



Would allow crosswalk users to stop traffic...

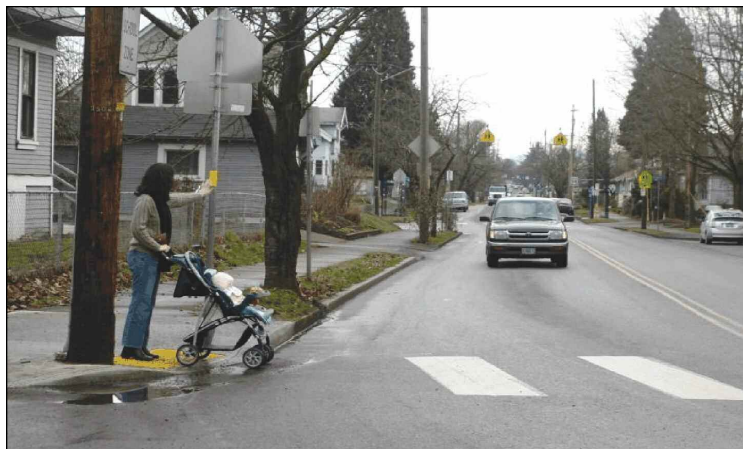
WPC to push for Pedestrian Safety Hand-Signal Bill in Oregon Legislature

by Michael Dennis

The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition is leading an effort to pass a state law to make it safer to cross at marked and unmarked intersections. Currently, to legally cross a crosswalk in Oregon, pedestrians must step out into traffic to signal approaching traffic to stop and to lawfully

cost-effective way to promote walking in our communities. It will promote walking as an option to the automobile and reduce dependence on foreign oil, increase the health of citizens, and address climate change.

The Bill will support and complement community efforts to make it safe for children to walk to school. It will correct a dilemma for parents and teachers trying to teach safe walking skills to school children. Children are taught not to go into the street when cars are coming, but there is no way for them to signal for cars to stop without entering the street. The pedestrian hand signal is easy to teach and enforce. It improves safety



The hand-signal law would create a clear rule for pedestrians and vehicles. "Raising a hand and arm toward oncoming traffic" becomes a clear visible signal that the pedestrian is intending to cross the street.

take the right-of-way. The "Pedestrian Safety Hand-Signal" Bill, drafted by a team led by noted bicyclist and pedestrian lawyer Ray Thomas and Doug Parrow, will provide pedestrians the option to use a hand signal to assert their legal right to cross the street.

To increase walking, we must provide safe passage across Oregon streets at crosswalks. Existing crosswalk law in Oregon is dangerous for pedestrians, confusing for drivers, and unclear to public safety officers. Enforcement of Oregon's present crosswalk law is difficult because there is no violation for a motorist's failure to stop unless a pedestrian actually steps into traffic.

By making a minor amendment to ORS 811.028, the Pedestrian Safety Hand-Signal Bill will provide a simple solution: crosswalk users safely signal their intention to cross the street with a hand signal. The Pedestrian Safety Hand-Signal Bill is a

because it allows a pedestrian to observe whether or not approaching traffic is going to stop without having to step out into the street in the path of traffic.

ACT NOW!

The WPC has gained support for the Bill from the Portland Police Bureau and Elders in Action – but now the action turns to Salem and **we need your help** telling legislators that **pedestrians speak with a loud voice!** You can help! Please contact the WPC at info@wpcwalks.org and let us know if you are willing to sign up as a supporter!

With the Legislature heating up, we need to bring our supporters to Salem – by telephone call, by email, by letter, and in person. The date of the first hearing has not been determined, but once we know we will get the word out.

As our nation enters a year of change and new challenges, so, too, your organization enters a time of transition and faces an exciting work program. It is an honor to write to you as the new Board President. I am pleased also to announce that Katie Urey will fill the vacant Vice-President position. After three years of great energy and leadership, Mike Dennis has stepped down as President to meet new demands in his job at the Nature Conservancy. Mike is a hard act to follow. Katie and I look to Mike for guidance as he remains on the Board as Member-at-Large.

I am a relative newcomer to WPC, but not to pedestrian needs. I recently retired from TriMet where I served as Project Planning Director and led efforts to improve bus stops and pedestrian accessibility around transit. I am excited about our future and humbled to lead a talented Board and supportive membership.

Change has also come to our day-to-day operations. Lynn Lindgren-Schreuder has resigned as director after serving the WPC with great enthusiasm over the past year. We thank Lynn for her dedication and hard work, most notably in securing the Northwest Health Foundation grant, organizing pedestrian legal clinics and drafting a new pedestrian safety class and tour format. The Board of Directors hopes to have a new director selected by the end of February. See our website for details.

We have been busy. In December the Board adopted a Strategic Plan, which is posted on the website (see article on page 3 for a summary of key elements). The WPC just held the second Legal Clinic in 2009, with more scheduled (see Web site for upcoming dates). Attorney Ray Thomas, who has been generous with his time and talent on behalf of pedestrians and our organization, leads the clinics. Another exciting project to be launched this spring is the "Getting Around on Foot: Pedestrian Facilities Action Plan." With surveys and community outreach we will document examples of urgent pedestrian infrastructure needs and argue for their funding and implementation. Stay tuned for details – we want your active participation!

Recent highlighted societal challenges present opportunities to promote our message and pedestrian needs. Your volunteer Board and a new director cannot do all this alone. We will use the **footnote*, e-mail alerts and the website to better stay in touch with you, our members and supporters.

Walking can be \$\$\$timulating

With Congress busy giving our economy a boost, local leaders are deciding how to best apply much-anticipated Economic Stimulus funds to local transportation infrastructure and starved capital budgets. This is a great opportunity for pedestrians and pedestrian projects. We all know that investment in pedestrian infrastructure:

- Reduces dependence on the automobile and fossil fuels;
- Contributes to individual health – making exercise a part of the daily routine;
- Complements this region's major investment in quality public transportation;
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and global warming;
- Strengthens livable communities and our region's thoughtful land use planning.

These discussions have been a moving target and your WPC Board of Directors has stayed in touch with the Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF), the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) and 1000 Friends of Oregon on how to best influence this process. We appreciate their leadership and have signed onto:

- A December 18 letter to Governor Kulongoski prepared by the OEC with WPC input that calls for road maintenance, transit investment and complementary bike and pedestrian

improvements as the foundation for a stimulus funding program;

- A January 23 OEC-authored letter to statewide leaders that calls for increased investment in transportation strategies which reduce automobile dependence and promote land use patterns that make walking and cycling practical and attractive options for getting around;
- A February 12 letter prepared by 1000 Friends to Governor Kulongoski calling for Oregon's \$350 million share of stimulus funding to be directed to transit, walking and bike projects that can also create jobs. The letter highlights the unique opportunity to flex these funds for alternative modes – without the constraints imposed by traditional highway-focused federal programs.

The WPC Board of Directors is painfully aware that, unlike our BTA partners, we do not have our own list of ready-to-go pedestrian projects. We are working to change that, but we also know that good pedestrian-oriented projects are already listed within local Transportation Systems Plans and capital programs.

This process is moving quickly, but you are encouraged to get involved. Check the Metro and ODOT websites for the latest information and opportunities for individual input.

WPC sits on Mayor's Transportation Cabinet

by Todd Borkowitz

The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition was invited by Portland Mayor Sam Adams to represent pedestrian interests on his newly-established Transportation Cabinet. The panel, headed by Adams' Transportation Policy Director and former BTA Executive Director Catherine Ciarlo, will provide the Mayor's office with expert advice on transportation issues by bringing together representatives from labor, business, regional government partners, community stakeholders, non-profit organizations, and academia.

According to Adams, "...pivotal decisions will be made about a vast array of transportation issues. It is critical that I have access to experts on a wide range of transportation topics to help guide the decision-making process. The controversial Columbia River Crossing project, expanding role of bicycles, growing light rail and streetcar system, and potential of a Federal stimulus package to fund public works projects are all matters that require [panel] expertise."

WPC board member Todd Borkowitz attended the initial meeting of the Transportation Cabinet on January 26. Funding was the primary topic of discussion. The Federal Stimulus Package (signed into law on February 17) will be of little assistance to a decreased City transportation budget. Adams emphasized that the stimulus dollars are focused on putting people to work and not about addressing local priority projects. Portland must succeed in the employment arena if it hopes to see this type of money again.

The Transportation Cabinet discussed whether bike/pedestrian issues might receive better attention from the Oregon Legislative Funding Package. Thirty-five million dollars will be allocated to the City of Portland for budgeted transportation projects and Adams' Safe, Sound & Green Streets projects.

The next meeting of the Transportation Cabinet is scheduled for March.



Join us for WPC Board Meetings – Note our New Location –

The times they are a-changing and now more than ever the WPC needs your interest and participation. As a new director comes on board, your organization will be launching several projects which will require everyone's help. We will update you on volunteer opportunities. In the meantime, consider joining your Board of Directors at one of our regular monthly meetings held at our upstairs office, 711 SE Grand Avenue. Please let us know in advance if you are unable to use stairs and we will make arrangements accordingly. We meet on the second Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

You may also be anticipating our WPC Annual Meeting. That date has not been set, but we will keep you posted and look forward to seeing you at that gathering this spring.

Your WPC Board

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Katie Urey, *Vice-President*

Erin Kelley, *Recording Secretary*
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Members-at-Large

April Bertelsen
Todd Borkowitz
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Jeanne Harrison
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Caleb Winter

Pedestrian safety issues addressed at SE Belmont and 46th

by Darvel Lloyd

Every weekday, seniors and adults with disabilities take the risk of crossing the congested 4600 block of SE Belmont Street, going to and from the Southeast Multicultural Center and TriMet bus stops.

People in wheelchairs and pushing walkers must either struggle with the curbs on both sides of Belmont, or be forced into 46th Avenue on one side and a lane leading into a packed parking lot on the other.

During weekdays, vehicles are stacked up in both directions, with TriMet buses and delivery trucks adding to the congestion. The closest marked crosswalk is four to five blocks in either direction.

In early 2002, after numerous complaints, the SE District Senior Advisory Council (SEDSAC) initiated the first formal request for pedestrian safety improvements. Solutions were explored but nothing much came of it, as the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) told SEDSAC that funding was not available for higher-cost improvements.

SEDSAC sent in a second request for safety improvements in early 2004, after two more years of near-misses and pedestrian complaints. Another engineering evaluation was done, but their recommendations were again tabled because the funds were still unavailable and not budgeted.

However, that request led to the city's first coordinated "Crosswalk Enforcement Action" at an unmarked crosswalk by PBOT and the Portland Police Bureau in May 2004. Drivers slowed for a while, but the crossing was still very dangerous and congestion continued to worsen.

During spring of 2008, SEDSAC members again renewed their enthusiastic and urgent efforts to make the Belmont crossing safer for pedestrians. We went to the

Sunnyside Neighborhood Association and submitted another formal request for safety improvements to PBOT and Commissioner Sam Adams' office. The Sunnyside Neighborhood Association and Elders in Action immediately added their support. Katie Urey, WPC Board Member, offered her support. Sharon White, from PBOT's Community and School Traffic Safety Program, dropped off two "Share the Road" yard signs for Belmont Street and battery-operated blinking lights for senior pedestrians.

Four months later, Will Stevens, PBOT's Program Director of Traffic Operations, along with two engineers, met with SEDSAC and Impact Northwest representatives to evaluate the site for safety improvements. Their report recommended a "Preferred Pedestrian Improvement" consisting of "green" curb extensions on both sides of Belmont, an ADA-compliant curb ramp onto 46th Avenue, appropriate warning signs, and painted white stripes. The cost is estimated to be \$30,000 to \$35,000.

While some local opposition and a lack of funding are currently stalling the project, we are still hopeful that the improvements will be funded in the next fiscal year.

Darvel is a volunteer and advocate for Impact Northwest, Inc., besides serving on its S.E. District Senior Advisory Council



Willamette Pedestrian Coalition Board Meetings

For information call – 503-223-1597
 Meets at 6:30 – 8:30 pm
 on the second Thursday of each month,
 in the Alia Planning offices,
 711 SE Grand Ave., Portland
 (Note – this is a new location)

Portland Pedestrian Program Citizen Advisory Committee

For information call April Bertelson
 503-823-7265
 Meets 7:00 to 9:00 pm
 on the third Tuesday of each month,
 in the Pettygrove Room
 of Portland City Hall
 1221 SW 4th

WPC Board approves Strategic Plan

At its December 2008 meeting, the WPC board approved a Strategic Plan for 2009-2012. It includes a new Mission Statement, Goals, Objectives, and a set of Actions and Measures to carry the organization forward over the next several years.

WPC's new Mission Statement is:

"The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition advocates for and empowers the people of the Portland metropolitan area to create, sustain and enjoy walkable communities. WPC defines a walkable community as one in which it is safe, direct and attractive to walk."

The new Goals for the organization are:

1. All neighborhoods, new developments and new transportation projects are great places to walk.
2. Walking is safe for all because everyone understands their rights and responsibilities, and practices safe walking, driving and bicycling.
3. WPC members and community leaders are empowered to advocate for solutions to pedestrian issues.
4. WPC operates effectively while growing the organization.

Among the many measures and actions that WPC will pursue over the next three years include:

- Advocating for policies, programs, and projects that support pedestrians.
- Creating a prioritized list of needed improvements.
- Assembling a collection of best designs.
- Increasing participation on committees that affect pedestrian movement.
- Advocating for funding for pedestrian projects.
- Increasing information and outreach activities.
- Identifying unsafe locations and advocating for enforcement.
- Supporting changes to laws that improve pedestrian rights.

See the WPC website for the complete Strategic Plan and join us in creating a strong organization. We welcome your comments and your participation in these efforts.

**footnote*

**footnote* is the newsletter of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization working to promote a better pedestrian environment in the greater Portland, Oregon metropolitan region.

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 Portland, OR 97208-2252

503-223-1597 – www.wpcwalks.org

**footnote* e-mail: info@wpcwalks.org

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Graphic Designer.....Bob Elliott

Book Review

**The Lost Art of Walking:
The History, Science, Philosophy, and
Literature of Pedestrianism**

by Geoff Nicholson

Riverhead Books, 2008, \$24.95

Geoff Nicholson, a Brit currently living in southern California, has written 20 books including *Sex Collectors*, *Hunter & Gatherers*, *The Food Chain*, and *Bleeding London*. His latest, *The Lost Art of Walking* is organized into chapters that weave walking with art, music, movies, literature and photography, and he shares some of his favorite cities to walk in – London and New York. He explores the motivations and accomplishments of some of the most prodigious walkers of all time including the story of Edward Payson Weston (1839-1929) who lost a bet over Lincoln winning the election and vowed to walk the five hundred miles from Boston to Washington in ten days to attend the inauguration ceremony. He missed the ceremony by a couple of hours but managed to arrive in time for that evening's ball. Along the way (averaging 50 miles a day!) "he walked through rain and snow, was chased by dogs, was arrested once, fell down several times, and on one occasion sprained his ankle." He went on to become a professional walker who won \$2500 by walking one hundred miles in 22 hours with only champagne for sustenance.

Nicholson isn't particularly supportive of pedestrian advocacy – he incorrectly assumes that activists are anti-driving which he sees as a fruitless activity. He contends that as soon as there was a choice between walking and driving, people chose not to walk. Nonetheless, he appears to spend many hours walking wherever he lives and most enjoys exploring new places on foot.

What I liked best about the book (and it is very likeable for the most part) is that Nicholson values walking for many of the same reasons I do – "when you walk, you're your own

The Walk Safe Umbrella Story *As told by Kim Carlson*

On January 31, 2006, at 7:35 pm, two pedestrians were struck by an automobile as they crossed NW 23rd Avenue at Quimby Street. One pedestrian was killed. Neither the surviving pedestrian nor the driver claim to have seen each other. It was nighttime and raining heavily. Following the fatality, (then) Commissioner Sam Adams initiated a joint meeting with the Portland Office of Transportation, the Nob Hill Business Association and the Northwest District Association.

In preparation for that meeting the NWDA Transportation Committee discussed pedestrian safety measures and ideas that we could offer. Among our ideas was a bright yellow umbrella with a "yield to pedestrian symbol" on it. I contacted local umbrella maker, ShedRain, to explore how the idea could become a reality. As fate would have it, the owners of ShedRain were friends of Sara Cogan, the woman killed in our neighborhood. The owner of ShedRain was eager to participate.

The unique design combines an iridescent yellow fabric, reflective trim, and clear plastic panels. The iridescent yellow

boss" and "it has to do with exploration, a way of accommodating myself, of feeling at home." *The Lost Art of Walking* ambles through a terrain, personal to the author, but filled with interesting stories and trivia that keep the reader engaged to the end of the journey.

– Jeanne Harrison

is particularly visible on cloudy, gray and wet days, at dawn and at dusk. Reflective trim surrounds the umbrella edge and punctuates the diamond "yield to pedestrian" symbols on two sides. This trim catches the light from headlights and streetlights to visibly announce the pedestrian to on-coming traffic. The clear plastic panels alternating between the diamonds are a key safety feature of this umbrella. It provides the umbrella carrier with the ability to see approaching traffic from two directions.

ShedRain has been incredibly generous. In addition to applying their expertise to improve the design, they included the Walk Safe Umbrella in their 2007 catalog. Orders have been taken from Bend to Longview. Food Front Cooperative Grocery and three Fred Meyer stores are selling the Walk Safe Umbrella for \$20 and they are also available at the Neighbors West Northwest Coalition office located at 2257 NW Raleigh Street.

It is never a good idea to challenge a motor vehicle. Those of us who walk are responsible for making ourselves visible, especially during low-light conditions. The Walk Safe Umbrella will make pedestrians carrying it more visible in these conditions.

Kim Carlson is the chair of the Northwest District Association Transportation Committee.

*This issue of *footnote has been brought to you in part by a donation from
Liz Dally and Jim Houser of the Hawthorne Auto Clinic
4307 SE Hawthorne, Portland • 503-234-2119*



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Yes, I want to join WPC!

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 "Treading Lightly" Membership – \$ _____
 Corporate Membership: Bronze – \$150,
 Silver – \$250, Gold – \$500.

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