

SW Capitol Highway Subcommittee Multnomah Neighborhood Association

Comments on the SW Capitol Highway 30% Project Design

In December, 2016, the Multnomah Neighborhood Association and its SW Capitol Highway Subcommittee provided PBOT with a set of design preferences on the SW Capitol Highway project. Generally speaking, the list of comments included a strong preference for a continuous sidewalk on the east side of the corridor, continuous bicycle facilities on both sides of the corridor, extensive tree preservation, crosswalks at all transit stops, and the use of creative stormwater treatment methods that rely more on regional facilities than on-corridor facilities within the right-of-way.

On January 11, 2018, the Subcommittee met and **unanimously agreed** on a set of comments on the proposed 30% design and additional project work, as outlined below. We strongly encourage PBOT and BES to consider incorporating these preferences into the design as work continues on the project. The Subcommittee also thanks PBOT and BES for their dedicated work on this important community project.

Comments on the 30% Design:

- **Horizontal Cross Section:** Residents strongly prefer Typical Cross Section 1. The proposed 30% design relies too heavily on Typical Cross Section 2, resulting in woefully insufficient separation of sidewalks and bicycle lanes along the east side of the Capitol Highway corridor. While the neighborhood compromised on a multi-use path on the west side of the corridor to help reduce both the project cost and footprint, more separation of facilities on the east side of the corridor is needed to ensure safety and functionality. As proposed, a total of approximately one-third of eastside pedestrian and bicycle facilities are separated, resulting in a de facto multi-use path for roughly two-thirds of the corridor in addition to the multi-use path on the full extent of the west side. The extensive use of 24 6-8 ft. on-corridor stormwater facilities appears to be the primary cause of this issue, which should be minimized or eliminated to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Stormwater:** Residents strongly support maximizing use of the regional off-corridor facilities and eliminating on-corridor stormwater facilities in order to allow space for the construction of significantly safer pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The information from BES indicates that the regional stormwater facilities are far more effective at treating stormwater than the on-corridor facilities along SW Capitol Highway. Further, BES has modeled Alternative 1 that conveys stormwater to the large, off-corridor facilities along SW Multnomah Blvd, which would be able to meet/exceed performance standards for water quality treatment. We believe exclusive use of these regional off-corridor facilities would allow for an improved design that greatly enhances transportation safety benefits for all users of Capitol Highway (ex: improved visibility; fewer conflicts) while also reducing the overall project footprint.
- **Bicycle Paths:** Residents support the west side multi-use path as designed. However, the east side, downhill bicycle lanes should be completely separated from the sidewalk (Typical Cross

Section 1) and made continuous (straight) as much as possible to minimize hazards and avoid a design akin to Multnomah Blvd. The current design includes hazardous conditions for bicyclists with approximately 30 sharp corners, 40 driveways, 7 streets, and adjacent parking and bus stops within the 1-mile corridor. Where a combined path is absolutely necessary, design should clearly delineate the different uses and include signage to minimize hazards. Design also should ensure that all driveways are at grade with sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

- **Parking:** Keep on-street parking minimal but work with property owners on a property-specific basis to ensure that individual parking needs are met, that design ensures safety of pedestrians/bicyclists (i.e. there is ample parking so that motor vehicles will not block bicycle lanes and sidewalks), and that parking considerations are given to delivery vehicles.
- **Maintenance:** Provide clarity on maintenance responsibilities. It is our understanding that adjacent property owners will be responsible for maintaining the sidewalks, PBOT will be responsible for maintaining the street and bicycle facilities and multi-use paths, and BES will be responsible for maintaining the stormwater facilities.
- **Tree Preservation:** Preserve as many trees and landscaping as possible to maintain the green characteristics of the corridor.

Location-specific issues:

- **SW 41st near the Barbur Transit Center:** During the Crossroads phase of the project, examine issues associated with parking, bicycle lanes, and potentially one-way motor vehicle traffic in the 9600-9800 block of SW 41st Ave. between SW Capitol Hwy and SW Taylors Ferry Rd. If the state funds are needed to complete the Multnomah to Taylors Ferry segment there should be ways to enhance SW 41st Ave. and SW Capitol Hwy to more safely access SW Barbur Blvd.
- **SW Capitol Highway between SW Brugger St. and Taylors Ferry Road:** Solutions are needed to incorporate bicycle lanes along SW Capitol Highway between SW Brugger St. and Taylors Ferry Road, as well as to address the west side multi-use path that is in very close proximity to the auto body shop. This poses safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists where cars frequently back in and out of the business's garage and parking lots. Also, include room on both sides of Capitol Highway for bus shelters at the heavily used stops at Capitol Highway and Taylors Ferry Rd.
- **Dolph Ct. / Capitol Highway Intersection:** As one of the only thru-streets connecting to Capitol Highway in this stretch, Dolph Ct. experiences a higher level of motor vehicle traffic. Visibility at the Dolph/Capitol intersection is poor due to the curves on Capitol, right-of-way vegetation, and the steep incline of Dolph. We recommend removal of the Capitol Highway pedestrian crossing on the south side of this intersection due to significant safety concerns. Only the pedestrian crossing on the north side should remain.
- **Retaining Walls:** Work with individual property owners to ensure that slopes are stable and to determine where retaining walls may be needed, such as along the west side of SW Capitol Highway between SW 41st Ave. and Freeman St.

Additional comments:

- **Crosswalks:** Add crosswalks on SW Capitol Highway at every transit stop, at a minimum, with use of rapid flashing beacons or other safety measures as appropriate.
- **Stormwater Facility Safety:** Include railings along on-corridor stormwater facilities that are adjacent to a sidewalk or bicycle lane. Maintain a distance of at least 3 ft. between pedestrian/bicycle crossings and on-corridor stormwater facilities to improve safety for pedestrians.
- **Retaining Wall Design and Artwork:** Find a cost-effective and visually-appealing retaining wall design to be used throughout the corridor (i.e. better aesthetics than Multnomah Blvd./Vermont Ave. retaining walls). Explore opportunities to incorporate artwork and other design features into the retaining walls, transit stops, and/or other elements of the project to enhance the livability of our neighborhood.
- **Speed Limit:** It is our understanding that PBOT will request a lower speed limit for SW Capitol Highway, which we strongly support.
- **Multi-Use Path Surface Treatment:** Use surface delineation between pedestrians and bicyclists on the multi-use path to ensure safety for both modes of travel.
- **Pavement Condition:** It is our understanding that PBOT will grind and repave the street surface at the end of the project, which we strongly support. In addition, if the road is compromised during construction, it should be fixed immediately.
- **Local Transportation Infrastructure Charge (LTIC) Project Selection:** LTIC funds should be used to improve unimproved or underimproved streets adjacent to SW Capitol Highway to leverage street and stormwater improvements with the Capitol Highway Project. We prefer alternative street designs on the local streets. PBOT funds should also be used to improve SW Dolph Ct., which is a PBOT maintenance responsibility.
- **Project Costs:** The PBOT funding for this segment of the project must be adequate to ensure safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles in the project corridor before any funds are redirected to the Crossroads portion of the project.
- **Construction Updates:** For the construction phase of the SW Capitol Highway project, provide a construction timeline calendar and weekly email updates for residents to prepare accordingly.
- **Crossroads Segment:** PBOT and ODOT must involve residents in the design of Crossroads “safety improvements” early in the design phase of the project. We request PBOT and ODOT provide the community with a project schedule as soon as possible, as well as a communications plan that details how local residents and businesses will be involved in this phase of the project. As mentioned above, if the state funds are needed to complete the Multnomah to Taylors Ferry segment, there should be ways to enhance SW 41st Ave. and SW Capitol Hwy to more safely access SW Barbur Blvd.

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ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
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Michael Jordan, Director



Leah Treat, Director

March 1, 2018

Dear Multnomah Neighborhood Association SW Capitol Highway Subcommittee,

Thank you for your recent comments on the 30% design of the SW Capitol Highway project, received in January 2018. We appreciate your insights and your commitment to this joint Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and Environmental Services (BES) project. Our project team continues to work through project design and related tasks, including stormwater modeling work to help determine the best way to move forward with the project. The 60% design deliverable, which will incorporate comments from staff and the community as well as information from updated modeling results, is expected in summer 2018. Changes to the plans, reflected in the 60% design deliverable, will take specific recommendations in your recent letter into consideration. The 60% design will also consider a variety of other factors, including adherence to City design standards and policies, feedback from individual property owners, and budget and schedule constraints.

In the meantime, BES and PBOT would like to respond to several of your comments, including the request for continuous bike and pedestrian facilities and minimized use of on-corridor stormwater facilities.

Additional modeling has revealed that the on-corridor stormwater facilities may not be necessary, and the team is going to work to develop the 60% plans without the corridor facilities. We have also heard from community members requesting reduced reliance on the facilities on the corridor. This stands to have an impact on the horizontal cross section along the highway, including the location of retaining walls on the west side of the road, the amount of separation between cyclists and pedestrians on the east side of the road, and the location and size of the furnishing zone. More details regarding the cross section will be available in the 60% plans.

Your letter also covered the following topics, which we have aggregated in some cases:

Crosswalks at all transit stops: Between now and 60% design, PBOT Traffic Design Services staff will run pedestrian crossing warrant analyses for each of the proposed

bus stop locations (Garden Home, Carson, Dolph, Alice, Taylors Ferry). These standardized analyses provide guidance on the most appropriate crossing treatment based on factors including existing and future pedestrian and vehicle volumes. It is highly likely that striped crosswalks with warning signs will be the warranted treatment. It is unlikely that flashing beacons or other traffic signals will be warranted, nor do we have budget in the project for signal equipment.

Related to SW Dolph Court safety concerns, we expect that the improved sight distance created by the new sidewalk and bikeways taking the place of much of the existing vegetation in the right-of-way, combined with lower posted and actual speeds, will allow for safe crossing on both sides of this offset intersection, as with other intersections along the corridor. We are currently refining which and how many crosswalks to maintain and where buses will stop as part of the 60% design.

Tree preservation: An arborist is conducting an assessment of more than one thousand trees along the corridor and at proposed off-corridor stormwater facilities. Staff are also meeting individually with property owners on the corridor to discuss specific concerns about trees, hedges, and shrubs. We will continue to prioritize preservation of trees identified as “Existing Priority Trees” in the 2011 SW Capitol Highway Plan Refinement Report. The current 30% design is based on the preservation of this subset of mature trees and includes site-specific adjustments to the sidewalk and multi-use path alignments to reduce impacts on these trees. Trees that are significantly compromised by overhead electric or communication lines, and trees that are non-native or nuisance species, are not prioritized for preservation.

Hedge rows and shrubs that are in the public right-of-way and impacted by the project will, for the most part, be removed and not replaced by the city. Hedge rows and shrubs that are wholly or partially on private property, and will be impacted by the project, will be mitigated either by financial compensation during the temporary construction easement (TCE) negotiation process, or by adding to the landscaping scope of the project.

The 30% design included a significant number of new trees that will be planted to mitigate for lost trees and increased pavement. These trees will be located either in the planter strip between the east side bike lane and sidewalk, or in available locations behind the back of the sidewalk or multi-use path, in the public right-of-way. After project completion, property owners will be welcome to plant additional trees and shrubs on their properties near the edge of the sidewalk and multi-use path, but should coordinate with project staff to avoid future maintenance issues.

Reducing reliance on a shared use path: Your letter states support for the west-side multi-use path but also concern regarding the prevalence of shared use environments on the east side of the road. Our proposed removal of the on-corridor stormwater facilities will approximately double the length of segments where a planter strip can be provided between the sidewalk and bike lane on the east side. A number of locations without physical separation between the east side sidewalk and bike lane will remain, including street crossings, driveway crossings, bus stops, locations severely constrained by topography, locations where on-street parking is proposed, and some locations where mature trees are being preserved.

In all locations on the east side, we intend to use a combination of different surface materials and pavement markings to clearly delineate the pedestrian and bicycle spaces. On the west side, the surface of the multi-use path will be constructed of a uniform material, but we intend to use pavement markings and striping to identify the intended positions of bikes and pedestrians.

Facility maintenance: The regional stormwater facilities will be maintained by BES. The west side multi-use path and east side bike lane will be maintained by PBOT. The east side sidewalk and adjacent furnishing zone (planter strip) will be the maintenance responsibility of the adjacent property owner.

Parking: The project approach to on-street parking is to provide it only in locations where adjacent properties have no off-street parking options. The 30% design shows one such location north of SW Alice Street on the east side of SW Capitol Highway in front of several multi-family residences. Here, the project proposes to provide on-street parking for up to seven vehicles. An additional location for on-street parking is also being considered for the 60% plans, on SW Capitol Highway between Baird and Brugger Streets.

We have heard concerns from people who have driveways but use the gravel shoulder of SW Capitol Highway to park extra vehicles or to host visitors. While we understand the change and potential inconvenience caused by removing these informal parking areas, our City Council-adopted Transportation System Plan, in particular Policy 9.56 (Curb Zone), instructs us to “recognize that the Curb Zone is a public space, a physical and spatial asset that has value and cost,” and to “evaluate whether, when and where parking is the highest and best use of this public space in support of broad City policy goals and local land use context.” In this case, in a largely single-family residential zone where 97% of properties have driveways for off-street parking, we have chosen to prioritize the safe movement of people walking, biking, and using transit over the storage of vehicles. Furthermore, providing on-street parking creates significant space

trade-offs with the width and quality of the pedestrian/bike environment, unless additional right-of-way were to be acquired at significant cost.

Your letter also mentioned delivery vehicles. Waste haulers will likely remain in the vehicle travel lane to pick up garbage and recycling, causing temporary delays. Similarly, TriMet buses and school buses will stop in-lane to pick up and drop off passengers. Delivery vehicle behavior may vary based on vehicle size and dwell time, with some opting to stay in-lane while others straddle driveway openings, partially blocking the vehicle and/or bike lane/multi-use path for a short time. In these circumstances, people driving will need to exercise discretion and follow all applicable traffic laws in determining whether or not to pass the delivery vehicle, and people biking may be able to circumvent the vehicle on the sidewalk/multi-use path, or in the roadway.

Coordination with the Crossroads Project: PBOT is working closely with ODOT and Metro to “solve” the Crossroads area where SW Capitol Highway, Taylors Ferry Road, Barbur Boulevard, Interstate 5, and Huber Street converge. ODOT’s \$3 million All Roads Transportation Safety (ARTS) project proposes to reconfigure traffic movements in this area and to potentially install a traffic signal at SW Capitol Highway and Taylors Ferry Road. The SW Corridor light rail project, led by Metro, will also have impacts to the Crossroads that will come into clearer view when a preferred alignment is chosen later this year. We agree that continuous, safe sidewalks and bike lanes are needed on both sides of SW Capitol Highway through the Crossroads, and that safety and circulation issues are present on other streets such as SW 41st Avenue.

We will continue to work with ODOT, Metro and TriMet to address these needs and will discuss proposed solutions with the community as they arise. However, these efforts will continue during and after the completion of the *Capitol Highway: Multnomah Village – West Portland* project, and will be funded separately. Because of the high cost of our project, PBOT has decided to allocate a majority of the \$2 million from Oregon House Bill 5006 to the *Capitol Highway: Multnomah Village – West Portland* project, while dedicating a smaller amount of those funds to help leverage the ODOT ARTS project.

Railings adjacent to stormwater facilities: The plans call for railings adjacent to some of the deeper stormwater management facilities (i.e. on Multnomah Blvd), but not on smaller facilities. As noted above, the team is exploring removing the 24 on-corridor green street facilities from the design.

Retaining wall and railing aesthetics and public art: Between now and 60% design, PBOT Bridges and Structures staff will be advising the project team on design options

and associated costs for constructing the retaining walls shown in the 30% plans. We intend to involve the subcommittee in this discussion. Gravity block retaining walls, similar to those found on SW Multnomah Boulevard east of 31st Avenue and on SW Vermont Street west of 30th Avenue, are typically the least expensive option and will be strongly considered to minimize costs. However, we plan to research the possibility of cast-in-place walls, which offer more aesthetic options, particularly in “cut” locations where walls face the right-of-way and will be seen by the travelling public. For “fill” walls that face private property, gravity blocks will likely remain the best choice because they do not require geogrid, soil nails or other tie-back methods that would conflict with underground utilities in the right-of-way. Property owners will be able to screen these walls with their own vegetation, but should be aware that a maintenance easement may be required within 5 to 10 feet of the base of the wall.

PBOT also will look into different railing options where they are needed at the back of the sidewalk or multi-use path adjacent to fill walls and steep slopes. Railings will need to meet certain city and state specifications for safety and resiliency, but there are a variety of pattern and paint options that could be considered. We will involve the subcommittee in this discussion as well.

We have learned that the funding sources for this project do not allow for a public art budget. However, the project team will brainstorm ways in which art can be accommodated in the project by other means. We encourage suggestions on ways that public art could be incorporated into the project.

Reduced speed limit: PBOT intends to reduce the posted speed on SW Capitol Highway both during construction and after the project is completed. Construction speed limit is likely to be 25 mph. Depending on state review of the posted speed post-project, the speed is likely to be reduced to either 25 mph or 30 mph.

Roadway paving: A final grind-and-pave is built into the project budget and will occur at the close of project construction in 2020.

Local street improvements: We appreciate the suggestion to improve local streets that intersect with SW Capitol Highway. The forthcoming 60% design will show improvements to several local streets that will host off-corridor stormwater infrastructure. SW Dolph Court will feature a new sidewalk on the south side of the street from Capitol Highway eastward approximately 240 feet. SW Alice Street between 42nd Avenue and Capitol Highway will be repaved and widened to an 18-foot width plus gravel shoulders. SW 42nd Avenue south of Alice Street, currently gravel, will be paved with 18 feet of asphalt and gravel parking areas. For remaining local streets, we

encourage community members to stay engaged with the Neighborhood Streets Program to advocate for specific spending priorities for LTIC funds. Visit <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/72452> for more information. Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) will also remain a tool for property owners to pool resources and potentially leverage public funds to improve their streets. Contact Andrew Aebi at Andrew.aebi@portlandoregon.gov with any inquiries.

Construction updates: We will work closely with our contractor when they are selected in 2019 to develop and distribute public information on the construction schedule, including duration, geographic sequencing, traffic detours, temporary closures, work schedules, and other information. The City will have dedicated construction managers, one each from PBOT and BES, as well as inspectors to oversee contract work and to communicate any concerns between the public and the contractors, and public involvement specialists to keep the community informed and relay concerns and questions to the team. Property owners will be notified before crews begin construction along their frontage so that they have adequate time to make any needed arrangements such as fence deconstruction, transplanting, or mailbox relocation.

Again, thank you for your correspondence regarding SW Capitol Highway project. We look forward to continued partnership and consistent communication with the community as this project moves toward construction in 2019.

Sincerely,



Steve Szigethy
Capital Program Manager, PBOT
Steve.Szigethy@portlandoregon.gov
503-823-5117



Becky Tillson
Watershed Services, BES
Becky.Tillson@portlandoregon.gov
503-823-7097

cc: Aaron Abrams, Public Involvement, BES
Ruben Gonzalez, Project Manager, BES
Ning Jiang, Public Involvement, BES
Lisa Moscinski, Westside Watersheds, BES
Amin Wahab, Westside Watersheds Program Manager, BES
David Backes, Capital Projects, PBOT
John Brady, Communications, PBOT
Wendy Cawley, Traffic Design, PBOT

Raphael Haou, Civil Design, PBOT
John Gibbon, President, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.
Sylvia Bogart, Executive Director, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc.
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