

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024

4:30 p.m.

City Hall

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA

Commissioners Present:

Jeananne Edwards, Devon Fender, Cory Grandstaff, Thinkh Phan, Eduardo Ramos, Derya Ruggles, Sara Schmit, Ken Williams

Commissioners Absent:

Soroush Mohandessi, Mario Raia

Staff Present: Rebecca Kennedy, staff liaison; Julie Nischik, staff liaison; Becky Rude, staff attorney

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 pm by Chair Ramos.

Motion by Commissioner Williams, second by Commissioner Ruggles, and carried unanimously to approve the December minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Williams, second by Commissioner Edwards, and carried unanimously to excuse the absence of Commissioner Raia.

St. Johns/St. James Safety and Mobility Project

Emily Benoit, Senior Transportation Planner, Community Development Department

Staff presented an overview of the project, including goals, the planned community engagement process, existing and future conditions analysis, and next steps.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- Revenue allocated by City Council for Complete Streets projects. Staff responded City Council allocated revenue in the 2023 –

Members

Eduardo Ramos

Chair

Jeananne Edwards

Vice Chair

Devon Fender
Corey Grandstaff
Soroush Mohandessi
Thinkh Phan
Mario Raia
Derya Ruggles
Sara Schmit
Ken Williams

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2024 biennial budget for Complete Streets projects. The City has two core transportation goals, preserving and maintaining existing assets and planning new and enhanced infrastructure that this revenue goes towards.

- Within the right of way or acquisition of right of way. Staff responded this is a curb to curb project but will also identify sidewalk gaps for future projects.
- Will the project study parking utilization? Staff responded it will.
- Will the concrete portion of this corridor be repaved with concrete, as there are gaps in this section that are a hazard for those bicycling? Staff responded they did not know at this time if it would be repaved with concrete and can provide more information at a future workshop.
- Are improvements to the intersection with Minnehaha St. included in this project? Staff responded it's within the project boundary and will be analyzed for improvements.
- Sidewalk improvements and accessibility. Staff responded they are aware of the challenges near the intersection with SR500 and will look at making improvements for bicycles to maneuver in that area.
- Improvements to C-TRAN service on this corridor. Staff responded they are collecting data on ridership on the corridor and will look at improvements to existing stop locations.
- Outreach to WSU Vancouver and Clark College as part of this project. Staff responded they will include those schools in the engagement process.
- Coordination with Clark County. Staff responded they are working with Clark County early in the project process to coordinate the work as this corridor meets the City limits.
- Impacts to traffic flow from land uses and areas outside the project boundary. Staff responded the traffic study is within the City limits and includes land uses outside the corridor to forecast future traffic volumes.

Safe Systems Approach

Kate Drennan, Principal Transportation Planner, Laurel Priest, Associate Transportation Planner, Community Development

Staff presented an overview of the safe systems approach, how it is implemented at the federal, state and local level broadly and specifically within the City's Complete Streets Program, overarching principles, and examples of proven safety countermeasures.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- Has this approach been implemented in states or cities that have collected and published data on its effectiveness? Staff responded there are a few cities that have implemented this approach for a longer period of time and have more data available, including New York, Hoboken, and Jersey City, where they have seen significant reductions in crashes. Staff will follow up with more data and additional examples.
- Ranked order of behavioral safety factors that contribute to crashes. Staff responded the crash contributing factors for Safer People are listed on slide 9 in order of most common to less common. These crash factors have overlap where some crashes involve unrestrained people and impairment by alcohol and speeding, or another combination of one or more crash factors. For reference, here is the link to the webpage provided by the FHWA regarding contributing crash factors for Safer People <https://www.transportation.gov/NRSS/SaferPeople>.
- Moving away from punishment and towards placemaking. Staff responded enforcement is part of the safe systems approach. The approach aims to mitigate for those times when people don't make good decisions. Roadway design and landscaping is a major factor in addressing the human behavior element, but enforcement also plays an important role.
- How are the countermeasures chosen? Staff responded countermeasures respond to crash factors and are chosen based on the specific factors of a corridor. There are also inexpensive

countermeasures that proactively address potential issues. More expensive countermeasures can be added to the Capital Facilities list for future implementation.

Community Forum

Jason Cromer was present to discuss bicycling as a mode of transportation. He supported safe options for those who choose to walk, bike, roll and take transit to move around the City.

Zach Gatton requested bike lane protections such as bollards in the corridors crossing under SR500 where there are conflicts with vehicles merging onto the highway. He also requested no turn on red signage on Thurston northbound by the mall to remove the conflict with turning vehicles and bicycles going straight.

Tom Hughes encouraged the Commission to continue to add biking infrastructure in Vancouver, specifically measures to slow vehicle speeds and separation bike from and vehicle travel lanes. He also requested signage on Columbia Street where bikes merge with vehicles.

Charla Burke teaches a biking 101 class and takes students on routes throughout the City with varying biking facilities. She appreciates the evolution of the safety for bicyclists on the streets in Vancouver.

McGillivray Blvd Safety and Mobility Project Public Hearing

Emily Benoit, Senior Transportation Planner, Community Development

Staff presented an overview of project including past review by the TMC and City Council, project phases, the community engagement process, design options considered and feedback received, frequently asked questions, traffic analysis of future conditions, evaluation of the design options and alignment with project goals, and the final design recommendation.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- Methods and frequency of community engagement. Staff responded there was in person and online engagement to reach people who live on the corridor as well as those who use the corridor to travel to other parts of the City. Postcards were sent to 8,000 households in the area to engage and provide input on the project during community events throughout the project period.
- Rationale for option 1 improvements at intersections. Staff responded option 1 is a more standard treatment with bikes on the right side of vehicles. This reduces potential conflicts for mobility lane users making righthand turns and, with the addition of bike boxes at intersections, improves two part turns (left turns). With option 2, there is an additional conflict point with vehicles turning left when mobility lane users are going straight and it's more difficult to turn right across the vehicle travel lane.
- Will design proposals for the intersections come back to the Commission. Staff responded there have been some preliminary review of intersections that may need capital investment. If that is the case, they would come before the Commission.
- At the intersection with 136th Street, concern for pedestrian crossing and safety. Staff responded with this design, there will be fewer vehicle lanes to cross at the intersection, down from four to two. The detailed intersection designs for 136th and other cross streets are not finalized, but staff confirmed there will be specific treatments at 136th Street to address pedestrian safety while crossing.
- What other elements led to recommending design option 1? Staff responded that community feedback favored design option 1. In addition, Public Works engineers and maintenance staff, C-TRAN, and the fire department also preferred design option 1.

- Public comment regarding a math error found in the traffic analysis report. Staff responded they responded to the person who notified them of the error and have fixed the error in the report. The correction did not negatively affect vehicle travel times in the traffic analysis.
- Type of design features that will be added at mid-block crossings. Staff responded that this will be determined at a later phase of the design process. Locations for mid-block crossing have been identified and will include sound and other features to notify people who are crossing.
- How will bus stops be incorporated into the design? Staff responded there will be modular bus platforms which are raised platforms that extend into the mobility lane. Bikes and small mobility users will go behind those accessing the bus.
- Impacts to route 80. Staff responded the analysis did not include specific impacts to transit. C-TRAN is supportive of the modular bus platform design in the mobility lane.
- Occupancy rate of existing parking and how many spaces will be removed with the new design. Staff responded the existing conditions report analyzed overnight parking occupancy. There is space for approximately 420 vehicles on the corridor and at the time of the analysis, 77 vehicles were parked on the corridor. Some street parking may be removed at intersections to improve visibility of mobility users by drivers, but the majority will be maintained.
- Coordination of traffic enforcement. Staff responded they coordinate with the Vancouver Police Department regarding traffic safety and enforcement is a part of compliance and safety. There are not traffic enforcement resources to deploy consistently and continuously on this corridor or any other corridor.
- Options for a parallel biking route to McGillivray such as Mill Plain? Staff responded it's unlikely they would convert a traffic lane on Mill Plain for bicycles and small mobility users given the amount of traffic it carries currently.
- Emergency vehicle maneuvers on single lane roads. Staff responded they coordinate with emergency service providers on the design of roadways. In this case, there is buffer space, space between delineators, and driveways for people to pull aside to allow emergency vehicles through.

Public Testimony

Janet Landesberg suggested testing the proposed design before repaving and restriping the road. She was concerned for the safety of pedestrians crossing McGillivray and supported improvements to visibility of stop signs.

Mark Christopher did not support the proposed design for McGillivray. He was critical of the public outreach process for the project.

Tyler Wubbena was disappointed by the lack of resources for enforcement on McGillivray. He was concerned with vehicle congestion on Blairmont in the morning and afternoon during school drop off and pick up. He would have preferred consideration of a four lane design option.

Dan Packard supported the McGillivray design option 1 due to adding safe space for people walking and biking on the corridor.

Rick Ackman was critical of the public outreach process for the project and increases in vehicle travel time on the corridor in the future.

Anita Brittain did not support the proposed design for McGillivray.

Joe Arndt did not support the proposed design for McGillivray and asked the Commission to reconsider keeping 4 lanes. He supported automated enforcement on McGillivray to reduce speeding.

Laurie Arndt did not support the proposed design for McGillivray and was critical of the public outreach process for the project. She asked the Commission to reconsider keeping 4 lanes.

Michael Shaw did not support the proposed design for McGillivray and supported automated enforcement on McGillivray to reduce speeding. He supported adding sidewalks where they are currently missing on the corridor.

Bennie Atkinson was concerned with vehicle congestion at Blairmont and 136th and supported automated enforcement to address speeding.

Jason Cromer supported the proposed design for McGillivray to increase accessibility for those who travel by alternative modes, improve safety, and accommodate growth.

Zach Gatton supported the proposed design for McGillivray to increase accessibility for those who travel by alternative modes and improve safety for active mobility users.

Leah Jackson supported the proposed design for McGillivray as it will be easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate.

Tabor Kelly supported the proposed design for McGillivray and will likely bike along this corridor more after the changes have been made. He expressed safety concerns regarding the wide travel lane and how it might be used by drivers.

Israel Lopez supported the proposed design for McGillivray to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

John Bower supported the proposed design for McGillivray to increase safety for pedestrians and students who attend the schools on the corridor.

Ron Hostetler discussed vehicle collisions and accidents on McGillivray.

JB Bishop did not support the proposed design for McGillivray due to future congestion from population growth and redevelopment. He supported automated enforcement to address speeding.

Tom Hughes supported the proposed design for McGillivray to increase safety for cyclists and adding space and buffers between vehicles and bikes.

William Schwan supported the proposed design for McGillivray as it aligns with the Climate Action Framework. The proposed design supports the safety of those who use the corridor.

Scott Reed supported the proposed design for McGillivray as it supports cyclists, pedestrians, people using mobility devices and transit users.

David Kirchner did not support the proposed design for McGillivray and questioned the accuracy of the traffic analysis.

Pat Wilmoth noted there was quite a bit of public outreach for this project, indicated that he had attended several meetings, and discussed the options with staff. He supported the proposed design for McGillivray to address safety and speeding.

Ruth Wilmoth supported the public outreach process for the McGillivray project. She supported the proposed design for McGillivray to address safety and speeding.

Andy Goldstein asked what the City would do if the traffic analysis did not accurately reflect the outcome after the project is implemented.

Chris Erickson supported the proposed design for McGillivray to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Commission discussion and staff responses:

- Confidence in the accuracy of the traffic analysis. Staff responded they are confident the model is the best representation of the future of Vancouver as it accounts for future population growth, job growth, and land use changes that increase density. The model looks out 20 years in the future, but the street will likely be repaved again in 8 to 10 years, and it can be reviewed again at that point.

Commission Deliberation

- Commissioner Ruggles appreciated the inclusiveness of neighborhoods and the community involvement. She supported the proposed designs inclusiveness.
- Commissioner Williams agreed with a lot of the public testimony regarding the need to address speeding on McGillivray. Road diets are new to this community but have been implemented in the US for over 30 years. Given the amount of traffic currently on McGillivray, the proposed design will make McGillivray safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Commissioner Phan supported the proposed design to increase safety for bicyclists and children. He noted that increasing safety was an acceptable reason to increase commute times.
- Commissioner Grandstaff supported the proposed design to increase access for mobility for those who can't drive.
- Commission Fender supported the proposed design to increase safety for those who do not drive to school and for students to get to school safely and agreed with Commission Phan's statements.
- Vice Chair Edwards supported the proposed design as it increases access for those who can't or choose not to drive.
- Commissioner Schmit supported the proposed design as this connection is essential for east west biking in the City and encouraged the community to research road diets.
- Chair Ramos supported the proposed design as it is an inclusive use of the roadway and increases options for travelers. This design will move the City towards a more vibrant, prosperous, and livable community.

Motion by Commissioner Ruggles, seconded by Commissioner Williams to endorse design option #1: curbside mobility lane to repurpose a travel lane in each direction on SE McGillivray Boulevard to provide separated and protected mobility lanes as well as install vertical separators, high visibility mid-block crossing and crosswalks, modular bus platforms, and restripe parking to increase safety benefits.

Roll call vote

Commissioner Ruggles:	Yes
Commissioner Williams:	Yes
Commissioner Phan:	Yes
Commissioner Grandstaff:	Yes
Commissioner Fender:	Yes
Commissioner Schmit:	Yes
Vice Chair Edwards:	Yes
Chair Ramos:	Yes

Motion carried unanimously.

Staff Communication

There were no staff communications.

Commission Communication

There were no Commissioner Communications.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Eduardo Ramos, Chair