

Sam
Adams
Mayor

Tom
Miller
Director

**North Williams Traffic Operations and Safety Project
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**
March 20, 2012, 12:00 – 2:00 pm
Oregon Red Cross, 3131 N Vancouver Ave, Training Room 11
Meeting No. 15 Notes

Summary of actions taken or planned in this meeting:

- The SAC agreed to support a left-side buffered bike lane from Broadway to Fargo and from Skidmore to Killingsworth, and a shared left lane between Fargo and Skidmore (similar to Option 4B, but with the shared section beginning at Fargo).
- The SAC will meet again on April 3 to finalize their recommendations.

Meeting attendance

Committee members in attendance:

Debora Leopold Hutchins, Sistas
Weekend Cyclers (Committee Chair)
Allan Rudwick, Neighbor
Ben Foote, Neighbor
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
Jrdn Freeauf, Eddie's Cabinets
Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Boise
Neighborhood Association
Pastor Matt Hennessee, Vancouver
Baptist Church
Melissa Lafayette, Jesuit Volunteer
Corps Northwest
Michelle DePass, Neighbor
Mychal Tetteh, Village Market at New
Columbia
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:

Caitlin Wood, Disability Rights Oregon
Dwight Terry, Terry Family Funeral
Home
Jazzmin Reece, Urban League Young
Professionals
Kenneth Doswell, Betty Jean Couture
Laurie Simpson, Eliot Neighborhood
Association

1120 S.W. 5th Avenue, Suite 800 • Portland, Oregon, 97204-1914 • 503-823-5185
FAX 503-823-7576 or 503-823-7371 • TTY 503-823-6868 • www.portlandoregon.gov

Members of the public in attendance:

Carl Larson, BTA
Amy Lubitow, PSU
Russ Willis, citizen
Cathy Galbraith, Bosco-Milligan Foundation
Stephen Lamb, resident
Charles Ewing, PSU
David Sweet, NECN
Maryann McCarthy
Kevin Ketchum, nearby resident
Lee Perlman
Ed Abrahamson
Elizabeth Nardi, neighbor and New Seasons Market

Media in attendance:

Cornelius Swart, The Oregonian

City and project staff in attendance:

Ellen Vanderslice, PBOT Project Manager
Michelle Poyourow, public involvement consultant
Joan Brown-Kline, public involvement consultant
Rob Burchfield, PBOT
Dan Layden, PBOT
Chloe Ritter, PBOT
Rich Newlands, PBOT
Adrian Witte, Alta Planning and Design
Joshua Cohen, Fat Pencil Studio

DETAILED MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome, Introductions (Chair Debora Leopold Hutchins)

Debora called the meeting to order at 12:13pm, welcomed everyone, and facilitated introductions.

2. Check-in (Debora) – Review agenda

No changes were made to the agenda.

3. Starting Public comment period

Steven Lamb provided a written summary his comments to committee members. He observed traffic on North Williams and feels the majority of both motorized and non-motorized vehicles turn right, not left. If this represents typical movements on the street, the committee should consider options that put bikes on left side because this helps reduce right-turn conflicts.

Cathy Galbraith felt dissatisfied at the last meeting during the presentation by Eric Engstrom, because she feels the City gave the impression that “everything’s fine” and going according to plan. However, many neighborhood plans (such as the Albina Community Plan) were not adopted with the force of law. The zoning components of many of these plans were adopted, but not necessarily other components. Also she doesn’t think the ExD zoning anticipated all the multifamily housing currently planned for the area. Nowhere else in the city has ExD zoning right next to low-density residential zones. Finally, she encourages the committee to test their preferred option, and to consider the entire community in their decision.

4. Report from the Honoring History Working Group (Michelle DePass)

Michelle acknowledged that the committee would like to honor the history and planning that Cathy just mentioned. She then shared a presentation of project ideas the Honoring History working group developed. The criteria for project success includes that the project should help bridge cultural gaps and be accessible to both new and old residents, among other items.

An idea for a shorter-term project would be to install “eyes on the street” signs or banners. These would have pictures of community members together, with messages like "We cross Williams. Please, slow down!" and could be placed along the corridor.

Another idea for a short-term project is to create a walking tour of North Williams. Laurie Simpson has already begun to develop a walking tour, so the Honoring History group would work with her to put up informational or interpretive signs. The signs would include websites and phone numbers, so people can access the information through a variety of technologies. Some possible stations along this tour could include Tillamook, Russell, Monroe, Failing, and Going. These include signature locations in African American history along the corridor.

A long-term project idea is to create a museum, community center, or some other kind of gathering place. Michelle would love to have community members involved in the development of this project.

Debora asked if there were any questions for Michelle, and no one had any. Debora encouraged people to participate in the development of these projects. Michelle added that the short-term project should be easy to fund and implement as part of the PBOT traffic operations safety project. The long-term project could be developed in partnership with the Northeast Coalition of Neighbors (NECN).

5. Report on results of outreach to SAC members regarding options (Ellen)

Ellen discussed the survey she gave to the committee on the options that were presented two weeks ago. Nineteen of the 26 members completed the survey (though only 18 results were included in the summary provided at this meeting, as one member had responded that morning). She reviewed the responses to the survey, and also provided the committee with a handout summarizing the responses.

There were no options that everyone could live with (that is, every option had at least one person say they couldn't support it). The option that received the most support was 2a (a right-side buffered bike lane). Several people indicated that they did not recommend a test; they would prefer to conclude the process. The majority of respondents agreed that Rodney should be prioritized for the Neighborhood Greenway program.

Debora asked if anyone had questions for Ellen, and no one did. Debora then informed the committee that the Bicycle Advisory Committee had submitted a letter to the City with their comments on the North Williams options.

SAC Comments and Discussion

Debora read a statement from Laurie, who was out sick today. The statement noted that the Eliot Land Use committee supports separation of bikes from motor vehicles, and they support a left-side bike facility to minimize conflicts. Laurie could support a left-side lane with a single motor vehicle lane. The Eliot Land Use committee has concerns about a shared lane with bikes and

motor vehicles. If she were there to vote, Laurie would vote for 4b (however, the committee's previous decision was that only members present could vote). Laurie concluded by stating that she felt the committee's process had been as important for its community-building as for its recommendations.

Twenty-one committee members were counted present. Debora said she felt that the committee could make a decision with the required 2/3 super-majority. Jana clarified that 14 votes were necessary for a 2/3 majority today.

Paul presented draft recommendations from a small working group that had met informally the previous week. He provided a handout of the presentation for the committee. Everyone from the SAC had been invited to the meeting. Those who were able to attend had the opportunity to discuss and explore the options using the visualization tools provided by Fat Pencil Studio consultant Joshua Cohen.

This working group had concluded from their debate that the most practical solution for the bike/bus conflict was to implement a left-side bike lane, and they felt the best way to do that with the least impact on neighborhood businesses and others was with a buffered lane, not a cycle-track. Based on these perceptions, Paul shared language the group suggested for a motion. However, given the volume of motor vehicle traffic on North Williams as many people use this as a regular route going home, they didn't think it would be feasible to restrict the road to one lane for the whole corridor. They prefer the option that includes a shared left lane for the commercial segment to give cars an "escape valve". This is similar to option 4b but with one change that would start this shared treatment at Fargo.

Paul said the group also felt a 20mph speed limit should be recommended. He noted the need for traffic signals at several locations. He then suggested that the bus stop in the right turn lane at Fremont should be moved further south, and said that the treatment would have to carefully consider how to manage the potential conflict between buses and bikes at Fremont, where a bus regularly turns left.

Paul suggested that PBOT use the Office of Neighborhood Involvement for future outreach.

Paul then discussed housing, clarifying this was not necessarily an issue the informal group discussed. He had concerns about gentrification and displacement. He felt it would be unconscionable if the SAC brought up the issue of affordable housing and then simply dropped it. The city should be pushed to more aggressively pursue affordable housing, and Paul felt the North Williams SAC should include language about affordable housing in their recommendations.

Ben, who had been present at the working group meeting, said that he didn't think the group had decided to suggest these things formally, he thought the gathering was mainly to allow committee members to improve their own understanding of the options and discuss them. Debora asked what Ben was uncomfortable with and explained that she had recommended that Paul put his presentation together, because the informal group had had such a productive conversation. Ben agreed that the conversation was productive and helpful, and explained that his main concern was that he didn't want the larger committee to feel that this smaller group was dictating something to them. Mrs. Easterly, who also was at the meeting, then clarified that the working group was not insisting that the SAC vote on their proposal, but the smaller group felt it was the "best of the worst". In a perfect world Mrs. Easterly felt that the Rodney Greenway would be the best option.

Noni clarified that any individual or group could have made a recommendation to the SAC.

Debora asked Mychal to share the comments he had previously sent in an e-mail message. Mychal explained that in his view the process had significantly improved. Regarding the project, he felt that engineering would only go so far to improve safety. He said the SAC had overlooked the broader issue of trying to put too many things in too small of a place. Mychal said he has come around to the idea that they should consider Rodney as well as Williams – though Portland has great engineers, he feels the SAC and the City should take a more conservative approach and do what we know works well: implement and promote a greenway.

6. Discuss a recommendation to the City (Debora)

Debora reviewed the SAC's Guiding Statement and purpose. She reminded the committee that they had decided that a vote with a 2/3 super-majority of SAC members present would pass. She also reminded them that they had agreed on the Top Ten outcomes and had asked the city to develop options to address those outcomes. Debora then said it was now time for the SAC to decide what options they thought would work.

Debora asked how many people wanted to see North Williams with a separated bike lane and one vehicle lane all the way through the corridor.

Susan said she would like to continue the method of agreement introduced in the survey (that is, identifying what people can live with, what they strongly support, and what they can't support).

Shara wondered if the committee could go through each option and eliminate those that a majority of the SAC said they couldn't live with.

To help illustrate this, Debora had asked Joshua from Fat Pencil Studios to show the 3-D visualizations of several of the options. Joshua explained that he has been working on this project since 2009 after witnessing a bike/bus conflict. That incident made him realize that this street was not designed to handle the level and variety of traffic. He also felt confused by all the options after the last meeting, but felt it was easier to think of them in three categories: left-side bikeway, right-side bikeway, or no change to the lane configurations. He showed visualizations of what expanded bike facilities would look like on the left or right side. He showed why a cycle-track was not feasible – on the right, due to buses, and on the left because of businesses. He felt the buffered lane could be feasible with segment 4 modifications.

Joshua then showed what the working group had discussed (as Paul had presented), and then encouraged committee members to suggest things they would like to see. He said he could move some of the elements around to give a sense of how the street would look and feel.

Shara noted that bicyclists have to merge to turn left when they were on the right, and noted that this was how people would have to merge to turn right if a left-side was chosen. Ben shared his experience merging from the buffered bike lane on SW Oak and said that while it was not always comfortable, speeds were generally slow enough to make it safe.

Michelle asked if more the more “expert” bike riders in the room thought that a left-side bikeway would be more comfortable for the “interested but concerned” bike riders in the commercial area. Susan responded that slowing traffic down could make people more comfortable, but if a rider was not comfortable merging they could make a two-stage right turn. She also said that having a single bike lane and single vehicle lane was safer for crossing pedestrians and bikers.

Mychal asked if they could put a shared lane on the right. Staff replied that they could, but they could not include diverters because buses had to go through.

Steve said that if cars were really slowed down, this would change what the shared lane feels like. If cars are going 12-20 mph like on Stark and Oak, it could be more comfortable. He also asked if it would be possible to include a pedestrian refuge at the diverter. Staff replied that it is a possibility.

Karis asked to see how the #4 bus would cross the left-side bike lane to turn left at Fremont. She asked how the City would address this left-side bike/bus conflict. She also asked if New Seasons was adding on-street parking. Staff replied that New Seasons would like on-street parking, but PBOT wouldn't give away a travel lane without good reason.

Melissa asked for clarification on who would have the legal right of way when cars wanted to turn left. Staff explained that since the left lane was shared, cars would have to merge into the shared lane safely as they would on any other road. Then when they turned left they would not be turning across a bike lane in the shared lane situation.

Rob said that PBOT's bike coordinator felt the shared lane was a degradation of bike service because it removed separation. Adrian added that a high left-turn volume was one reason they didn't recommend the shared lane at Cook or Fremont.

Noni clarified that the SAC could vote on a 20mph speed limit as part of the committee's recommendation process.

Susan agreed with Steve that the shared space would be more comfortable at slower speeds. She also noted that vehicles and bikes would "clump" differently because of different speeds, which seems like it would make it easier to cross or merge because there will be large gaps in front of clumps of bikes.

Jrdn asked to see the right-side buffered lane to see if there was room for bikes to pass the bus.

Diana said she felt that a left shared lane would require extensive reeducation of cyclists about letting cars merge into the shared lane.

Jana admitted that she doesn't ride her bike on Williams. She wanted to know for those who do ride on Williams whether they would prefer riding on the left over the right.

Michelle said she preferred riding on Rodney. She also agreed reeducation will have to happen for cars and bikes.

Ben said he doesn't feel the left side bikeway eliminates conflicts, but it greatly reduces them.

Mychal said he would rather be in conflict with bus drivers than car drivers because they drive the route more regularly and are professional drivers.

Nathan noted that, regardless of how the left lane was configured, it would be shared in some way because of the parking on the left side.

Ellen shared that TriMet preferred a left-hand option. She also shared that a Bicycle Advisory Committee member suggested that the first half of the block be buffered in segment 4, not shared. Susan said it could also be a left-turn only lane. She prefers a buffered lane the whole way for comfort, but if done right (for example, with signing) the shared lane could work.

Karis reiterated Michelle's point about reeducation. She said this will be a reeducation of a whole city for one street, because a lot of people make left turns to destinations like the

Mississippi district. There a lot of people who don't know how to interact with bikes in general, and she's concerned about asking people to learn brand new rules on top of that.

Allan said he is not as concerned about reeducation because so many bikes are on Williams before you even get to where most people turn left. He also said while he personally turns right most of the time, he feels the left side is better for everyone.

Paul felt that the shared lane addresses a potential issue if the buses don't pull all the way out of the right lane when stopping. Joshua illustrated the space a bus takes if it only pulls partway out of the lane at an angle, cars would have to enter the left lane to go around.

Steve said there is more room to work on the left side in segment 4.

Jerrell said he is concerned that most of the people in the room indicated that they do ride their bikes on Williams, and that the viewpoint of people who DON'T ride on Williams is not represented. Debora noted that while she indicated that she rides on Williams, she is not a "regular bike rider" on Williams, so she feels she can provide balanced input. Michelle DePass appreciated Jerrell's concerns, and added that she wonders how the businesses on the left side of the street will be affected by this proposal.

Ben recognized that Jerrell felt a driver constituency was not represented on the SAC. Jerrell clarified that a culture was not represented both in the SAC and in the community overall. Ben said he felt it was more nuanced – most people represent multiple interests, they are not only bikers, blacks, transit users, business owners, and so on.

Matt appreciated Debora's comment. He feels that the SAC is aware that they need to represent views beyond their personal perspectives. He would like to believe that the SAC can be concerned about all the North Williams issues; otherwise, he asked, why are they here? He is happy to have been educated about the left-side buffered lane, and appreciated Joshua's work.

Michelle DePass said that Jerrell's view needs to be heard. She feels that the Guiding Principles are just a piece of paper and that culture and race are overlooked in the larger perspective. Noni added that she feels there are more bike riders on the committee, and that that interest was represented more than others. Debora said she thinks the SAC tried to pull more of the community in last year, but at this point the committee can't go back even if the community isn't fully represented. But she does feel comfortable that the committee can make decisions for everyone.

7. Decide whether to make a recommendation today and/or whether to meet again on April 3 (Debora)

Debora asked, since the SAC is not in the position to make a final decision today, whether they should they consider a test. If not, then the committee has essentially three options as described by Joshua earlier: leave the configuration as it is with just the spot improvements; expand the bike facility on the right; or put it on the left. She asked people to vote on these options, and next time they could work out more of the details of their recommendations including speed change recommendations.

Mrs. Easterly clarified that the spot improvements are part of all the options.

Vote on Option 3 (no lane changes, just spot improvements): 2 people voted in favor.

Vote on a right-side buffered bike lane option: 9 people voted in favor.

Vote on a left-side buffered bike lane option: 15 people voted in favor.

A left-side option is the preferred design of the majority of the SAC.

Allan proposed removing Option 1a/1b (the cycle-track). Michelle DePass noted that she didn't want to rush through these decisions. Debora explained they would have more time at the next meeting to work out the details.

Vote on keeping Option 1a on the table: 0 votes in favor.

Vote on keeping Option 1b on the table: 0 votes in favor.

Vote on Option 4a (left-side buffered bike lane with 1 vehicle lane the whole way): 6 votes in favor.

Vote on Option 4b (left-side buffered bike lane in segments 2, 3, and 5, with a left-side shared lane in segment 4): 18 votes in favor

Option 4b, the left-side buffered bike lane for segments 2, 3, and 5, with a shared lane in segment 4, has greater than a 2/3 majority of the SAC's vote.

Debora said she would like one more meeting to work on the details of the recommendation.

Susan said she would be gone next time and asked that BTA representative Carl Larson be her alternate (as allowed by the SAC Charter adopted by the committee).

8. Ending Public Comment period

Amy Lubitow reminded the SAC that the PSU research project would like the SAC members to share their perspectives on this process.

Russ Willis congratulated the SAC on making their decision. He thanked Pastor Hennessee for his comments. Russ said he prefers to ride on the right, but is amenable to changing to the left. He hopes everyone can learn to live with the outcome. He said that if the situation is safer for everyone, even motorists can be happy. He also said that like Mychal he is more comfortable sharing with bus drivers. Finally he encouraged more task force work (similar to what the working group did when meeting with Joshua Cohen).

9. Thank you and adjournment (Debora)

Debora reminded people that the next meeting would be April 3. She urged people to come back with recommendations.

Debora thanked the group and adjourned the meeting at 2:12pm

Meeting notes prepared by Chloe Ritter and Ellen Vanderslice.