been achieved by the project, and what kind of change they wanted to see as a result of the project for each outcome. With some technical help from engineers, Ellen wrote up the outcomes and measures. (See "Adopted Top Ten Outcomes and Measures," attached.)

Jana said she was looking to the Committee to find out if everyone is on board with these outcomes and measures. The Working Group members called other Committee members to talk about the outcomes and measures, and she knows there were some concerns, so she expects there may be some discussion today. She'd like them to discuss any grave concerns, and then adopt a list of outcomes so that the City can use them to develop solutions for Williams.

Diana Moosman asked if the Outcomes were listed by importance in the recommendation. Ellen said that they are listed in the same order as they were ranked by the Committee.

Jana asked for any other comments or questions. There were none. Jana moved that the Committee adopt these Outcomes and Measures for the project; Pastor Hennessee seconded her motion. Debora called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote.

### **4. Review the toolbox of possible traffic safety interventions (Ellen Vanderslice)**

Ellen gave a presentation and slideshow on a wide variety of tools that the City has available to achieve some of the outcomes discussed by the Committee so far. (PDFs of the both the slide presentation and the SAC handout packet have been posted to the website at <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/williams>.)

#### **Education and Enforcement** (pages 5-12)

Ellen noted that they had heard many concerns about people's behavior on Williams, and that the City has ample experience with education campaigns, and has some safety campaigns "in the

box” that could be quickly applied on Williams. They can include crosswalk enforcement, speeding citations, but also much more.

Diana commented that she didn't see anything in the handout that addressed educating cyclists. She suggested a more pointed campaign for cyclists. Mychal added that a campaign towards all modes, but with pointed information about how people are expected to share the right-of-way, would help to set consistent expectations.

Debora asked when such a tool would be implemented. Ellen responded that we would have to think about how to use the limited funding. One possible way to use some of the funding for this project would be a safety campaign. Perhaps they could split off a Working Group to advise the City on such a campaign.

Susan Peithman asked if the project would need to pay for extra police enforcement of the speed limit, or whether they can just request some extra attention to Williams from the police. Ellen said that they could certainly request it, and get in the queue (just as she got Williams in the queue for crosswalk enforcement last summer), but for additional enforcement above a certain level it would take a separate pot of money.

Ben Foote asked what the relative costs of educational efforts are. Ellen replied that, compared to building things in the road, education is inexpensive. She said that at the next meeting staff will come back with a specific proposal for a possible safety campaign including costs.

Shara Alexander said that she was a little frustrated to not have TriMet at the table for these discussions. She brought up moving the bus stop that is currently at Tillamook and Williams; Ellen suggested they wait to discuss that until later, along with the other engineering tools.

## **Engineering** (pages 13-34)

### **Tools to address driving too fast**

Ellen told the group that speed of motor vehicles comes into play for many of their top ten outcomes. For example, at crosswalks higher speeds make it harder for people to see pedestrians in time to stop. At 35 mph, a driver requires more than twice the distance to stop as at 20 mph. This affects safety, visibility, decision-making at crosswalks. Also, a pedestrian struck at 20 mph is more likely to survive, while a pedestrian struck at 35 mph is more likely to be killed.

Some tools that can reduce speeds are:

- Speed reader boards. The City has a few, and can deploy them where they are needed. However, these are not usually very effective over a long period of time, or where there is no change in the roadway.
- Traffic Calming/Road Narrowing. People tend to drive as fast as they feel comfortable. Pinchpoints along the road can make it feel less like a highway. For example, curb extensions can make the road feel narrower, so people drive slower, and also give pedestrians a way to get out and visible at the crosswalk. (Curb extensions were installed

at some intersections on Williams already, as part of the 2006 safety project funded by PDC.)

Another way to narrow the roadway is to reduce the number of travel lanes. On streets with more than one lane going in the same direction, speeds are generally higher than on streets with only one lane in a given direction. It's easy to understand that where there are two lanes, if someone wants to go faster than the person in front of them they can change lanes and pass.

- Signal progression. If there are enough signals on a street, they can turn green at a certain speed so that people have no incentive to drive faster than that speed. For example, downtown Portland has signal progression at about 11-12 mph. But the signals on Williams are too far apart for this to work very well, because people don't see the next signal ahead of them.

Mychal Tetteh asked if the signals on Williams are progressed. He said that when he is biking, he notices that he gets green lights on Vancouver, but not on Williams. Ellen responded that the signals on both streets are progressed at about 30 mph (Paul Anthony affirmed this) but that it's Mychal's speed on Williams that keeps him from making the green lights, because it is slightly uphill. Mychal asked that it be made clear that he can make the green lights on Williams *if he wants to*. Everyone laughed.

Ellen clarified that while the signals are indeed progressed on Williams at a certain speed, they are too far apart for that to act as a speed-reduction tool. People speed up above 30 mph in between the signals, then hit the brakes at the red light.

Susan asked how many more signals would be needed for signal progression to reduce speeds, because it is such a great tool in other parts of the city. Ellen said that it would take quite a few, but they could consider another strategy, like putting up signs to tell people at what speed the signals are set for.

Shara asked for confirmation that the speed limit on Williams is 30 mph. Ellen said that it is, except in two School Zones where it is 20 mph "when children are present." She noted that that is a very hard standard to enforce for a school zone, so the Committee could consider a different standard, such as when lights flash or during certain hours.

- Many people have asked about changing the speed limit on Williams. Ellen told the group that the City doesn't actually have the authority to change speed limits; that is controlled by a State board. In order to lower the speed limit the City has to show the State board that most of the traffic is already going below that speed. The fact is that changing the speed limit signs doesn't have much affect on people's speeds. You can do more enforcement of a lower speed limit, and give out more citations, but that isn't very sustainable in the long term. Again, people tend to drive the speed that feels comfortable to them, based on the design of the street, how much traffic there is, and how much activity there is.

### **Tools to address difficulty crossing at non-signalized intersections**

Curb extensions (page 19) can improve pedestrian crossings at non-signalized intersections. They also visually narrow the street, as mentioned earlier. They calm traffic, improve the visibility of pedestrians and shorten the crossing distance.

Susan commented that, in this photo, the visibility is great in part because there aren't cars parked right up to the curb extension, but that there often are. Ellen noted that this is the curb extension at Sumner, which is extra-long for a transit stop, although TriMet removed this stop after the curb extension was built.

Traffic signals (page 20) can provide great pedestrian crossing opportunities, but they cost \$200,000 - \$250,000.

Flashing pedestrian beacons are another option, less expensive than a full traffic signal. Wendy Cawley explained to the Committee that these are a tool to use in locations with high vehicle volumes or high pedestrian volumes. There are one or two locations on Williams that might "warrant" (according to the official transportation manual) a flashing beacon. The City would need to predict or count pedestrian crossing volumes to do that analysis. Steve Bozzone asked if there were any pedestrian counts scheduled; Ellen said none were, but that a PSU class did some counts on Williams, and she will take a look at what data they gathered.

Paul asked whether the older-style yellow flashing pedestrian crossing lights were an option. Wendy replied that they are not as effective as the new beacons and not much cheaper, either.

Michelle DePass asked whether the Committee should be designing for today's use, or for the future, when with additional development and the New Seasons store going in; there may be much more car and pedestrian traffic.

Ben asked how many years in the future the City wanted this Committee to look in making its recommendation – five years? Ellen responded to Ben and Michelle that they would have a chance to discuss that more when the City brings them some different alternatives to consider.

(Page 22) Pedestrian refuges, Ellen said, are not used on one-way streets very much, so probably wouldn't work for Williams, except possibly with islands at dedicated turn lanes (for example, at Williams and Alberta).

### **Tools to address difficulty crossing at signalized intersections**

A leading pedestrian interval (page 23) can give people walking across the street a head start. This can improve safety when there are a lot of turns by cars. In this photo, the crosswalk actually has a sensor that can tell when the pedestrians have finished crossing.

Curb extensions, discussed earlier, can also improve crossings at signalized intersections.

### **Tools to address vehicle crashes**

Signal changes (page 24) can make traffic signals more responsive and integrated, and get more car traffic flowing through. For example, on NE 12<sup>th</sup> Ave, over I-84, they recently got all the signals “talking to each other” and as a result there is a big improvement in congestion, and they were able to free up some space on the bridge to make a bike lane. New traffic signals, where they are needed for safety, can be a big improvement as well. The intersections of N Cook with Vancouver and Williams are examples where there is a high crash rate that could be improved with new signals.

### **Tools to address danger of “dooring”**

A buffered bike lane (page 26) is an engineering tool that can reduce the risk of dooring. In this photo the buffer is on the outside, the traffic side, but it can be on the parking side instead, or on both sides. Another option is simply a slightly wider bike lane, such as the one on Vancouver. Either of these can reduce risk of dooring and provide ways for bicyclists to pass each other without getting in the car travel lane. (The bike lane on Williams is 4-6 feet wide depending on the block; the bike lane on Vancouver is 7 feet wide.)

Allan Rudwick asked how wide the auto travel lanes on Williams are, because he has seen trucks straddling the line. Ellen replied that they are 10 feet. Michelle Poyourow and Wendy added that a 10 foot wide travel lane is the City’s minimum standard, and that all the other lanes on the street (parking lanes and bike lane) are at the minimum. Ellen noted that the sidewalks are not just at the minimum, but sub-standard, and with new developments they are being widened. Michelle Poyourow pointed Committee members to the colorful Existing Conditions report in the back of their binders, which shows all the lane widths along Williams

Jrdn asked if, in the case of a buffered bike lane, the buffer would be wide enough for the bus to clear it when it pulls over at a stop. Ellen said that it would be, so that bike traffic could probably go around the bus.

Susan pointed out that the buffer can also serve people getting in and out of their cars, because it gives them a place to get a baby or get their bags without being in traffic.

Ellen described a cycle track (page 29), which is like a buffered bike lane but with the car parking on the outside of it. It requires quite a bit of room, though; the one pictured, at PSU, is 10 feet wide. Shara noted that the PSU location is an easy place to do a cycletrack because there are no right turns. Ellen agreed.

Dan Layden added that they have a design for right turns across cycletracks. They bring the bikes and right-turning cars back together, close to one another, at each intersection, but this requires removing a few car parking spaces. In addition, this cycletrack at PSU has been problematic for LIFT users, who have to deploy their wheelchair ramps onto the cycletrack instead of onto the sidewalk.

### **Tools to give cyclists room to pass other cyclists**

In addition to the wider facilities described already, some tools that could help with bike passing include a bike passing lane (page 30), which is like a wider bike lane, but it can be used just at

strategic places where bicyclists group up. Ellen suggested that on Williams there could be a few such places, and we could decide to convert a few car parking spaces to install a bike passing lane. (The width of both lanes together would be 8-10 feet wide, total.)

Debora asked how long people stay in the left-hand lane shown in the slide (on the east approach to the Hawthorne Bridge). Ellen replied that they just use it to pass, and it ends after a short distance.

Another tool that might help bicyclists who ride different speeds sort themselves out is a bike box (page 31). These are often used to draw peoples' attention to the danger of right-hook crashes. Where bike boxes are installed, it is also no-right-turn-on-red for car traffic. But the other purpose, for which it might be useful on Williams, is to get the bikes sorted out and also passing one another, since people bike at such different speeds. This can also get the bikes in a group, in front of the bus, just before a bus stop, such as at Russell.

#### **Tools to address conflicts between bikes and buses**

A left-side bike lane (page 32, pictured in New York City) can be the same width as an ordinary right-side bike lane, but on the left side of the street. On Williams, Ellen said, it would get the bikes away from the buses, which have to stop on the right side of the street since their doors are on their right sides. It would be between the car parking on the left side of Williams, and the left-hand car travel lane.

Ellen said that, if we went to a left-side bike lane on Williams, we couldn't switch it back and forth along the street. They would have to have it go to the left side of the street at some point and stay there.

Susan commented that she would be uncomfortable on the left side, because, generally, faster traffic is on the left sides of our streets. But she also wondered if getting the bikes away from the buses would improve auto traffic flow on Williams. Neither Wendy nor Ellen knew the answer to that question. Wendy noted that it would be hard to model. Ellen noted that a test could answer the question.

#### **Tools to address difficulty of transitioning a bicycle for a turn**

Ellen showed a bicycle turn box, which helps cyclists make a two-stage turn (lining up with the traffic on the cross street and then proceeding when it's clear for that direction).

#### **Tools to address conflicts between right-turning motorists and through cyclists**

In addition to bike boxes, already discussed, green "transition" lanes with signage (p. 34) can draw right-turning motorists' attention to the fact that they are crossing the bike lane and must yield to cyclists.

### **5. Review the five segments of North Williams, and their opportunities and constraints (Ellen)**

(Pages 35-77 of slide presentation) Ellen talked the group through the five segments the engineering team had divided Williams into, based on the different characteristics of each area.

Regarding Segment 2, Jana mentioned that many of her clients have cognitive disabilities, and so being able to tell them to look for a marked crosswalk to get across Williams would be tremendously valuable. They don't necessarily have the ability to make good decisions at an unmarked crosswalk.

Debora asked if the "light parking demand" on the west side of Williams (in Segment 3) was describing the area by the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. Ellen replied that it was not, rather that it was describing everywhere *but* in front of the church. In most of Segment 3, there is currently no parking allowed on the west side of the street, but parking demand right by the church is quite high.

Michelle DePass and Laurie Simpson both pointed out that future development in Segment 3 will likely increase parking demand.

Susan asked if Cook (at the south end of Segment 4) is slated to get a traffic signal. Ellen replied that both the intersections of Cook/Vancouver and Cook/Williams meet the crash warrants for a signal. Cook at Vancouver also meets the criteria the volume of vehicles there, and it's likely that if a signal were installed at Cook/Vancouver the volume at Williams would go up. Those signals are a priority for a safety improvement, but there currently is no funding identified to install them. (Ellen noted we will talk more about this when we get to the agenda item about development.)

Ben commented that, in Segment 4, crossing Fremont on Williams by bike can feel very difficult, with so many cars turning right on the south side, and cars pulling into and out of the parking spaces on the north side in front of the corner store.

Ellen discussed the traffic volumes in Segment 4. She said that the peak volumes were high enough to likely need both lanes, unlike on other sections of the street where really only one lane was needed. Jrdn asked if a single lane simply wouldn't work in Segment 4. Ellen replied that it would work most of the time, but for some period of time during the evening peak it would cause some people to shift to other roads, or to sit in traffic. It could get congested. You could certainly physically do one lane, but it would have consequences that we need to consider.

Michelle DePass mentioned that she and Mrs. Easterly are meeting with Jack Menashe, a Williams developer with a few projects in planning and under construction. She encouraged Committee members to send her any questions or concerns she should share with him.

There was discussion about the zoning requirement for parking per unit with the new developments, and what the rate of car ownership will be. Michelle Poyourow reported that she

had heard from the developer of EcoFlats that the car ownership rate in that building started at about 70% and is now about 50%, i.e. one car per two units.

At the end of Segment 5, at Williams and Killingsworth, the bike lane is in between the right- and left-turn cars lanes. Ellen reported that she has heard this makes some drivers uncomfortable.

Paul said that the Humboldt Neighborhood Association has grave concerns about pedestrian safety at that intersection, where a number of people have been hit while crossing the street recently.

Debora asked what the bike volumes are in Segment 5. Ellen replied that the City doesn't have bike volume data for that segment, but that it is probably lower than in Segment 4 since many people turn right on Going.

## **6. Report back from the City regarding New Seasons Market development requirements (Ellen)**

Ellen passed out a City flyer on Transportation System Development Charges (TSDCs). She told the Committee that SDC funds, whether from other developments or from the New Seasons store, would not turn out to be a source of funding for this project.

There are a few reasons for this. First, System Development Charges (SDCs) are required, by state law, to only be used to increase capacity, i.e. to get more auto vehicles from one place to another. They cannot be used for safety improvements.

In addition, the capacity-increased projects that are eligible for SDC funds in Portland are on a list that was developed with public input five years ago; it will be updated again in five years. (It happens on a ten-year cycle.) It would be difficult to add a project to the list mid-cycle, even if there were an auto-capacity-increasing project the Committee wanted to recommend for Williams.

Finally, the amount of money in the SDC fund is very low. The City Council set the SDC rates for developments at such a level that the City would collect 40% of the funds needed to build all the projects on the list. The remaining 60% has to be found from other funding sources. But because development has been slow recently, because of the down economy, there is much less money being collected through SDCs than was projected.

There is a way that a developer can pay for a capacity-increasing project and then get a credit towards their SDC charges, in proportion to how much extra capacity is going to be served that isn't directly necessitated by their project. But that credit happens only if the thing they pay for is a "requirement" of development. Because of the zoning of the New Seasons parcel, they don't have to go through the part of the process in which requirements are set on the development, which leaves no way to arrange such a credit.

Ellen said that there is an effort at the City to see if they can patch together funds from various sources to get the signals built at Cook/Vancouver and Cook/Williams. It would cost about half a million dollars altogether. Compared to other investments the City is making, it's small, but of course compared to the North Williams project budget it's big. And considering that the Portland Bureau of Transportation is \$16 million in the hole for its next year budget, it's a lot. But they are working on it.

So, in conclusion, Ellen said, they can't count on any New Seasons development-related charges to pay for the signals.

Ben asked about the public process for the TSDC project list. Dan replied that it happened in 2005-6, and had a citywide advisory committee and public meetings. Ben noted that none of the projects on the list were in the Williams area. Dan and Ellen said that the City does try to distribute the projects geographically, but since they are capacity-building projects, they are in particular places where that is needed, such as on Going to Swan Island, or on Columbia Blvd at MLK. They are often street-widening projects. There is neither the opportunity nor the need for that kind of project in this neighborhood.

Diana asked if there would be a good case for going back and revisiting the decision that was made on this TSDC list five years ago. Ellen and Dan said probably not, but even if we were successful in getting the two signals at Cook on the list, there isn't much money in the SDC pot.

Michelle DePass, Mrs. Easterly and Debora reiterated that they will be meeting with New Seasons, and encouraged people to talk with them if they would like to pass any questions or concerns along through them.

## **7. SAC timeline and next meetings (Debora):**

Ellen said that her goal was to have a recommendation from the Committee by March 6<sup>th</sup>, but she has scheduled these other additional dates (see below) just in case.

Confirmed dates:

SAC Meeting: Tuesday, February 21st, 2012, 12:00 to 2:00 pm, at the Oregon Red Cross

SAC Meeting: Tuesday, March 6, 2012, 12:00 to 2:00 pm, at the Oregon Red Cross

Possible additional dates:

SAC Meeting: Tuesday, March 20, 2012, 12:00 to 2:00 pm, at the Oregon Red Cross

SAC Meeting: Tuesday, April 3, 2012, 12:00 to 2:00 pm, at the Oregon Red Cross

## **8. Public comment (Debora):**

There were no comments from the public.

*Meeting notes prepared by Michelle Poyourow and Ellen Vanderslice.*