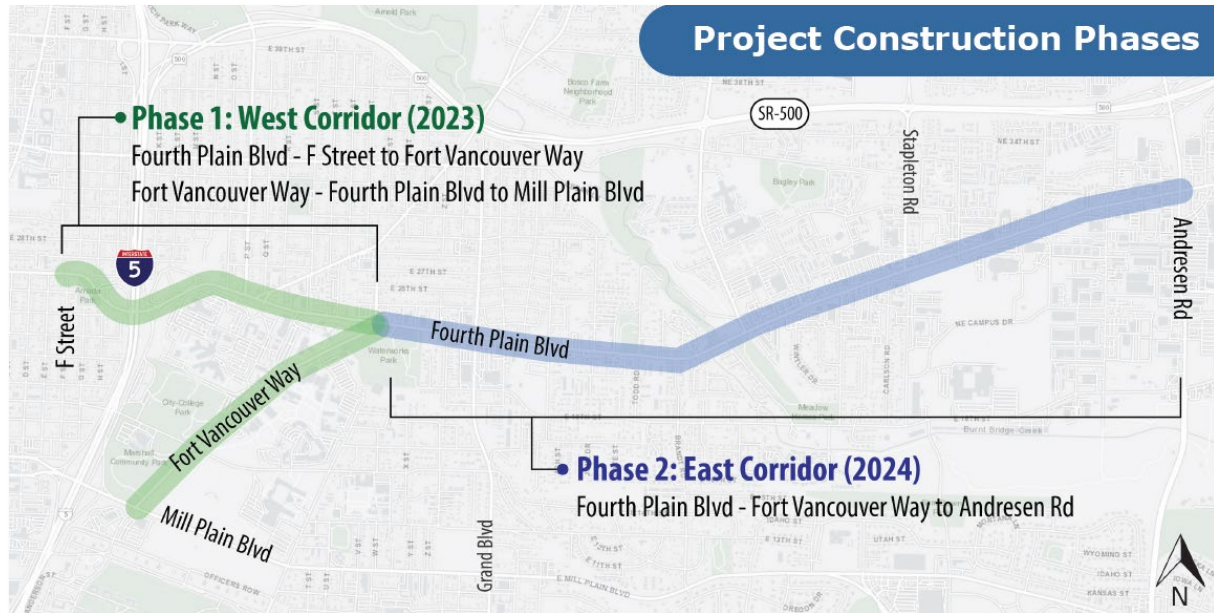


TO: Transportation and Mobility Commission **HEARING DATE:** 10/4/2022
FROM: Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Community Development Director; Ryan Farncomb, Parametrix
SUBJECT: **Fourth Plain and Ft. Vancouver Way Safety & Mobility Project Phase I Design**



Report Date: 10/4/2022
Hearing Date: 10/4/2022
Proposal: Repurpose roadway space to increase safety and mobility for all users on Phase 1 corridors segments- Fourth Plain Blvd between F Street and Ft. Vancouver Way and Fort Vancouver Way between Mill Plain and Fourth Plain
Location: Fourth Plain Boulevard from F Street to Fort Vancouver Way, and on Fort Vancouver Way from Fourth Plain Blvd to Mill Plain Blvd
Proponent: City of Vancouver
City Staff: Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development, City of Vancouver
Recommendation: Endorse the recommended Phase 1 designs to repurpose a travel lane on Fourth Plain for a two-way cycle track on the south side of the road between F Street & Ft. Vancouver Way; to repurpose the parking lane and outside travel lane on Fort Vancouver Way between Fourth Plain and McLoughlin Blvd to create a Bus Access and Transit (BAT) lane and buffered mobility lane; and to repurpose the outside travel lane on Fort Vancouver Way between McLoughlin and Mill Plain Boulevard to create a buffered mobility lane.

P.O. Box 1995 • Vancouver, WA 98668-1995 • 360-487-8000 • TTY: 360-487-8602 •
www.cityofvancouver.us

To request other formats, please contact: Julie Nischik (360) 487-7813 | WA Relay: 711 |
Julie.Nischik@cityofvancouver.us

I. Background

The Fourth Plain and Ft. Vancouver Way Safety and Mobility Project is a Complete Street project focused on reconfiguring the roadway to address one of the most unsafe corridors in the City through a potential roadway repurposing, coinciding with scheduled pavement maintenance. The existing corridor has historically high crash rates and does not provide safe or comfortable facilities for people walking, cycling, using a mobility device, or accessing transit.

Due to the multi-year paving schedule, and the complexity of the corridor, the project is split into two phases. Phase 1 includes Fort Vancouver Way between Mill Plain and Fourth Plain and Fourth Plain Boulevard from F Street to Fort Vancouver Way (2023 paving year). Phase 2 includes Fourth Plain Boulevard from Fort Vancouver Way to Andresen Road (2024 paving year). To meet project schedules for the 2023 paving season, Phase 1 West Corridor roadway design options are moving in advance of the Phase 2 Eastern Corridor.

II. Technical Findings

The team reviewed previous planning work and historical crash data to understand safety and access issues along the corridors. To understand potential impacts from a roadway reconfiguration, the team conducted traffic analysis to understand how changes to roadway vehicle capacity would impact vehicle travel times in current and future conditions.

The analysis used the RTC travel model to understand conditions today and in 2040 under a 'no-change' scenario, while also applying different roadway reconfiguration designs to understand potential outcomes. The analysis found that both Fort Vancouver Way and Fourth Plain Boulevard continue to perform well and meet City mobility standards with a lane reconfiguration. See the Attachment "March 2022 TMC Memo re: Reconfiguration Alternatives" for more information on travel impacts from a roadway reconfiguration.

The Project team also conducted parking utilization studies during both weekdays and on a weekend to assess parking demand in the vicinity of Clark College, at the Marshall Center, and along Fort Vancouver Way. The data collected was augmented with conversations with representatives from Clark College and Marshall Center/City of Vancouver Parks Department staff to understand current and potential future parking demand.

III. Community Engagement

The City and consultant team are engaging the public around two major project milestones. The first engagement round took place in early summer 2022, and gathered input on safety issues and corridor needs, while conversing with the community about the project purposes and goals. Some themes the team heard include:

- Inadequate and unconnected bike lanes do not provide a continuous, safe

- route. Nearly 80% said they felt very uncomfortable bicycling along the street.
- Wide roadway for pedestrians trying to cross. Many report that drivers fail to yield to pedestrians, even in marked and signalized crosswalks
 - Sidewalks in corridor are uncomfortably narrow. Most survey respondents said they felt somewhat or very uncomfortable walking

Respondents indicated that the top three most important evaluation criteria for design options were:

- Safety Improvements for all users (31%)
- Mobility improvements for all users (24%)
- Greenhouse gas reduction benefits (19%)

The second round is taking place from September - October 2022 and involves deeper discussion with the community on potential lane reconfiguration and safety improvements. The project team is sharing lane reconfiguration concepts with the community to identify the ideas that best meet the evaluation framework and community needs. Outreach tactics include tabling and one on one conversations at The Multicultural Fair and the LULAC-Rose event. The team is also holding several in-person focus groups, as well as widely distributing an online open house and survey. The open house, survey, and other outreach materials can be found on the [BeHeard Project webpage](#).

IV. Transportation and Mobility Commission and City Council

In 2022 the project team has met with the TMC four times over the past year (April, May, September, and October) and once in late 2021 to discuss the project goals, traffic analysis and findings, community engagement process and input, and proposed design elements.

On July 11 and October 3 2022 the project team held workshops with City Council to share information related to the traffic and parking analysis, community feedback, and design options for Phase 1.

V. Phase 1 Design Proposal

The project team has developed 'alternatives for Phase 1 that were reviewed by the TMC in early September. The alternatives include different types of roadway treatments to improve conditions for people walking, bicycling, rolling, or using a mobility device. Some treatments also aim to improve transit speed and reliability. The treatments that focus most on improved mobility for people outside of vehicles include traditional mobility lanes, or lanes that are buffered for greater separation from traffic. Facilities that improve transit and create more space for mobility users include business access and transit (BAT) lanes. Both design options would be installed within the existing curb to curb roadway width by repurposing a vehicle travel lane.

Fort Plain Blvd – F Street to Fort Vancouver Way

Only one alternative is being proposed for this section of the roadway due to several factors, including its identification by the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) as a critical safety issue, subsequent WSDOT grant funding allocated to address the issue through a design that limits vehicle and vulnerable road user conflicts through the Interstate 5 interchange, and previous Council direction to proceed with addressing this

critical safety issue. The single alternative under consideration includes a cycle track treatment on Fourth Plain Boulevard from F Street to Ft. Vancouver Way on the south side of the street. This treatment avoids many of the conflict points created by the freeway interchange on and off-ramps, and scores highly on the evaluation criteria compared to the no build design option. In addition, this alternative includes changes to address a lack of mobility facilities between the existing one on Fourth Plain that drops just east of C street and the proposed cycle track that will start at F Street, by extending the existing mobility lane to connect to the new cycle track.

Fort Vancouver Way – Fourth Plain Blvd to McLoughlin

On Fort Vancouver Way, between Fourth Plain and McLoughlin, Alternative 1 repurposes the parking lane as a BAT lane and adds an adjacent buffer to the mobility lane. Currently C-Tran operates bus rapid transit on this segment and it could be extended further south in future years.

Alternative 2 retains parking but moves the mobility lane to be curb tight. In conversations with Clark College, they noted that the transition to hybrid operations has significantly dampened parking demand. The Marshal Center Director and City of Vancouver Interim Parks and Recreation Director also confirmed low utilization on McLoughlin Boulevard, but also noted that demand has been suppressed due to some ballfields being closed. Demand is likely to pick up again, but long-term changes to Clark College operations has significantly reduced demand in the area.

Fort Vancouver Way – McLoughlin to Mill Plain Blvd

Alternative 1 on this segment repurposes the outside travel lanes to add parking that also acts as a buffer to a curb-tight mobility lane. This option adds new parking to a corridor where parking removal is recommended further north, recognizing the regional draw of the ballfields and the accessible playground built all ages and abilities. Alternative 2 includes a mobility-focused design with an extra-wide buffer protecting the mobility lane. The design treatment within the buffer is still to be determined but would likely include vertical elements to prevent driving in the buffered area. At the southern end of the segment, the Project team recommends keeping two lanes for a short time to act as receiving lanes from the double left-turn off Mill Plain, then tapering to the single travel lane with a wide-buffered protected mobility lane. Both design options score relatively highly as compared to the existing design, but Alternative 2 scores higher when considering greenhouse gas reduction and mobility improvements for people walking, using a mobility device, bicycling, or using the bus.

At the September TMC meeting there was significant discussion about the need and value of adding some new on-street parking on the southern segment of Ft. Vancouver Way between Mill Plain and McLoughlin, to increase access to the Marshall Center, the new all ages and abilities Harper's Playground under construction there, and access to nearby ball fields and sports facilities. To assess this, the project team conducted parking utilization studies on both weekdays and weekends, to understand demand for parking in the Marshall Center lots and nearby on-street parking on McLoughlin. The team also talked with the Marshall Center Director and Interim Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director to address current and potential future parking needs. Based on the

data collection and insights from the Directors, the team does not believe additional on-street parking is warranted for several reasons:

- Parking utilization rates indicate sufficient supply to accommodate new forecasted demand associated with Parks Facilities.
- On Street parking on the west side of Fort Vancouver Way and south of McLoughlin, while adjacent to the new park and community center, will not have an accessible route to these facilities. In addition, Parks staff have indicated they do not believe this increases access, and also indicated that many ADA-spaces are included in the Marshall lots that will provide direct and accessible access to the facilities.
- On Street parking utilization and nearby lots associated with Clark College and Hudson's Bay High School provide significant additional supply when the area is busy. Clark College staff indicated that in-person attendance is at 30-50% of pre-pandemic levels, and their expectation is that hybrid will continue going forward. Thus, the demand for parking both in their lots and for nearby on-street facilities has significantly decreased.

Renderings of the alternatives are included in the Attachment titled "Presentation: TMC Project Update (October 2022)".

VI. Recommendation

In making a recommendation, staff considered feedback from the TMC in earlier design discussions, public engagement feedback, stakeholder interviews with Clark College and City of Vancouver Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services staff, and analysis of traffic impacts through lane reconfiguration as well as parking utilization studies.

Based on these, the project team recommends the following design options for Phase 1:

- Alternative 1 on Fourth Plain between F Street and Fort Vancouver Way (south side cycle track)
- Alternative 2 on Fort Vancouver Way between McLoughlin and Fourth Plain (remove parking, add BAT lane and buffered mobility lanes)
- Alternative 2 on Fort Vancouver Way south of McLoughlin to Mill Plain (repurpose travel lane for wide-buffered mobility lane on each side. At the Mill Plain intersection, the southbound lane retains the right-turn lane and the northbound lanes will retain two receiving travel lanes that taper to the wide-buffered mobility lane treatment)

Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director, Community Development, Rebecca.Kennedy@cityofvancouver.us

Attachments:

- Memo: "Fourth Plain TMC Memo" (December 2021)
- Memo: "TMC Memo re: Reconfiguration Alternatives" (March 2022)

- Memo: "Fourth Plain Final Evaluation Framework" (July 2022)
- Memo: "Fourth Plain TMC Updates" (August 2022)
- Memo: Fourth Plain & Ft. Vancouver Milestone #1 Outreach Summary (August 2022)