

Sam
Adams
Mayor

Tom
Miller
Director

**North Williams Traffic Operations and Safety Project
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**
March 6, 2012, 12:00 – 2:00 pm
Oregon Red Cross, 3131 N Vancouver Ave, Training Room 11
Meeting No. 14 Notes

Summary of actions taken or planned in this meeting:

- The SAC will meet again March 20 to make a decision
- Ellen will check in with the SAC to "take their temperature" on the options

Meeting attendance

Committee members in attendance:

Debora Leopold Hutchins, Sistas
Weekend Cyclers (Committee Chair)
Allan Rudwick, Neighbor
Ben Foote, Neighbor
Caitlin Wood, Disability Rights Oregon
(by telephone)
Gahlana Easterly, Property owner
Pastor Jerrell Waddell, New Life
Christian Center
Jana McLellan, Port City Development
Jrdn Freeauf, Eddie's Cabinets
Laurie Simpson, Eliot Neighborhood
Association
Melissa Lafayette, Jesuit Volunteer
Corps Northwest
Michelle DePass, Neighbor
Nathan Roll, Metropolis Cycle Repair
Noni Causey, Neighbor
Pamela Weatherspoon Reed, Legacy
Emanuel Hospital
Paul Anthony, Humboldt Neighborhood
Association
Shara Alexander, Neighbor
Susan Peithman, BTA
Steve Bozzone, Willamette Pedestrian
Coalition

Committee members absent:

Diana Moosman, MOSI Architects
Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Boise
Neighborhood Association
Pastor Matt Hennessee, Vancouver Baptist
Church
Dwight Terry, Terry Family Funeral Home
Irek Wielgosz, King Neighborhood
Association
Jazzmin Reece, Urban League Young
Professionals
Kenneth Doswell, Betty Jean Couture
Mychal Tetteh, Village Market at New
Columbia

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Members of the public in attendance:

David Lee, Neighbor
Carl Larson, BTA
Amy Lubitow, PSU
Thad Miller, PSU
Angela Kremer, Eliot N.A.
Russ Willis, citizen
Cathy Galbraith, Bosco-Milligan Foundation
Stephen Lamb, resident
Charles Ewing, PSU
Pauline Bradford
David Sweet, NECN
Paige Coleman, NECN
Paul Comery, neighbor, PSU student, biker
Joshua Cohen, Fat Pencil Studio
Pauline Bradford, neighbor

Media in attendance:

Jonathan Maus, BikePortland.org
Cornelius Swart, The Oregonian

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
Peter Koonce, PBOT
Rich Newlands, PBOT
Adrian Witte, Alta Planning and Design

DETAILED MEETING NOTES

Agenda item 1. Welcome (Chair Debora Leopold Hutchins)

Debora called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

Agenda item 2. Check-in and introductions

Debora facilitated introductions around the table. She also reminded the public that they would have an opportunity to comment either at the beginning or the end of the meeting. Ellen noted that Eric Engstrom, the speaker for agenda item no. 3, would be late, and Debora said we would defer his agenda item until he arrived.

Public comment:

Steven Lamb suggested a variation on Option 2a, which was to install a left-side bike lane. He said this would reduce dooring and provide other benefits. He feels the choice of which side of the street the bikeway will be on should be a ‘votable’ option.

Agenda item 4. Update on concept strategies for integrating traffic safety interventions on North Williams (Ellen and project team)

- a. Review of original four concepts presented February 21

Ellen briefly reviewed the four options discussed at the last meeting. She reminded the committee that all of the options have a package of crossing improvements and a proposed signal at Cook.

- **Option 1a** is a left-side cycle-track option with a single motor vehicle lane;
- **Option 2a** is a right-side buffered bike lane with a single motor vehicle lane for the entire length of the corridor. Ellen noted that a single motor vehicle lane provides a lot of benefits related to the committee’s top outcomes;

- **Option 2b** is similar to 2a, but with two motor vehicle lanes in the center segments;
- **Option 3** is ‘spot improvements’ with two motor vehicle lanes maintained through the entire length of the corridor.

b. Presentation of additional concepts as suggested February 21

Ellen discussed some additional options that were suggested at the last meeting. One proposed idea – the suggestion of diagonal parking in the center of the road – was briefly analyzed and determined not to be feasible for a number of reasons. For example, it doesn’t allow movement from one side of the street to the other, and it loses parking. From ideas discussed at the last meeting, some new options were developed:

- **Option 2c** is a hybrid of 2b and 3. It has a right-side buffered bike lane with a single motor vehicle lane in the southern segments only.
- Another option considered was the Rodney Street greenway. The greenway team looked at this parallel route to N Williams and considered what intersection and spot improvements would be recommended. The committee could put some piece of this into their recommendations, but Ellen reiterated that the money for the Williams project is not applicable to greenways, and that there is no intention of removing bikes from Williams.

SAC questions or comments: None were voiced at this time. Ellen said that people have contacted staff outside of the SAC meeting about a left-hand buffered bike lane option. This could be feasible as one of the ‘mix and match’ options that staff discussed last time.

- **Option 1b** is a left-side shared travel lane, shared between motor vehicles and bicycles. The concept is one motor vehicle lane “plus”, and is most likely applicable in the busiest segment (segment 4), but not the whole corridor. Ellen explained that the left lane is shared as opposed to being a dedicated bike lane. The only reason motor vehicles would go into the left lane would be to turn left, to park, or to pass slower traffic in the right lane. This would also include diverters at intersections to prevent motor vehicles from using the lane for through travel.

SAC questions or comments:

Susan asked if this is a left-side bike lane. Ellen clarified this is a shared lane, not an exclusive bike lane. Susan asked whether this design would be north of Beech as well. Ellen replied that one thought was to pair this with a left-side cycle-track in other segments.

Shara asked why this “shared lane” couldn’t be put on the right side. Ellen explained that there is no way to close off the north side of intersections to motor vehicles on the right side, because buses need to get through.

Susan asked whether there would be other markings or signage to indicate shared space besides sharrows and narrower lanes. Rob Burchfield said that sharrows are the standard marking for this. Susan clarified that she was thinking of “shared bus/bike lane” type markings. Rob responded that the most important goal with markings is to make sure drivers know the left lane is not a through travel lane.

Gahlana asked whether this has this been applied elsewhere. Ellen replied no, this is new idea.

Melissa asked what right-turning bikes do in this situation. Ellen said that bikes would have to merge to the right lane – this would not include a two-stage turn option because it's difficult to do from the left. Adrian said they've looked at this in the past. Rob said that most bikes would probably merge right anyway. Debora asked whether bikes merging right would increase bike-bus conflicts. Rob replied that the bike-bus conflicts are largely caused by "leapfrogging" when they're both traveling through on the right side.

Noni clarified that this treatment is suggested only in Segment 4 only (paired with cycle-track in other segments).

- **Option of rush hour parking restrictions:** This was another suggestion from the last meeting which would prohibit parking on the right side during peak travel times, allowing more capacity for peak hour bicycle traffic. Rob said this would require *dynamic* parking signage. Rob explained that hours when parking was prohibited, the signs would show a 'P' in a red circle with a slash through it; when parking was allowed the 'P' would be in a green circle. There would also be regular static signs listing parking hours. This kind of lane exists in other places, but without dynamic signs. This is a little different than other changeable lanes because there is no time that cars should be driving in it – it is either car parking or bike travel.

SAC questions or comments:

Laurie asked whether the city had heard of John Forester, a proponent of cyclists operating more like vehicles. Rob replied that, yes, the city has heard of him. Forester is considered the "guru" of vehicular cycling; however, this approach is not the City's philosophy towards bicycle travel. Laurie wondered whether Forester's ideas included any suggestions for shared road use. Rob said no, and other SAC members clarified that the "vehicular cycling" concept that Forester promotes is opposed to any physical street improvements for cyclists as he believes that cyclists should be skilled enough to ride with traffic.

Noni asked whether this shared rush hour lane would also be in segment 4. Ellen confirmed that it would be.

Agenda item 3. Address the question of traffic impacts from development

- a. Guest presenter Eric Engstrom, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS)

Eric explained that his role is managing the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is a long-range development and infrastructure plan. Once each decade, BPS is required to perform a periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan. In this review, staff performs a few scenario forecasts, including a scenario with no change to zoning and plans. In these forecasts, the city does not assume a complete build-out of the zoning capacity. Physically there is enough zoning capacity for 100 years of growth, but the assumed build-out is scaled back a bit from this. The forecasting scenarios also include some assumptions about *where* growth will happen for the next 25 years.

This process is not done yet, but the city is starting to get a sense of where infrastructure and other impacts will be.

Eric showed city-wide map with streets highlighted where traffic issues are predicted, assuming the current zoning build-out. There do not appear to be any issues with traffic on Williams in this model. The city is still in the process of modeling different alternatives, for example: What if we go with current policies? What if we put more emphasis on Central City growth? What if we distribute more growth to neighborhood centers? Later this fall or in early 2013, there will be more opportunity for public comment on this review.

Rob asked Eric to respond to a question brought up at the last meeting: is the current new growth on Williams what BPS expected, or is it more than was expected (for example, new housing and grocery store developments)? Eric replied that these are within the range of what was expected.

b. Questions and discussion (Debora)

Ben asked what rate of growth was used in model. Eric said that the city started with Metro's 2035 population forecast. Ben clarified that this is effectively a couple of percent a year, and asked what the 2035 population number was. Eric said he did not have that number on hand, but estimated that 100,000 new households were predicted.

Ben asked where development would be in the dispersed neighborhood center scenario. Eric said that the scenario which emphasized Central City growth might affect the south end of the Williams corridor. He said that locations haven't been selected for a dispersed neighborhood scenario, but he would expect that existing commercial nodes would be emphasized.

Michelle DePass asked how accurate population projections are in the assumptions, noting that there are many different ideas about whether the population will grow quickly or not. Eric said that overall, the region's long-term population forecasts have been fairly accurate in terms of scale; however it is more difficult to predict exact location of growth. Rob clarified that BPS forecasts both housing and jobs.

Gahlana noted that while the planning efforts look 50 years out, the neighborhood is experiencing a building spike right now. She asked how Williams is zoned now. Eric replied that the zoning is not continuous on the corridor. North of Skidmore it is more of a medium-density residential zoning (called "R1"). South of Skidmore it is zoned "ExD", usually with design overlay zones. Gahlana noted that there were non-residential uses in the R1 area to the north. Eric explained that R1 doesn't allow commercial uses, but there are little pockets of commercial zoning along the corridor.

Gahlana asked whether the R1 zoning north of Skidmore meant that the neighborhood would not have to worry about large-scale housing developments. Eric said yes, unless someone changes zoning.

Laurie noted that there is a current proposal to up-zone lower Williams and asked if that would affect the city's projections. Eric said that BPS is following the N/NE Quadrant plans closely as a separate process. It is not factored in yet but it will be in later scenarios.

Michelle Poyourow asked Eric to clarify what the highlighted traffic streets mean for street users. Eric said the highlighted streets represent a proxy for congestion during the peak hour. It only looks at auto traffic.

Ben asked whether the modeling process includes bicycles. Eric said that bicycles are not included in the same way as autos. BPS is working with PBOT on mode split assumptions but the model won't get to the same level of detail, for example it won't estimate how many bikes use the street. Ben asked if the model implied an assumed mode split. Rob said the city uses the Metro model, and it doesn't explicitly model a number of bike trips. The model tries to estimate a mode split and then takes that number of trips out before assigning transit and auto trips. Ben asked if most planners in the region use the Metro model. Eric said that is the starting point for all the jurisdictions. Ellen noted that Metro and others nationally are working on this problem of estimating bike trips.

Agenda item 4c. Review of concept option matrix showing in detail how each option addresses the top ten outcomes (Ellen)

Ellen discussed the Evaluation Criteria Matrix that illustrates how each option affected the adopted top ten outcomes. The city also changed the representation of impacts, using empty-to-full "Harvey" balls instead of red-yellow-green. Ellen asked whether the SAC wants to go through this now, or take time to process this information first.

Debora noted that the city is trying to clarify how the project team ranked different options according to the outcomes, in response to concerns last time about the subjectivity of the color designations. This might not change how individual SAC members feel about the options or the ratings, but the project team is trying to explain their process.

Michelle DePass asked whether the Harvey balls are less subjective than the colors. Ellen said the rankings are still subjective, and this is just an exercise, but the matrix tries to show how each measure relates to the outcomes. If the committee wants to quantify the outcomes or measures, they will have to discuss weighting (these measures are completely unweighted).

Steve asked whether the outcomes are listed in order of importance. Ellen said they are listed in the rank order that came out of the ranking exercise the SAC did.

Debora suggested that the SAC take time to look at these in relation to the old and new options and consider the differences from red-yellow-green assessment.

Letter from the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (Paige Coleman) Debora distributed copies of this letter to the SAC. The letter expresses the NECN's view that the status quo is not acceptable and urges the SAC and project team to continue to keep safety as a priority.

Agenda item 5. Frame today's discussion with a review of proposed next steps (Debora)

(and Agenda item 6. Discussion)

Debora has heard from many that they would like to move past discussion to a recommendation. She said the SAC could do that today if people are comfortable with it, though they have been given additional options and features. Another option is to do a pilot project, but keep in mind the SAC would be asked to come back and review the outcome of a pilot.

Shara asked for a number for the left-side buffered bike lane option. Ellen labeled it Option 4a.

Allan said there were four decisions needed. First, should the bikeway be on the right or left? Second, will the road be skinny at the south end, and where does that end? Third, will the road be skinny at the north end, and where does that begin? Fourth, what should be done with Segment 4 (the busiest segment)? He suggested that the fourth decision might be left towards the end because it is the most complex. Ben asked whether any of these decisions drive other things. For example, it might be necessary to think about Segment 4 before deciding other things.

Jrdn suggested that the committee could start eliminating things because they are getting more overwhelmed each meeting. He agrees that they should start discussing the proposed options. Jrdn expressed several concerns about a left-side bikeway. First, it's different – people are used to bikes on the right side. Also, as a cyclist, he thinks most north-bound cyclists are turning east to get to their homes. Another concern is that with a cycle-track on the left side, east-bound cars would have to pull out into the bike lane and the parking lane to see north-bound traffic. He is also concerned that New Seasons maybe a game changer because of cars turning into the grocery store parking lot. Jrdn also said there may be conflicts for businesses on left side of the road. For example, trucks park by his cabinet store, the firehouse supply, and the funeral home. Overall he said while he likes that a left-side bikeway addresses the bike-bus conflict, there are too many other tradeoffs. He prefers Options 2a and 2b.

Debora asked if the committee wanted to discuss the elimination of left-side bikeway options.

Shara clarified that eliminating the left-side bike lane would eliminate Option 1b (left-side shared lane), which she appreciated as a creative solution. She agreed with Jrdn's concerns.

Susan asked whether there was any way to combine a right-side buffered bike lane with a shared lane similar to Option 1b. Ellen and Rob explained that there is no way to divert one type of traffic (cars) but not another (buses). Susan noted that Option 2a addresses the bike-bus conflict, but with Option 2b, Segments 3-5 remain "as is" and does not mitigate bike-bus conflicts and other issues in a very busy section.

Ben asked Jrdn if there is a loading zone near his business. Jrdn said it is essentially a driveway in front of their garage door – an "illegal" loading zone in a no-parking. Shara asked if trucks block the sidewalk and traffic there. Jrdn said they often do. Ben asked the city if there is a solution for this. Michelle Poyourow clarify that this is two different concerns: first, double parking, and second, trucks backing up into the garage. Rob said that another option ("4b") could be a left-side buffered bike lane instead of a cycle-track.

Michelle Poyourow projected a summary list of project options on the screen to help the committee keep track during their discussion:

- 1a: Left-side cycle-track with one motor vehicle (MV) lane the entire corridor
- 1b: Left-side cycle-track with one MV lane for segments 2,3, and 5, and left-side shared travel lane for segment 4
- 2a: Right-side buffered bike lane with one MV lane the entire corridor
- 2b: Right-side buffered bike lane with one MV lane for segments 2 and 5, and right-side regular bike lane with two MV lanes for segments 3-4
- 2c: Right side buffered bike lane with 1 MV lane for segments 2-3, and right-side regular bike lane with two MV lanes for segments 4-5
- 3: Two MV lanes the entire corridor for the whole corridor with spot improvements
- 4a: Left-side buffered bike lane with one MV lane the entire corridor
- 4b: Left-side buffered bike lane with one MV lane for segments 2, 3, and 5, and left-side shared travel lane for segment 4

Noni asked Rob whether the city has done much research on left-side bikeways. Rob said there are a few examples and there are not any issues that he is aware of. Ellen noted that lots of other cities use left-side lanes. Allan said he's ridden in them and didn't notice much difference except for turning or crossing movements, but the city has solutions for that. Noni clarified that bicyclists who want to turn across traffic would have to merge or use a two-stage turn.

Ben asked if staff could show a "curb-to-curb" description of Option 4b to look at how it works with Jrdn's concerns. Ellen said it was a flipped version of Option 2b. Jrdn said he didn't think a left-side buffered bike lane would be much different than current conditions.

Shara asked if there was any way to do a shared left lane all the way. Ellen said the city didn't suggest this because it's a degradation of the current separated bike lane for some users. It could be a good option in the busiest segment, but would not be as comfortable the whole way.

Steve asked for clarification of why the of right-side cycle-track option was eliminated. Ellen replied that in working with TriMet, there were multiple issues raised by the transit islands that would be needed, particularly because of the high use of LIFT buses in this corridor. Rob noted that some of the challenge would be in making successful ADA compliant pedestrian islands.

Paul asked if the committee could allow public comment before voting to take an option off the table. Debora replied that the SAC is not set up for that, and then encouraged more SAC members to voice their concerns.

Jana said she would love to eliminate options for clarity's sake, but wondered if they wanted to think in a "macro" or "micro" scale. She doesn't want to eliminate an option for one segment without thinking of the implications for the whole corridor.

Dan Layden said that the City didn't want to overwhelm the committee, and reminded them they have the option of testing things out on a segment. The SAC wouldn't have to meet frequently during the test, but would have to come back at the end of it. Jana would like to look at an easy segment for a test (such as Segment 2). Gahlana asked if the committee decides on a test, who

would decide whether it is or isn't working, what would the criteria be, and if the SAC thinks the test is not working, how would they undo it? She wondered if they would be stuck with the City's recommendation after the test. Dan said that the city would collect a lot of information during the test (such as crashes and traffic delay) and that PBOT and the SAC would look at the data together to come to an agreement on recommendations. It would be similar to the 12th Avenue overcrossing test, where the City and stakeholders worked together on traffic issues. The City wants to make sure the recommendation works for all modes.

Susan suggested it might be more empowering for the SAC to recommend a test then come back, while if they make a solid recommendation now, they close the book on this. Dan said there could be options for a second test. Rob cautioned that tests are too expensive to simply try different things to see what happens – they should test things they already think will have desirable outcomes. He also reminded them that if they wanted to test a left-side bikeway option it would have to be for the whole corridor (because they don't want to have bikes switching sides frequently).

Noni asked how long a test would last. Ellen said it would probably be done over the summer and the SAC would reconvene in August or September. Noni asked whether a test would include education. Ellen said the city assumes that the SAC will recommend some education component.

Shara questioned whether a test would show long-term behavior changes or if they would be looking at skewed results.

Laurie wondered whether it would be possible to test the shared lane at the same time as other elements. Staff replied they could test several elements at once.

Jerrell said that, in response to the comment that the city wants to see something that works for all modes, he feels the majority of the street users (drivers) are not represented at the SAC. People have said that this isn't intended as a through street, but what if that's how the street is used? He is concerned that the committee may not be considering businesses with large trucks (as Jrdn commented) and the new developments with less parking. He said it is an irritation that they want to make this work for all modes, but the focus on left-side versus right side ignores the fact that most traffic is currently vehicles. There will be more traffic issues in the future.

Allan responded to Jerrell, saying that when he drives, he doesn't like to drive on the right side because he feels like a threat to cyclists. He believes driving will be more comfortable with a single motor vehicle lane and plenty of room for the bicycles.

Shara also responded to Jerrell's comments, noting that in addition to representing drivers, the committee also should represent children and other street users not present.

Gahlana wondered how the committee went from discussing a little experiment to discussing the whole corridor. Debora noted that the committee is not at a point of deciding anything. Michelle DePass reiterated that the SAC wants to do a pilot only if they think it will work, but noted that she's also worried about a loss of momentum with testing.

Debora proposed that the SAC members evaluate all the options. She said each person should think about which options they are most comfortable with. Then on March 20, the committee will focus on decision, not discussion.

Noni asked what happened to the input from community meetings, such as comments about safety and comments from people that don't want a one-lane street. Debora replied all the feedback from public meetings were synthesized in the top ten outcomes developed by the SAC. These outcomes then led to the options presented by the city. Ben followed up by reading from the results of the survey done at the Community Forum. Ellen noted this document is on the website.

Steve agreed that the committee should go back and think about the options. This was part of the process of how they came up with the outcomes. Maybe members could rank the options. Ellen said she would be willing to check in with committee members to "take the SAC's temperature" on the options.

Allan asked that the City send out summaries of Options 4a and 4b.

Debora noted that the majority (by show of hands) agreed that the SAC will review the options and reconvene on March 20, and each member should have a sense of what they can live with.

Agenda item no. 7. Public Comment

Joshua Cohen noted that he created the 3-D visualizations for the options. There isn't a budget to show every option, but he offered to meet with SAC members to show different configurations.

Russ Willis appreciated that there is not a good way to for the committee to come to a decision right now, but he is concerned about what sounds like mistrust in the process.

Pauline Bradford noted that safety was a top priority for this project. She said that for 15 years the neighborhood has tried to get a light at Williams and Stanton. PBOT had said they didn't have enough money for the signal but finally it was to be funded as part of the Interstate Urban Renewal Area. Now she wonders who sabotaged the signal project, and asked how there are funds for the N Williams corridor but no funds for the signal. That intersection is near schools, parks, and other destinations. Ellen responded that PBOT did ask the PDC about funds for this project and the PDC said they don't have it. Pauline asked where the money went.

Thad Miller, a PSU professor, encouraged SAC members talk to him and his colleagues about the Williams process (he also noted that his colleague, Amy Lubitow, had discussed this at the February 21 meeting).

Paul Comery is not in favor of a left-side bikeway. He agreed with Jrdn's comments about the left-side bike lane. He felt that left-turning buses (the #4) would be more dangerous for bikes than right-side conflicts. Paul is not in favor of anything that makes drivers less aware of bikes – for example, he is less visible on the SW Broadway cycle-track. He also agreed with Jerrell's comment that the primary users on the street are motor vehicles.

Angela Kremer said it would be good to think about where there were positives, not just where the problems are, to help find a place where people meet. She encouraged people to think about what is already great about the area and what *can* be great.

Debora adjourned the meeting at 2:10pm and reminded everyone about the next meeting on March 20th.

Meeting notes prepared by Chloe Ritter and Ellen Vanderslice.