

Sam
Adams
Mayor

Tom
Miller
Director

**North Williams Traffic Operations and Safety Project
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**

April 3, 2012, 12:00 – 2:00 pm

Oregon Red Cross, 3131 N Vancouver Ave, Board Room

Meeting No. 16 Notes

Summary of actions taken or planned in this meeting:

- Michelle DePass will provide examples for the Honoring History recommendation.
- Ellen will send out the draft SAC Recommendations with changes as agreed in the meeting today, plus Michelle’s examples.
- The SAC will review the draft and comment within one week.
- Ellen will conduct a vote by e-mail/phone/mail for a final tally.
- “Attendance” will be considered all those who respond to the vote, so passage will require 2/3 approval of all those who respond.
- Mrs. Easterly, Pastor Hennessee and Michelle DePass will follow up with Emanuel Hospital about a signal at Williams and Stanton.

Meeting attendance

Committee members in attendance:

Debora Leopold Hutchins, Sistas Weekend Cyclers (Committee Chair)
Allan Rudwick, Neighbor
Ben Foote, Neighbor
Carl Larson, BTA (Alternate for Susan Peithman)
Diana Moosman, MOSI Architects
Gahlana Easterly, Property owner
Pastor Jerrell Waddell, New Life Christian Center
Irek Wielgosz, King Neighborhood Association
Jana McLellan, Port City Development
Laurie Simpson, Eliot Neighborhood Association
Pastor Matt Hennessee, Vancouver Baptist Church
Melissa Lafayette, Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest
Michelle DePass, Neighbor
Nathan Roll, Metropolis Cycle Repair

Noni Causey, Neighbor
Paul Anthony, Humboldt Neighborhood Association
Shara Alexander, Neighbor
Steve Bozzone, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

Committee members absent:

Caitlin Wood, Disability Rights Oregon
Dwight Terry, Terry Family Funeral Home
Jazzmin Reece, Urban League Young Professionals
Jrdn Freeauf, Eddie’s Cabinets
Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Boise Neighborhood Association
Kenneth Doswell, Betty Jean Couture
Mychal Tetteh, Village Market at New Columbia
Pamela Weatherspoon Reed, Legacy Emanuel Hospital
Susan Peithman, BTA (Carl Larson served as alternate for BTA)

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Members of the public in attendance:

Thad Miller, PSU
Russ Willis, citizen
Cathy Galbraith, Bosco-Milligan Foundation
David Sweet, NECN
Ed Abrahamson
Elizabeth Nardi, neighbor and New Seasons Market
Claudia Knotek, New Seasons Market
Lt. Eric Schober, Portland Police
Gregg Lavender, Friends of the Children

Media in attendance:

Jonathan Maus, BikePortland

City and project staff in attendance:

Ellen Vanderslice, PBOT Project Manager
Michelle Poyourow, public involvement consultant
Rob Burchfield, PBOT
Dan Layden, PBOT
Chloe Ritter, PBOT
Rich Newlands, PBOT
Steve Durrant, Alta Planning and Design
Joshua Cohen, Fat Pencil Studio

DETAILED MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome

Debora welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 2:15pm.

2. Check in

Debora facilitated introductions and reviewed the agenda.

Michelle DePass spoke to the group about her appreciation for the process and work completed by the SAC. Debora then noted that that Matt Hennessee had sent an email to the SAC as he did not expect to be able to attend today's meeting (though he was able to join the meeting later). In his email, he also expressed appreciation for the group's work.

3. Starting Public Comment Period

No members of the public requested to make comments before the meeting.

4. Review and discuss DRAFT recommendation to the City

a. Draft recommendation document

Prior to the meeting, Debora had requested comments from SAC members on the draft recommendations document, and she incorporated comments received as of yesterday evening (April 2). A few more comments were made after this was sent out, so they will be discussed and incorporated today.

Debora walked the SAC through the Draft Recommendations document. She said the SAC probably did not need to review the background. She also pointed out that Matt Hennessee had made a brief comment on the document overall, expressing his regret at losing a traffic lane but understanding the space limitations that led to this decision.

Debora led discussion on each item in the Draft Recommendations:

Item #1: Left-hand buffered bike lane

No comments were made on this item.

Item #2: Shared left-turn lane/bikeway

Allan asked how PBOT will know if this works, since it hasn't been done before. Ellen referred to the SAC's outcomes, which have specific measures. Rob added they could measure some of the outcomes through intercept surveys. Michelle DePass asked how drivers could be intercepted. Rob replied that they would probably focus more on businesses, pedestrians and bicyclists. Debora asked what would happen if the surveys showed it didn't work. Ellen replied that based on the feedback, the fallback facility types to try instead of the shared lane could be either a left-side regular bike lane or a left-side buffered bike lane. The process would bring the question back to the community. Michelle asked if this was a pilot, and how long it would last. Ellen said yes, the City would likely view the shared lane as a pilot, and how long it lasted would depend on how well it was working. Ellen noted that the City has a responsibility to make sure whatever is implemented is safe.

Shara said the analysis should include the whole corridor (including Rodney), not just the one street (Williams). Ellen said the analysis should look at whether there is diversion to parallel streets, which would include Rodney. Debora asked how a pilot would affect the recommendations. Diana said the SAC could come back in a year or more. Jana reminded the group that Item #6 described next steps, which they will discuss shortly.

Item # 3: Fargo to Fremont (Transitions from buffered bike lane to shared lane)

Ellen commented that she agrees with the language, "encouraging PBOT to design safe and comfortable transitions", given the uncertainty from both the SAC and the City of how this section will work. The City is still in the process of figuring out the best way to do that. No one on the SAC had comments on this item.

Item # 4: Traffic Speed

Debora read Matt Hennessee's emailed comments. He recommended changing the requested speed limit to 25 mph, not 20, because he was concerned that new businesses and others in this corridor will be hurt by congestion. As businesses rely on the ease of people getting to them, 20mph might be too slow and could cause congestion. (Pastor Hennessee was able to join the meeting at this point.)

Noni asked who had recommended a 20 mph speed limit. Debora said it was discussed at the last meeting. She thinks it came out of the working group and was presented by Paul. Steve added that they had discussed this as a safety measure because of the level of injury caused by vehicles travelling 20 versus 30 mph.

Michelle DePass asked how feasible it is to change to speed limits, given the assumption that this is usually a State decision. Rob replied there are questions of legality as well as of actual behavior. Posting a speed limit does not necessarily change behavior. It may be possible to get approval for 20 mph in the short business district, but it probably is not practical to get 20 mph for the whole street. It may be possible to get 25 mph. Michelle noted that there are 20 mph

school zones or crossings. Ellen clarified that those signs say “when children are present”. Michelle asked if it is possible to add flashing lights, and Ellen responded that the project team would look at those school zones as the design progressed.

Debora asked if the SAC liked the idea of recommending 20 mph in the commercial area, and change the rest of the road to 25 mph. She noted that part of the rationale was to manage speeds. Michelle DePass asked why not make the limit 25 mph, which is similar to other commercial districts, and then enforce it.

Pastor Hennessee had submitted language for this item, recommending the speed be set at 25 mph, or what the traffic engineer deemed reasonable. Diana agreed with this language. Shara seconded this opinion, saying that 20 seemed to low, 30 too high (sending the wrong signal), but that 25 seemed like a good balance.

Jana moved to change the wording on Item #4 to “allow the traffic engineers to deem the best speed for N Williams”, and to not recommend a specific speed. Pastor Hennessee seconded the motion. Debora asked for a hand vote to indicate approval. 15 of the 17 SAC members present voted yes, giving a greater than 2/3 majority. This change was accepted.

Item #5: Parking

Debora explained that parking had not been discussed before, but she had added this item so they could discuss it. Due to concerns about the visibility of pedestrians, they could remove two parking spots near the intersections. The SAC had also talked about more curb extensions. Allan said they should just recommend that the City solve pedestrian visibility issues without dictating specific solutions. Irek disagreed, saying that they should be more specific because the City’s approach is not currently working. Michelle DePass agreed with Irek. Allan then asked why the SAC did not simply recommend curb extensions instead of parking removal.

Diana asked whether the bike corrals and planters shown in the plans were permanent. Rob agreed with Allan that curb extensions are ideal, but they are expensive so the City needed to prioritize locations. He also noted that with one lane of traffic, visibility will be improved, but still, curb extensions are better. Diana said part of her interest in was to improve the overall streetscape, and the planters at the diverters look like a good opportunity for that.

Steve Bozzone mentioned that State law says cars cannot park within 20’ of a crosswalk, but this is not enforced by the City. Also, vehicles over six feet high cannot park within 50’ of a crosswalk. This also is not always enforced.

Irek agreed that planters act as de facto curb extensions, but he would still like to recommend something more, especially at Failing and Williams. Melissa noted that Failing was the second most cited crossing after Cook in the Community Forum survey responses. Debora agreed the planters and moving of lanes would help, though she’s still concerned about permanence.

Steve said that there would still be a visibility problem on the east side. Restricting the parking 20 or 50 feet back on the right side would improve visibility. Ben asked whether the lane would be closer to the right, reducing visibility, since the bike lane is going away on the right side. Rob replied that the lane will be wider, so the position of the car isn’t likely to change much.

There was some discussion of whether the left shared lane would allow through traffic. City staff confirmed that the design was not intended to do this, the intention is to divert traffic at every intersection. Debora said she was OK with that.

Jerrell asked if it was essential to have a buffer between the parking and cycling, and he asked if it is customary to have solid striping between the travel lane and a parking lot entrance. He is concerned that this would prevent people from driving into the driveway of Life Change Christian Center. Rob replied that bike lane striping typically stops at intersections but usually continues through driveways (similar to yellow center lines, you can turn across it). But the line could be dashed to indicate that it is okay to turn across it.

The SAC continued to discuss parking, as they would like to make some recommendation about improving visibility, which could include parking removal. Ellen said it would be useful to the City if the SAC recommended “judicious” removal of parking as a tool for improving pedestrian visibility where needed. This could still acknowledge the importance of on-street parking.

Allan asked to recommend Ellen’s language, but given their concerns they should also recommend that curb extensions should be added at every block in the commercial district as developers build it up. He asked if the developers should be required to pay for curb extensions. Michelle DePass asked if there was a way to put this in permits. Ellen said the City would have to adopt a plan before being able to require this.

Ellen suggested that Item #5 be called “Pedestrian Visibility”. Pastor Hennessee agreed with this, and agreed with Diana’s idea that they use planters instead of curb extensions when possible because it makes a statement and accomplishes a greater goal.

Shara asked about the enforcement piece. She noted that, for example, during Blazer games, people actually park in the crosswalk, and this isn’t enforced. Shara hoped the enforcement could be increased at least during the transition phase. Rob replied the best approach is “complaint-based”, and that there are swing-shift officers who can enforce parking.

Item #6: Traffic Signals (Williams/Cook, Vancouver/Cook, Williams/Stanton)

Allan said he had concerns that the signals will be “value engineered out”, as was said about the Williams/Stanton signal during public comment a few weeks ago. He feels Legacy should have paid for this in the past. However, he thinks they should recommend signals even if there is a chance they won’t be installed.

Jana worries that the recommendation doesn’t reflect whether the SAC feels strongly about the signal. She asked if this recommendation should pack a “bigger punch” – that is, should the SAC make this a bigger priority so that the decision to build it won’t be based on affordability. If their most important priority is an expensive element, maybe the SAC should prioritize that first. Pastor Hennessee noted that the Stanton signal has been a concern for many years, as reflected by Mrs. Pauline Bradford during a previous public comment period. Pushing this recommendation in part is a way of honoring the history of this request.

Jana reiterated that if the SAC feels this is a priority, the language should be stronger. Diana suggested that the language could say “it is imperative” to install signals. Shara commented that if there is a reason that the signal isn’t needed, the City should explain this. The reason a signal isn’t installed shouldn’t just be “there is not enough money”. Debora asked if the SAC needed

facts about the reason for the signal, which would take more time, or does the SAC need to make a signal a strong recommendation

Ellen noted that the signal at Williams and Stanton was mentioned in the Russell Streetscape Plan ten years ago. She said the signal was determined then not to be warranted, based on their analysis, but the City made other improvements, including pedestrian improvements. She pointed out that the base improvements included a rapid-flash beacon at Stanton.

Mrs. Easterly said that conversations with New Seasons indicated that they were going to contribute to the cost of a signal at Cook. She feels that, similarly, Emanuel Hospital should pay for the cost of the signal at Stanton. The hospital is the reason this signal is imperative, in addition to the fact that the street is extra wide and offset at that intersection.

Debora clarified that Mrs. Easterly wanted the recommendations to include language asking that the City require Emanuel to pay for this signal. Debora asked the staff if the City would be able to require this. Dan explained there is an SDC (System Development Charge) that goes towards projects. Ellen and Ben reminded the SAC that the SDC fund was underfunded. Dan said that another approach could be a negotiation to require the signal as part of the land use action when something is built on Williams.

Mrs. Easterly said the hospital recently called a community meeting to ask “why the community hates Emanuel”. The hospital wants to know how to change this sentiment, and this could be an opportunity to talk about the signal.

Allan noted that since the traffic volumes are too low to “warrant” a signal, the community or the hospital could put a signal there but the City wouldn’t pay for it.

Debora reminded the SAC about Jana’s suggestion – instead of simply recommending the signal they could ask for it. Rob asked to be reminded of what the SAC hopes the signal will do. Paul replied that his observations and many conversations with Mrs. Pauline Bradford indicated that there is a long history of cars being broadsided at this intersection. Collisions often happen at night and when people are agitated because they are on their way to the hospital. They don’t always look for traffic because of this. Paul also disagreed with Ellen’s comment about the Russell study. He felt that study was flawed because it didn’t look deeply enough at fatal accidents. Debora also noted that drivers can’t see traffic even when turning right onto Williams from Stanton. Paul also added there is a new school, there are children trying to cross to the park.

Debora reiterated that the recommendations could benefit from stronger language regarding the signal. Maybe the SAC should not even use the term “recommend”, but use something stronger. Pastor Hennessee added that they should include language about approaching the hospital for “good neighbor” discussions. Paul added that instead of having the City approach the hospital, the SAC should take this action moving forward as a community effort. However, it should still be included in the recommendations so there is a record of this. Matt added that this is perfect time to honor history since the new hospital administration is interested in reaching out.

Jana asked who would approach the hospital administration. Mrs. Easterly would be a good point person to start as she had already attended a meeting with the hospital, and she agreed. Pastor Hennessee and Michelle DePass also offered to help.

Carl asked Rob if adding signals would be an opportunity to control speed through signal timing. Rob agreed that the more signals there are, the easier it is to use the signals to progress the traffic at a certain speed. Carl asked the SAC if they should include this in the recommendation.

Michelle DePass said she has concerns about increased traffic based on new residents. She asked if the trips from those residents would increase traffic volume enough to warrant a light. Rob said the residents were more likely to impact parking and pedestrian activity. The new residential developments will probably add about 300 extra cars, which won't increase overall traffic volumes that much on a road that already has many thousands of trips per day.

Noni clarified that the documents they had today (including the draft recommendations and the graphic representations) were not the final draft. These recommendations and the designs in the handouts were not created in a separate meeting; they are the City's attempt to draw what the SAC voted on at the March 20 meeting.

Item #7: Bus stop relocations

Jana asked why they were "encouraging" instead of "recommending" bus stop relocations. Rob said that TriMet seemed willing to work with the City and the SAC. Shara noted as a public entity, TriMet should listen to taxpayers. Rob said TriMet often runs into difficulties of businesses NOT wanting a stop in front of them, so support from a public committee like the SAC would help TriMet.

The SAC agreed to change back to "recommending" bus stop relocation, and for clarity's sake they changed the wording to recommend moving a stop to the "north" side of the intersection instead of the "far side".

Allan expressed concern that, while it's easy to remove a bus stop, it's expensive to move or add stops. He worried that since many stops on Williams are close together, this might hurt service if stops are removed instead of moved. He also noted that the stop at Graham (by the island) will not allow space for both a bus and a car. He said it is good if TriMet is looking at all the stops. Debora clarified that they're also asking about one stop in particular (at Fremont). Allan agreed they should let TriMet work out the details.

Item #8: Honoring the History of Williams Avenue

Debora noted that lots of changes have been made to this section and asked for comments.

Jana liked how this was written but wanted more clarification on what "elements" of the Williams Project will be used. Michelle DePass said she would be happy to write an explanation of what that would look like. She also said that she wanted to add Business Owners to the first bullet.

Michelle DePass will write a sentence to clarify what elements of the traffic project will be used in the honoring history project.

Item #12: Housing

Diana asked Debora to skip ahead to this item because she wants to discuss it before she has to leave. She feels that developers tend to use lower quality materials for affordable housing, and if the SAC requires more affordable housing the neighborhood construction quality could suffer.

Diana doesn't want to remove suggestions for affordable housing, but doesn't want to encourage the corridor be developed with only affordable housing.

Michelle DePass said they've discussed this. She said, for example, MLK has "crappy" affordable housing. Williams has nicer housing. She would like to see a mix of housing affordability. She wants to encourage a mix of people (diversity in looks, incomes, etc), not a homogeneous suburb. However, given the development that has already occurred and is planned, she also doesn't think Williams will ever be all affordable.

Allan said that some people on the SAC have more experience than others on affordable housing, so it may not be possible for the whole group to make specific housing recommendations at this time. However, the SAC could recommend moving forward with this discussion in general. Laurie agrees they should be careful not to push single family housing out.

Debora agreed that the whole group has not had an opportunity to discuss this, and that she and some of the others aren't as informed about the issues. Debora suggested recommending that the City form a citizen committee about affordable housing in this corridor. Michelle DePass commented that the City should study the unintended consequences of requiring affordable housing. Paul added that if they want to recommend a committee they should make sure the City includes people like those in the SAC, not just developers.

Steve worried about watering the recommendation down. He said the smaller group had discussed some of the tools for making housing affordable. Shara felt the housing recommendation was outside the purview of the SAC, as the project was on Traffic Safety. Michelle DePass disagreed, noting that race wasn't supposed to be part of the project, but it was important to include, and housing is also important. Debora agreed that a housing recommendation belongs in the project, but she's concerned that only a few people in the SAC were part of the discussion.

Pastor Hennessee clarified for the media that the entire committee was invited to the working group meeting where housing was discussed, but not everyone was able to attend.

Michelle DePass said that some people were still uncertain about the technical terms. Ellen said the recommendation of a housing committee could replace the technical recommendations, but she suggested keeping the recommendations about seeking an urban renewal area (URA) program.

Debora asked Paul and Mrs. Easterly if they could accept this change. Paul felt it was probably the best he'd get, but worried that a committee would not have the emphasis of the SAC's recommendation.

Debora asked for a show of hands on making this change (to recommend a committee on housing). There was a greater than two-thirds majority in favor, so it passed.

Item #9: Safety Campaign

Allan asked if they wanted to limit the amount of funds for the safety campaign so would not take too much from the infrastructure funds. He suggested they limit the safety campaign to 10% of the total budget. Laurie asked how much the Honoring History would receive, as this was part

of the safety campaign. Michelle DePass asked if they could recommend 15% of the budget for both safety and history combined.

Steve said he didn't think they were ready to break down the budget in this detail. Jana agreed that if they start budgeting for one item, they have to budget all of it. Laurie was concerned the Honoring History project could get lost. Carl felt that though safety education was important, the infrastructure was more important.

Debora confirmed that the committee leaned away from putting in specific budget amounts.

Item # 10: Neighborhood Greenways

No comments or changes were made to this section.

Item #11: Future Outreach and Actions by PBOT and the City of Portland

No comments or changes were made to this section.

Item #13: Project Funding and Phasing

No comments or changes were made to this section.

Some committee members wanted to go back to Item # 5 (Pedestrian Visibility, was Parking). Irek commented that Failing Street should to be put back in this recommendation.

Debora said that, because it was already 2:00 p.m., for this meeting she would rather talk about the other agenda items. She reminded the SAC that they will receive this updated draft anyways.

5. Vote on whether to adopt recommendations

Steve asked what the next step in the process was. Debora said the SAC couldn't approve the draft recommendations now because there was too much for people to process. She asked if everyone was comfortable with an email vote, because another meeting was not in the budget.

Ben asked what a two-thirds majority would be by email. Ellen replied that it would be two-thirds of the total response, that the people responding would constitute attendance. Ellen said she would follow up and try to get as many responses as possible.

6. Discuss whether the City should hold another open house

Allan asked if there would be more chances to comment on the designs. It was agreed that the City should have another open house to go over this and share the SAC's recommendations with the public. Ellen will send out possible dates.

As another next step, Debora confirmed that Mrs. Easterly will follow up with Emanuel Hospital about the signal at Williams and Stanton.

For next steps in general, Ellen confirmed that this was the last scheduled meeting. After the open house, and after the pilot project, the City may ask the SAC to reconvene.

7. Ending Public Comment period

Russ Willis said he was pleased to hear the conversation about honoring history, even though it was rushed. He said you can't go wrong on traffic safety if you address pedestrian safety, for example at Stanton, pulling back parking could help traffic as well as pedestrians. He said a signal at Failing should be included as a possibility because it will help with signal progression. He also urged the SAC to prevent affordable housing and equity from falling off the table.

Lieutenant Eric Schober said he is second in command at the traffic division of the Police Bureau. From his point of view, deviation from the normal traffic flow (such as the left-side bike lane) will cause driver confusion. He has seen very successful bike lanes in other parts of town where traffic is separated. He doesn't like to mix major traffic flows with bicycles, it's more successful to move bikes off the main street. He would recommend more utilization of Rodney or other side streets. He also has a perspective on the enforcement piece, noting that major street changes should be carefully designed (for example, the freeway entrance on SE Willow was a terrible design). The committee should consider this in their recommendations.

Gregg Lavender said he works with the Friends of the Children group and lots of other people in the area, including traffic safety education at the hospital. He appreciates that Williams isn't turning into a major arterial like 122nd or 82nd.

8. Thank you and adjournment

Debora thanked the committee and said they would receive more information via email. She adjourned the meeting at 2:20pm.

Meeting notes prepared by Chloe Ritter and Ellen Vanderslice.