

Sam
Adams
Mayor

Tom
Miller
Director

**North Williams Traffic Operations and Safety Project
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting**
June 19, 2012

DRAFT Meeting Notes

Committee members present:

Allan Rudwick
Ben Foote
Debora Leopold Hutchins (Chair)
Diana Moosman
Gahlana Easterly
Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee
Jana McLellan
Assistant Pastor Jerrell Waddell
Karis Stoudamire
Laurie Simpson
Michelle DePass
Pamela Weatherspoon
Paul Anthony
Steve Bozzone
Susan Peithman

Committee members absent:

Caitlin Wood
Dwight Terry
Irek Wielgosz
Jazzmin Reece
Jrdn Freeauf
Kenneth Doswell
Mychal Tetteh
Nathan Roll
Noni Causey
Shara Alexander

Members of the public present:

Russ Willis
Scott Lieuallen
Jonathan Maus, BikePortland.org
Stephen Lamb
Carl Larson
Deborah Patterson
Patrick Patterson
Debora Parker, Tropicana Restaurant
Jim Lorenzen, Tropicana Restaurant
Elizabeth Nardi
Marian Rhys, Pedestrian Advisory Committee
David Sweet, Northeast Coalition of Neighbors
Amy Lubitow, PSU
Thad Miller, PSU
Claudia Knotek, New Seasons
Jason Nolin
Adrienne Leverette
Lee Perlman

City and project staff present:

Rich Newlands, Project Manager, PBOT
Rob Burchfield, Traffic Engineer, PBOT
Dan Layden, Capital Program Manager, PBOT
Nelson Chi, PBOT
Drew Meisel, Alta Planning + Design
Joshua Cohen, Fat Pencil Studio
Michelle Poyourow, Public Involvement

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Action items for Committee members:

- The Honoring History Subcommittee will develop a draft proposal this fall, for inclusion in the Transportation Enhancements grant application in November.

Key decisions made in this meeting:

- The Committee decided to support a design concept for Fargo-to-Fremont presented by Rob Burchfield. The concept provides one lane for car parking on the east side of Williams, two lanes for through car traffic, and one buffered bike lane on the west side of the street.

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

2. Check-in (Debora, 10 mins)

- a. Review agenda
- b. Starting public comment period (there were no requests)
- c. Expectations for this meeting

Debora asked the Committee members to each say what they expected to happen after the Open House. Specifically, did they expect the SAC to meet again? Did they expect feedback given at the Open House to prompt changes to their recommendation or how PBOT implemented it?

People reported a variety of expectations. However, most people did not expect to meet again, and had expected that the recommendation they made in April was final and would not be altered prior to the Open House or based on feedback given at the Open House. Many did expect PBOT to communicate with them again during or after implementation.

Debora asked if she was hearing a consensus that the group had not expected to make any more decisions about the overall design of the project after the Open House. There were head nods around the table.

3. Committee input on new alternatives for N Fargo to Fremont (Rob Burchfield, 30 mins)

Debora read from the SAC Recommendation, to remind the Committee of what, exactly, they had recommended for Williams from North Fargo to Fremont. She read:

“We encourage PBOT to develop a design that makes a safe and comfortable transition from the buffered bike lane to the shared left-turn lane/bikeway while safely accommodating bus and motor vehicle turning movements [from Fargo to Fremont].”

Michelle DePass asked what had happened between the April SAC meeting and the Open House. Rob Burchfield replied that they continued working on the design in this segment. He recalls telling the SAC, in April, that what was shown in the drawing they had seen most recently wasn't

done and needed more technical work, and that that is why the SAC made the recommendation they did for Fargo to Fremont. He continued doing work on that segment, including traffic analysis that he'll share with them shortly. He said they were working on designs for the Fargo-to-Fremont segment right up until the Open House, but that he regretted not sharing it with them before the Open House.

Allan Rudwick commented that the design shown at the Open House was not in keeping with the SAC Recommendation. The Recommendation described transitioning from one kind of bike lane to another; the Open House design had a third kind of bike lane in there.

Susan Peithman agreed with Allan, and added that the design shown at the Open House was not consistent with the Objectives that this Committee adopted months ago.

Debora told the Committee that they could make a more pointed recommendation at this meeting if they chose to do so, and that the City would take it. She asked the City staff present if that was true, and they confirmed it.

Rob began his presentation by saying that he apologized if they missed the mark on implementing the SAC's recommendation from Fargo to Fremont, but that he wants to move forward and get it right.

He asked the Committee to look at their packets (available online at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/405732>). The first page showed a "plan view" map and drawing of what he called the "pre-Open House concept." It shows one through car lane, parking on both sides, a buffered bike lane and turn lanes for cars at the intersection. This is what the SAC saw at their last few meetings, before they made their Recommendation. Since the time that this map was drawn he has done additional traffic analysis and he no longer recommends this configuration for reasons he'll address shortly.

The second page of the packet showed a plan view map of what was presented at the Open House. This concept has two through car lanes, with a five-foot wide standard bike lane on the left side, and car parking on both sides of the street.

The third and last page of the packet showed a new alternative that Rob has developed, with two through car lanes, a buffered bike lane, and some car parking on either side of Williams converted to make more room. (See page 3 of the pdf at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/405732> for more detail.)

Rob then asked Nelson Chi to fire up the traffic model on the overhead projector. He showed the Committee a prediction of what would happen to evening rush-hour auto traffic on Williams if there were only one through lane in the segment from Fargo to Fremont. Queues of stopped cars built up at times as far south as Russell.

Ben Foote asked Rob what guidance City policies give with regard to the number of lanes on Williams, which is designated only a "Neighborhood Collector" for motor vehicle traffic.

Rob said that this is a hard question to answer, and there are a few different answers. On the one hand, you could use congestion as a tool to push people to take the kinds of trips we want them

to take. But at the same time, to support the kind of development we want to see on Williams and that is planned for, you might want to make a different choice. For example, if these intersections start to fail, nearby landowners who want to get a zoning change in order to develop cannot.

Paul Anthony pointed out that congestion will discourage people from using Williams as an alternative to I-5 or MLK, and that this cut-through traffic is not necessarily important to developing the kind of business district that the neighborhoods want on Williams. He told the Committee that, when the City recently did a traffic study before making North Michigan a Neighborhood Greenway, they found that ½ of cars during evening rush hour had Washington license plates.

Susan Peithman asked for clarification about what the City was asking the SAC to consider – all of these design concepts for Fargo to Fremont? Rob answered that he was not considering the “pre-Open House” design, and he would like the Committee to focus on the second two concepts.

Susan asked what the difference would be between the second and third concepts for someone driving on Williams. Would it take them one minute longer in the one-lane concept? Or ten? Rob answered that it would not be ten minutes, but that they would experience multiple signal failures. This means that they would sit through multiple green lights at an intersection before they could get through. In this scenario, people going to New Seasons or Fremont may see that bike lane on the left side and just drive in it up to their turn, using it as a de-facto left-turn lane. That’s the kind of behavior you start to see when intersections fail.

Joshua Cohen began projecting his three-dimensional renderings of the new design concept, for the Committee to look at and compare to the Open House concept (available online at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/405735>).

Jim Lorenzen of the Tropicana Restaurant asked whether parking was going to be removed south of Cook on the west side of Williams. Rob answered that in this third design he was presenting today, it would be, but starting just north of the Tropicana Restaurant. Parking in front of the restaurant would not change.

Allan said that he liked the third option, but that he’s still concerned about the transition, just north of Fremont, to the shared bike lane/left turn lane. Debora suggested that they keep the discussion focused on south of Fremont until they resolve it.

Pastor Matt Hennessee commented that it seemed to him the City had done what the SAC asked it to. Now that they have done more work and responded to concerns shared at the Open House, should the SAC move towards a decision? And perhaps set the “pre-Open House” option aside?

Susan said that, regarding the design concept shown at the Open House (the second page in their packets), she was concerned about the change from a buffered bike lane to a standard bike lane to a shared lane. She believes that people would find a bike facility that changes from block to block uncomfortable and unsafe.

Ben Foote noted that the SAC Recommendation was marked “Final,” and that anything the Committee says now could just be considered “comments” on it.

Jana McLellan made a motion to remove the “pre-Open House” concept from consideration. The motion was seconded. The motion received 8 votes in favor and 5 opposed (with two abstentions). The motion did not receive 2/3 of votes in support and therefore did not pass.

Allan moved that the Open House concept (the second page in their packets) be removed from consideration; Steve seconded the motion. The group prepared for a vote, only to discover that Mrs. Easterly had stepped out of the room for a moment, and they decided to wait for her to return. Upon her return they voted: 11 members (of 15) voted in favor of removing the Open House option from consideration, so the motion passed.

Pastor Hennessee asked Rob if the third concept, which they were looking at for the first time at this meeting, achieved the Outcomes they decided on many months ago. Rob replied that he thought it did.

Susan responded that in her opinion the third concept meets the Committee’s set outcomes much better than the second option did.

Diana Moosman said that she did not like the white “candlesticks” in the bike lane buffer; they look cluttery and she wondered why they were there.

Pastor Hennessee made a motion that the Committee support this new, third concept, but without the candlesticks and with a crosswalk across Williams at Ivy. Rob explained that the purpose of the bollards is to prevent people from driving in the bike lane if they are making a left turn further down the street, and to offer additional comfort and protection to people bicycling. However, Rob said, something that is less “cluttery” could be used instead of the bollards, for aesthetic purposes.

Jana commented that the Committee was starting to get “down in the weeds” of the design, and that they should keep their decisions high level and let expert City staff figure out the details.

Pastor Hennessee amended his motion to simply support the third concept. The motion passed with 11 votes in favor.

4. Presentation and discussion of Open House comments (Rich Newlands, 30 mins)

Rich suggested that due to the shortness of time, the fact that most of the Committee members in attendance had themselves been at the Open House, and that a report on the comments had been emailed to the Committee prior to this meeting, they skip this agenda item.

5. Implementation strategies (Rich, 30 minutes)

Rich told the Committee that the City is planning to apply for Transportation Enhancement (TE) funding to implement this project, with a roughly estimated total budget of \$1 million. The City sent ODOT a “Notice of Intent” recently, to declare that they intend to apply for this project. ODOT will then “invite” the City to apply in the fall. The application is due from the City to ODOT in December, and decisions are made next spring. If the grant were awarded, it would be

enough funding to build almost all of what the SAC included in its recommendation; very few decisions about what to prioritize would have to be made.

Rich, Rob and Dan Layden told the Committee that they believe this project would be very competitive in this grant process, against other projects in the city and around the state. They also said that the project has a high degree of internal support at the City, from staff and officials.

Rich described a “plan B” for building this project, in case it does not receive a TE grant. Currently there is about \$200,000 left in the budget for this project. That is not enough to build the bike lane and the signal at Cook and Williams, which should be built together (the left-side bike lane won’t be safe without the signal). But if we are not awarded the TE grant, Dan said that he would work to find other small amounts of funding to add to this total. In that scenario, Rich said, he would want to be in touch with the SAC because then there would need to be some decisions about what to prioritize and how to build the project in phases.

Jana asked where in the City’s budget the \$200,000 remaining for this project lives; is it in the General Fund? Dan replied that it is not. It is in the transportation budget, in the Affordable Transportation Fund. He also reassured the Committee that the money will not go away between this year and the next. A year ago, Ellen was telling them that they had to finish this project by a certain deadline or risk losing the funding. But by making their final recommendation they have secured that money in the transportation budget for this project; they do not have to worry about it being reallocated.

6. Discuss future role of this group (Debora)

a. Honoring History proposal for grant

The City will want to include a draft concept for the Honoring History component of the project in the TE grant application, and Rich said that it seemed important that the concept come from the community rather than from the City. Michelle DePass said that she would take the lead on gathering together that subcommittee and developing a concept. The deadline for getting a proposal to the City for inclusion in the TE grant application is November.

Diana asked if the Honoring History and Williams Streetscape groups should get together, since they may be working on similar street elements. Debora supported that. Michelle DePass added that the History subcommittee is open to the public, not just to SAC members.

b. SAC available for future input on details?

Rich said that he was open to ideas from the Committee of how they would want to continue to be involved. He can stay in touch with them and tell them when the project passes certain milestones, such as applying for the grant; and he can get back in touch if there is a major decision to be made. Debora expressed her hope that the Committee members would make themselves available to help through the implementation phase.

7. Ending public comment period (Debora, 5 minutes)

Patrick Patterson commented that he commutes to Washington County each day, and that includes driving home on Williams. He is glad that they recommended the two car lanes. He also suggests that if they meet in the future they meet at a time when people with ordinary jobs can attend; he's been wanting to attend for a long time but has not been able to attend because of work.

Russ Willis reminded the committee and staff that there is a diverter at North Williams and Graham that is problematic for this new design; he suggested that it be moved to the far side of the intersection.

Marian Rhys of the City's Pedestrian Advisory Committee reminded the committee and staff that the #4 TriMet bus turns left onto Fremont, and that some attention should be paid to how that will work with the new design.

Scott Lieuallen suggested that, to improve pedestrian safety at Ivy (which becomes the new New Seasons driveway), the City add curb extensions there.

Stephen Lamb said that he liked the bike lane on the left hand side.

8. Thank you and adjourn (Debora)

Before adjourning, the Committee gave Debora a round of applause for her chairwomanship.

For more information on the North Williams Avenue Traffic Operations Safety Project, visit the website at www.portlandonline.com/transportation/williams, or contact Project Manager Rich Newlands, 503-823-7780, or rich.newlands@portlandoregon.gov.

---Meeting notes by Michelle Poyourow.---