

# Westside Mobility Strategy

## Community Forum #2

Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Meeting Recap



### Overview

The City of Vancouver held the second community forum public meeting for the Westside Mobility Strategy on Thursday, October 15th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Vancouver City Hall. The meeting was a project update and briefing, featuring a Power Point presentation followed by Q&A with participants. The intent of the meeting was to review:



1. Findings from Phase 1 mobility analysis
2. A balanced mobility approach and specific network management concepts which can achieve the goals of the strategy

Thirty-four people signed in for the event, which was publicized through the City website, media release, emails from the project team, and flyers distributed in advance to various community groups and stakeholders. Fourteen comment forms were turned in and project staff took notes throughout the meeting. About ½ of the audience indicated they also attended Community Forum #1 held on May 30, 2015.

Community members can watch a video of the full presentation or view a PDF of the slides at the following links:

- [Community Forum #2 Presentation Video](#)
- [Community Forum #2 Presentation Slides \(PDF\)](#)

### Key Takeaways

Project Manager and Principal Transportation Planner Patrick Sweeney presented an update on the progress of the project organized around five key points.

1. **Project overview:** The Westside Mobility Strategy will balance neighborhood livability with economic growth by collaborating with stakeholders to help identify strategies to improve the transportation network for all users.
2. **Projected travel demand data:** The project team analyzed the projected travel demand for 2035—based on growth in households and jobs in the study area—and found that all major east-west arterials in the study area have capacity to handle anticipated 20-year traffic demands. Minor pinch points were identified at the Fruit Valley Road bridge and I-5 exit and entry ramps.
3. **Summary of community engagement and traffic analysis:** Through multiple methods of community and stakeholder engagement and data analysis, the project team has learned that:
  - a. Current congestion on I-5 and anticipated future growth in the area will continue to add pressure to the transportation network.

- b. East-west mobility for freight is critical, and Mill Plain is widely seen as the best freight route, but the roadway is not optimized for reliable freight travel.
  - c. North-south mobility for cyclists and pedestrians is important, but current routes do not prioritize these modes.
  - d. Some westside arterials are less safe than comparable arterials in the northwest region, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.
4. **Defining the problem and approach for Phase 2:** The project team identified a need for *balanced mobility strategy* that balances the needs of all travel modes throughout the westside street network. Balanced mobility is represented by four key values that community members and stakeholders have articulated throughout the project:
- a. Improved transportation *safety*;
  - b. Improved *connectivity* for people who walk and people who bike;
  - c. Improved east-west *reliability* for freight;
  - d. Maintain land use *vitality*: manage all modes consistently to sustain long-term value and multi-modal accessibility.
5. **Network management concepts:** The project team is evaluating four street network concepts to understand how different approaches to managing the westside street network would achieve the objective of balanced mobility. Each of these concepts will be tested using traffic modeling technology to understand how they affect network freight and traffic patterns, and to determine if those patterns achieve the goals and values of the project. The results will be presented in Community Forum #3.
- a. Concept 1 - Optimize Mill Plain and Main: Improve Mill Plain corridor so it is the most reliable and efficient route for freight while adjusting Main Street north of Fourth Plain to reduce I-5 diversion traffic.
  - b. Concept 2 - Mill Plain and 78<sup>th</sup> Freight Routes: Improve Mill Plain corridor for freight, construct 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue extension to offer north-south freight route, and adjust 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Fourth Plain Boulevard to limit freight travel.
  - c. Concept 3 - Address I-5: The purpose of this concept is to test the effects of I-5 corridor improvements, including a new bridge over the Columbia River, to understand their impact on the westside network independent of other improvements.
  - d. Concept 4 - The Kitchen Sink: The purpose of this concept is to test the effects of all the above improvements working together.
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## Presentation Questions and Comments

### Summary of community engagement and traffic analysis

Question - Collision data: Please explain the percentage regarding collision rates

*Response: Collision rates represent the number of collisions per mile of roadway*

*Note: The slide that showed the Collisions per Mile as percentages has been revised. The slide presented showed the arterial values misrepresented as percentages. This has been corrected and the arterial values correctly represent the average of collisions per mile. Please see slide 20 of 38 [here](#).*



Question - Collision data: Is this Oregon data or Puget Sound data?

*Response: The collision data for the Westside Mobility Strategy study area is from the Washington State Patrol. The comparable collision rate data is from the Oregon Department of Transportation.*

Question - Collision data: How many modes does this data represent?

*Response: All modes.*

Question – Pedestrian Safety: It’s hard to see people at night in dark clothes. What can the City do to increase the number of people that dress appropriately for walking or biking at night?

*Response: The City can’t regulate how people dress but encourages anyone who is walking to be aware of their surroundings, to be careful of moving traffic, and to make sure they can be seen by other people.*

Comment - Main Street and 25th Street: The bus drops off on Main Street at Hi-School Pharmacy, which adds to the pedestrian issue.

*Response – C-TRAN bus stops are located on Broadway Street to the east of Hi-School Pharmacy. The proximity of the local bus transit stop increases pedestrian activity in this area.*

Comment – Fourth Plain and Main Street: What is the new fire station going to do to this intersection?

*Response - The new fire station, when fully operational, will impact traffic operations at the intersections adjacent to the firehouse when emergency vehicles are leaving the fire station to respond to an emergency call.*

Comment – 25<sup>th</sup> Street: 25th Street was designed to be a narrower street. A crosswalk across Main Street was never installed when 25<sup>th</sup> Street was rebuilt.

*Response – Noted, thank you.*

Comment – Raised crosswalk at 24<sup>th</sup> Street: The raised crosswalk near Starbucks on Main Street and south of 25<sup>th</sup> Street does not work well.

*Response – a recommendation of the Westside Mobility Strategy could be to re-evaluate the pedestrian and bike facilities located on Main Street.*

### **Network management concepts**

Question - Concept#1: When you say “Main Street,” are you distinguishing between upper and lower Main Street? They function differently.

*Response: Main Street is referring to Main Street between the I-5 exit and Fifth Street. Improvements to reduce I-5 diversion traffic on Main St. apply to the entire roadway but they will be tailored to the conditions in each segment.*

Comment - Concept #1: Main Street roadway improvements were previously designed up to 90% but it was decided not to complete. It would be worth looking at what was previously designed.

*Response – Noted, thank you.*

Comment - Concept #2: The Fruit Valley Bridge to 78<sup>th</sup> Street was recently resurfaced. Cyclists don't have anywhere to go coming from the nearby trails and have to ride in the middle of the road – there are no bike facilities. Signs are needed to alert drivers to watch for cyclists.

*Response – Sharrows and Share the Road signs are located in and alongside of the roadway in this area to remind vehicle operators that people on bikes could be in the roadway.*

Question - Concept #2: When did we move away from gross vehicle weight for articulated trucks? Isn't that a better measure?

*Response: The number of axles and articulation is the data point the project team decided to work with to best determine freight volumes and freight travel route preferences.*

Question - Concept #3: Where would 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. extension connect with Fruit Valley Road?

*Response: The 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave extension would connect at NW 61<sup>st</sup> Avenue and extend northward across a new bridge over the BNSF RR tracks to connect with NW Lakeshore Avenue.*

Comment – Over-Dimensional Loads: A participant disagreed about oversized load trucks having permits to travel on local arterials, stating they see them all the time along 39<sup>th</sup> Street. These were large trucks with heavy equipment travelling through areas where they were not permitted.

*Response: WsDOT has permits and protocols for determining travel routes for over-dimensional loads. A truck operator with such a load should have a permit as per <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/CommercialVehicle/NeedaPermit.htm>*

Question - When will the City be able to share the results of the network concept model runs ?

*Response: The results will be presented and discussed at Community Forum #3, tentatively scheduled for December 2015.*

Question - Will you be giving RTC your updated traffic data?

*Response: Yes, the City shares data with other local and state agencies.*

Question - Does the city publish preferred truck routes? Do drivers know which routes they should take?

*Response: Generally local drivers that are more familiar with Vancouver know to use the frequently travelled freight routes (such as Mill Plain), but some drivers are not local, and they may use other routes. Additional signage and coordination with freight providers and freight dispatchers will be considered as a recommended action for this project.*

## Appendix: Comment Form Feedback

### Feedback on meeting in general and network concepts:

- Attendee enjoyed the breakout sessions at the May 30, 2015 community forum.
- It might have been helpful to meet up after the Community Walk/Bike Ride event on October 10, 2015. Attendee felt that there might be a chance to do that tonight.
- Love Concept #2. Hope the county will cooperate.
- Concepts #1 and #2 sound very promising. Concept #3 is needed but seemingly challenging, given the politics involved.
- Thanks for listening during Community Forum #1, as well as this update.
- Should residents be writing legislators for Concept #2 funding?
- Consider setting up boards/sandwich boards in each westside neighborhood with meeting notices and updates and specifically on Main Street/Mill Plain Boulevard/39th Street/etc. announcing Community Forum #3.
- Liked the meeting, very interesting. Thanks for all the hard work thus far on the project.
- Thank you for taking a look at all possibilities and options.
- Go for the 'Kitchen Sink' (Concept #4).

### Feedback on specific locations:

- Need sidewalks and bike paths on Lincoln Avenue from 39th Street to Bernie Drive.
- Need sidewalks from Lincoln Avenue to Franklin Elementary School along 53rd Street.
- Consider the impact of new fire station at Fourth Plain Boulevard and Main Street.
- Taxpayers paid a significant amount to fix Mill Plain Boulevard so trucks would utilize that street, leaving less truck traffic on Fourth Plain Boulevard. Trucks seem to still use Fourth Plain Boulevard even though the left lane off of I-5 onto Fourth Plain is not easy for trucks to use. Crossing Fourth Plain Boulevard while walking/biking is difficult.
- Timing of traffic lights on Columbia Street, south of Mill Plain Boulevard, should be improved.
- Thank you for recognizing that Main Street through Uptown Village is a place. Cars should only be there to go to the businesses. This is an issue on most days and most hours, *not just* rush hour. The thru traffic can use Broadway Street, but going south on Main Street, you are forced on to Main Street at the D.Q. (can't easily access Broadway Street). Thru traffic could also use Columbia Street.
- The street to the east of D.Q. needs to be two-way.
- Main Street should be vibrant with shopping, dining, etc. Obstacles include: on street parking, narrow sidewalks, lack of bike lanes, thru traffic. Push thru traffic to Washington? Broadway?
- Consider addressing the bus stop at Hi-School Pharmacy on Broadway Street going south, as well as north. Many people catch buses from one stop to the other, and while it may improve with changed #4 bus route; it might still be worth looking into.
- Attendee strongly encourages more marked crosswalks (even at the cost of removing parking) on Main Street in Uptown Village, as pedestrians are currently crossing throughout the street, which is dangerous.
- Attendee wondered, in general, if eliminating the center third lane (e.g. 39th Street) and converting to two vehicle lanes and two bike lanes might encourage bikes and discourage trucks.

- Continue to further develop bike lanes and facilities on Columbia Street, from 13th Street north to 39th Street.
- Attendee's main concern is 39th Street. As ways are considered to improve safety for pedestrians, please remember it is east/west traffic that is usually going into the sun, if not rain. At least one more traffic light is needed.
- Fruit Valley Road Bridge: use bike-operated flashing lights, similar to SRIY tunnels in Klickitat County.
- Consider the impact of new waterfront development (i.e. Grant Street and others that will feed into waterfront).
- Attendee suggested a light on Fruit Valley Road at 61st Street: when traffic is heavy, it is tough to get onto Fruit Valley Road.
- A crosswalk would draw attention to the bicyclist/pedestrian crossing from the northbound bike lane on NE Hazel Dell Avenue to Burnt Bridge Creek Trailhead (entry/juncture in road), which is on the southbound side coming downhill.
- The new 32nd Avenue route seems like a dream come true; it looks fantastic!