

Sam
Adams
Mayor

Tom
Miller
Director

**North Williams Traffic Safety and Operations Project
Stakeholder Advisory Committee April 5th, 2011 meeting notes**

SAC members in attendance (in alphabetical order by first name)

Allan Rudwick, Neighbor
Bekah Cardwell, Port City Development
Chris McGraw (for Ben Foote), Neighbor
Debora Leopold Hutchins, Sistas Weekend Cyclers
Diana Moosman, MOSI Architecture
Irek Wielgosz, King Neighborhood Association
Jerrell Waddell, Life Change Christian Center
Jorge Guerra, Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
Jrdn Freeauf, Eddie Murphy Cabinets
Laurie Simpson, Eliot Neighborhood Association
Martha McElligot, Jesuit Volunteer Corps
Nathan Roll, Metropolis Cycle Repair
Pamela Weatherspoon, Legacy Emanuel Hospital
Shara Alexander, Neighbor
Steve Bozzone, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition
Susan Peithman, Bicycle Transportation Alliance

Members of the public in attendance

Magdalena Valdivieso, Cha Cha Cha
Rebecca Hamilton, Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Carol Herzberg, PDC
Russ Willis
Bernis Dorsey, Life Change Christian Center
Sharon Maxwell-Hendricks, Boanerges Group and Life Change Christian Center
Pam Johnson, PSU Engineering Student
John Souse, PSU Engineering Student

Project Staff present

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

1. Introductions

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2. Presentation: First Draft Technical Proposals for N Williams

Adrian Witte presented the range of treatments the engineers working this project believe are technically feasible. The presentation is available for review online here:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/52795248/N-Williams-SAC-Presentation-April-5>

Technical Questions from the Committee:

Why isn't a shared bus/bike lane being considered? The City considers that a downgrade. Most people prefer to bike away from motor vehicles, particularly large ones like buses, so putting them in the same lane wouldn't achieve one of the goals of this project.

Is part-time parking an option on Williams, to make space for more auto traffic at times when it's needed? Yes. It can better traffic control signage than is currently used, so that people can tell quickly when the lane is be confusing, though, and difficult for residents to keep track of; it also needs for parking and when it's for driving. But given that the road capacity on Williams is only in heavy demand 1-2 hours a day, a flexible tool like this should be considered.

How would emergency vehicles get through if there is only one lane of auto traffic? That is something we would have to figure out if N Williams had one lane of auto traffic and a cycle track, because the auto lane would have parked cars on either side. But even in cases like that, around the city, you do find that emergency vehicles can get through. People find places to pull over – fire hydrants, driveways, intersections, empty parking spaces. The auto lane would be wide, about 14 feet, not like today. And then if there's a bike lane alongside it, there would be more width for everyone to get over.

How would the bus stop work with a cycle track? There would be an island for the bus stop, but it would be challenging to design, though we do have some experience with streetcar stops. It would also be fairly expensive to do well. We'd need to take care of drainage, ADA access, unloading room for multiple wheelchairs, and pedestrian comfort when walking across the cycle track to get to the bus stop island. Also, TriMet's LIFT vans and private vehicles with wheelchair lifts would not be able to park against the sidewalk curb. Would wheelchair users roll down the block in the cycle track to get to a curb cut? Maybe we'd need to look at mid-block curb cuts for certain blocks. But would that be comfortable or would it generate conflict? It's legal for wheelchairs and scooters to be in the bike lane.

For an expensive treatment, like a cycle track with bus stop islands, it would be a long time before it could be built, right? That is generally true, but if there is a treatment that is broadly supported and more than our current budget, there is some possibility of getting more funding in the next budget year to make it happen.

What slows down auto traffic? Traffic tends to be slower on streets with only one travel lane in a given direction. Another way to slow traffic would be adding signals and setting the "signal progression" speed slower.

What if N Williams were one auto lane along its entire length (not just in Segments 2 and 5)? Would that divert traffic to other streets? Where? Yes, it could divert some traffic. It's an important policy question. Congestion could have an impact on bus service, and an impact on local businesses.

Comments from Committee members:

Shara: Slowing traffic and increasing pedestrian visibility seems consistent with many of the "measures of success" committee members offered at the last meeting.

3. Left side vs. Right side bicycle treatment

Michelle asked the group if they could discuss and possibly vote on whether project staff should keep investigating a left-side bike facility.

Irek asked why a left side bike facility is being considered. Ellen responded that it eliminates the interaction between the buses and the bike traffic.

Shara stated that she would not be comfortable with a left side bike lane. She bikes with kids often [and lives east of N Williams], and she asks that she not be made to cross two lanes of car traffic with a bunch of kids.

Jerrell said that before they decide on these different options we really need to hear from the broader community what they think, before we push something onto them that affects them.

Jrdn stated that a left side bike facility would ruin access to Eddie Murphy Cabinets' loading dock.

Allan pointed out that bicyclists want to be separated from the bus, so if that separation can be achieved with a cycle track on the right side then a left side treatment wouldn't be necessary.

Deborah said that she would find a left side treatment confusing.

When Michelle asked the group if anyone felt that a left side facility was promising, and if they wanted to speak up for it, no one did.

4. Public Comment

Russ Willis said that he wanted everyone to keep in mind that N Williams is designated a "neighborhood collector" street for auto traffic. He was concerned that he had heard very little about pedestrians in the presentation, and he thinks pedestrian access is very important, and wonders if we should be telling people bicycling to just slow down a little bit. He takes exception to the statement (regarding a shared bus/bike lane) that "shared is a downgrade."

Magdalena Valdivieso expressed her concern that there would be a bottleneck if the street went from two lanes to one. She also urged the Committee to consider not just current traffic but future demands on the street from future development. The district will need parking, and she doesn't see

any need to reduce the number of auto lanes. She would rather see it done with signs and with education. She values the bike and pedestrian traffic in the neighborhood very much, but she says you really have to have the car traffic to make it work.

Sharon Maxwell-Hendricks expressed her concern that schools were not yet involved in this project. She was hit by a car as a child and is very concerned about children's safety. She also wants to see a broader community involved in the project. She suggested we look back to the Albina Community Plan and PDC's Vancouver/Williams Infill Strategy. Finally, she asked why this was being discussed for N Williams Avenue, when other parallel streets like Rodney seem to her more appropriate for so much bicycle traffic.

Bernis Dorsey asked if bicycle traffic is highest during the peak afternoon hour. (Yes.) He wondered if there could be an alternative route for bike traffic, and whether that has been explored, rather than putting so much bike traffic on N Williams.

Rebecca Hamilton said that she preferred a bike lane on the right side of the street. She likes the concept of transit stop islands, because they give pedestrians a refuge to get part way across the street. She would want to see crossing pedestrians have all possible advantages on N Williams.

5. Wrap up

The next SAC meeting will be held on May 3rd, from noon to 1:30 pm, at the Red Cross in Training Room 11.