



February 1998 – Number 36

# \* footnote

The Newsletter of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

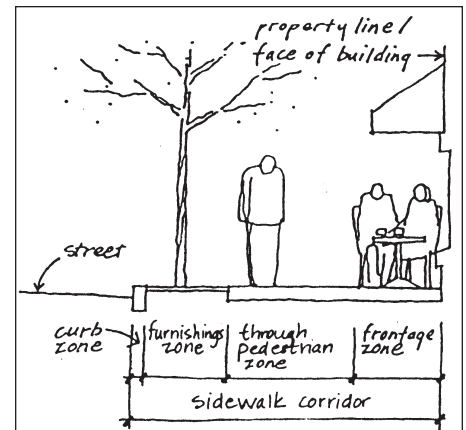
## Portland's Walking Plan Debuts with Guidelines, Projects

Portland's Pedestrian Master Plan will be presented to City Council for adoption on Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, at 9:30 am. The hearing will be held in the newly renovated Council Chambers, main floor of City Hall, 1221 SW Fourth Avenue.

The Pedestrian Master Plan includes policies, design guidelines, and proposed capital projects intended to help the City increase opportunities for walking.

Copies of the final draft Pedestrian Master Plan are available from the Pedestrian Transportation Program. Contact Ellen Vanderslice, project manager, at 823-4326 or [ellen@syseng.ci.portland.or.us](mailto:ellen@syseng.ci.portland.or.us).

Public testimony is welcome. Anyone requiring special accommodation for the hearing is asked to call 823-7211 or TDD 823-6868.



**Pedestrian Master Plan includes Design Guidelines for building active sidewalks.**

## Signal Pole Placement Protects Drivers, Hinders Pedestrians

by Doug Klotz

Portland traffic signal engineers install signal poles where they won't be hit by vehicles, even should a car drive up onto the sidewalk.

This results in traffic poles being placed in the middle of sidewalks which interferes with curb ramps

designed for the disabled, inconveniences walkers and stymies business development.

This policy came to light recently when new signal poles were being installed at SE 34th and Hawthorne Boulevard. Unlike traditional installations, where the poles are near the

curb, these will be placed at the back of the sidewalk, near the property line. Their location renders wheelchair ramps at the NW and SE corners of that intersection unusable, and will restrict future development on three corners.

Ellen Vanderslice of the Portland Pedestrian Transportation Program has been working for several years on the Pedestrian Design Guide, which lists appropriate locations for "street furniture" such as signal poles. The guide (see above story), says that signal poles should be placed three feet from the curb, or centered in the furnishings zone, the area near the curb where street trees and street lights are usually placed. The guide lists exceptions if there is not enough room to do this.

Placing poles and other fixed objects near the curb serves to buffer pedestrians from the adjacent roadway. According to the Design Guide: "Separating pedestrians from travel lanes greatly increases their comfort as they use the Sidewalk Corridor. This buffer function of the Furnishings Zone is especially important on streets where traffic is heavy." Poles at the back of the walk are often placed

*(continued on page three)*



**Newly installed pole at SE 50th and Belmont for a pedestrian crossing to a school. A preferred location would be in either planting strip.**

# Planning Commission Considers New Rules for Subdivisions

A proposed Land Division Code, which determines how lots and streets are laid out in subdivisions, will be discussed at a public hearing before the Portland Planning Commission on Tuesday, February 24, at 7:00 pm

The draft code has been developed over the past three years by Planning Bureau staff assisted by a 31-member Project Advisory Committee which included a WPC representative.

The proposed code includes connectivity standards for subdivisions in Regional Centers and Town Centers (as defined by Metro's 2040

plan), and for other areas that will make new subdivisions more amenable to pedestrian travel and transit use.

In the Regional and Town Centers, "through streets must be provided either: (a) Every 200 to 400 feet; or (b) Approximately every 530 feet, with bicycle/pedestrian connections provided approximately every 330 feet. These bike/ped connections must consist of a public right-of-way at least 15 feet wide, containing a paved path at least 10 feet wide."

In Station Communities (near light rail stations), the streets must be every 400 to 500 feet, with the same pedestrian connection requirement, except the paths can be six feet wide. In other areas, requirements only apply to sites five acres or larger. Exceptions in all areas apply when existing lot patterns prevent a through street.

In addition, connections must be provided from each lot to all public and private schools and parks within 2600 feet. Such connections must provide a path no longer than 150% of the straight line distance to such

destinations.

A new street type, the Infill Lane, is proposed. This would be a 20-foot-wide street, with a planting strip and sidewalk on one side, in a 30 foot right-of-way. This lane could be used to create connections on existing large blocks that would otherwise have no through connections.

The "double-frontage lots" that the WPC expressed concerns about earlier in this process (see \*footnote #31 November 1996) are not mentioned in this draft. The WPC believes such lots should be prohibited in order to create a safe and pleasant environment on major streets by requiring buildings fronting these streets, instead of blank walls enclosing back yards.

Testimony at Planning Commission would be helpful in guiding the commissioners on this project. Pedestrian support for the connectivity requirements is needed, as opposition is probable. As well, the "double-frontage lots" issue should also be raised. For more information, call Planner Bob Glascock at 823-7845, or WPC's Doug Klotz at 233-9161.

## America WALKs Board Meets in DC

The annual meeting of America WALKs, a national coalition of walking advocacy groups, was held in Washington, DC on January 11.

Special guest David Burwell, Executive Director of the Rails to Trails Conservancy, spoke on organizational structure and fundraising. WPC's Ellen Vanderslice was elected President of America WALKs.

WPC is a founding member of America WALKs, which was formed in 1996. Other member groups include WalkBoston, Walk New York, Philly Walks, WALK Austin, PEDS of Atlanta, and Feet First of the Puget Sound region.

The mission of America WALKs is to foster community-based walking advocacy groups and to educate and inform the public about the benefits of walking, in order to improve walking conditions.

The group is currently developing a start-up kit to help new pedestrian groups with the nuts and bolts of developing and running a local community advocacy organization.

Visit America WALKs on the web at [www.webwalking.com/amwalks](http://www.webwalking.com/amwalks).

## Oregon Highway Plan Could Affect Ped Facilities on Designated State Roads

The state is holding meetings this month on the Oregon Highway Plan. The Portland hearing is Monday, February 23, 3:30 to 9 pm. Presentations will be at 4 and 7 pm. The meeting is at Oregon Department of Transportation Region 1 Headquarters, 123 NW Flanders Street (near Old Town Max Stop, buses 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 33, 40, 77 and 91X).

Among the goals of the plan are Access Management. As discussed in \*footnote #33, April 1997, these policies limit auto access to state highways (including those such as Sandy Boulevard in Portland). But they also limit pedestrian crossings and affect how

walkable the streets are.

An exception to these policies has been written, which would affect what ODOT calls Special Transportation Areas (STAs), which are older areas with existing grid pattern streets. However, the STA exception would not apply to any newly developing areas. The result would be no new pedestrian-friendly districts could be developed on state highways.

To submit public comment, attend the public meeting, or contact Carolyn Gassaway (503-986-4224), or Kim Jordan (503-986-4121).

## Volunteer Wanted

The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition is seeking a coordinator to organize a "Walk to School Day" with schools in the Portland area. The event will be held in September 1998. If you are interested, please contact Pamela Alegria at 771-7258.



### \*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.

Membership is open to all. For more information about the coalition and its activities, call 503-223-1597, or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to WPC, P.O. Box 2252, Portland, OR 97208-2252.

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Graphic Designer .....Bob Elliott

## Curbside Pole Placement Aids Pedestrians and Businesses

*(continued from page one)*

where people prefer to walk, and where the landings for curb ramps are placed.

Another issue, which may be added to the Pedestrian Design Guide before it goes before City Council in April, is how pole location affects commercial development.

Portland's recently adopted Transportation Planning Rule requires buildings to be built up against the back of the sidewalk, or near it, in all commercial zones which are on a transit street. In Portland, this includes almost all arterial and collector streets.

In addition, locating building entrances at the corner helps build a pedestrian-friendly streetscape. This principle is listed in Portland's Central City Design Guidelines, (C5 – Design Corners That Build Active Intersections) which states: "Emphasize intersection activity by creating pedestrian access at building corners." Many new buildings in Portland are being built with corner entrances. Two new buildings planned on SE Hawthorne Boulevard, at 33rd and 40th, will have corner entrances.

WPC policy analyst Doug Klotz met with traffic signals department personnel recently to discuss these issues, and review other planned signal installations. Some signal engineers were unaware of the draft Pedestrian Design Guide. Others argued for placing signals as far away from the curb as possible. On turns, they said, drivers sometimes over-

shoot and end up on the sidewalk. Engineers like to place the signal poles far from the curb, so these the drivers "have room to recover and get back on the street" without hitting a pole.

When questioned about any pedes-

them to stand on the sidewalk.

Signals personnel responded that they would like to enlarge the corner radii so that vehicles could make the turns easily, but they didn't have the funds to do so. In the interim, they



*Bolts show where signal base will go at SE 34th and Hawthorne (SE corner). Access to top of curb ramp will be restricted by the signal.*

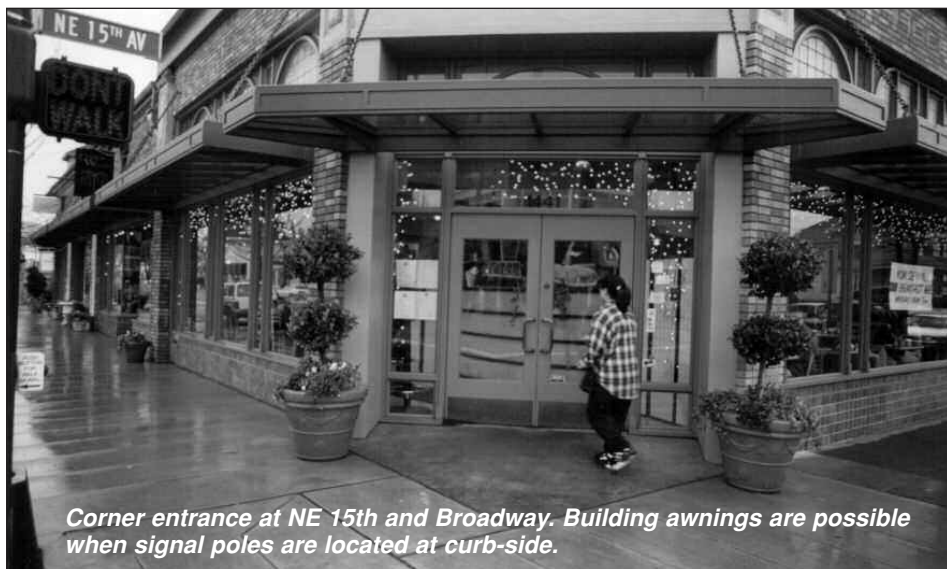
trians who might be standing on the sidewalk, the engineers responded the pedestrians could move out of the way, but the poles couldn't. When asked about visually impaired pedestrians, who might not see the vehicle coming, the response was "Blind people don't stand close to the curb. They can hear when a vehicle is coming and move back from the curb."

Ellen Vanderslice, of the Portland Pedestrian Program who was also present at the meeting, said the city is trying to encourage people to walk, and should provide a safe place for

would locate the poles as far out of the vehicle path as possible. (It should be noted that the Pedestrian Program preference is for smaller curve radii, so that crossing distances are less, traffic moves slower, and there is more room for curb ramps.)

Regarding the SE 34th and Hawthorne installation, signals department head Bill Kloos offered several options. Curb extensions are planned at several of the corners as part of the Hawthorne Boulevard Transportation Plan. If that project goes forward, the corners will be rebuilt as part of the curb extension work. Another option is to move the pole bases out to near the curb on two corners. This would cost between \$13,000 and \$15,000. The option Kloos recommends is to rebuild the corners to meet ADA requirements for curb ramps which will work with the current pole locations. This will cost between \$3,400 and \$5,000. Kloos says that under this option "we would also make the commitment to move the pole foundation should development occur with the desired corner access."

As a result of these discussions, it is clear that pedestrian issues still are not always top priority in street designs. However, the issues should now be better understood by the signal department in Portland.



*Corner entrance at NE 15th and Broadway. Building awnings are possible when signal poles are located at curb-side.*

# Historical Curb Stampings Lost in Curb Ramp Project

by Bob Elliott

Peeking out from overgrown grass, on a corner underneath the SE MLK/McLoughlin viaduct, is muted evidence that a portion of SE Division Street used to be designated Union Avenue.

The half-hidden curb stamping proclaims "Union Avenue" on what clear-

ly is now SE Division.

The problem is that until last month, there used to be at least nine such historic stampings documenting Division's ironic past as Union - now there are but three.

Southeast Division, along with other parts of the Central Eastside, has undergone a project to install disabled

curb ramps, and lost some of its history in the process.

The angled part of SE Division from SE 10th to the MLK viaduct was an extension of Union Avenue until about 1930 according to zoning maps.

The Policy and Operating Guidelines (1990) of the Sidewalk Maintenance Program call for the preservation of historic dates - "Historical dates in existing corners will be preserved whenever possible or restamped with addition of current year, i.e., 1933/1988. Existing historical street names will be restamped." (emphasis added.)

A phone call was made to Kent Bowen of the Maintenance Bureau, supervisor of the curb ramps project who acknowledged that the crews are supposed to document and restamp historic street names and dates. He stated if that was not occurring, he would need to pursue the issue with the various work crew supervisors.

Along Division between SE 10th and the MLK viaduct, three curb ramps have obliterated "Union Avenue" and are restamped "SE Division." Three other corners that previously had Union are now blank - no street name stamped.

The three remaining "Union Avenues" on Division are where curb ramps have not been installed (under the MLK viaduct and at SE Lincoln), and at SE 8th where the stamping is situated away from the corner.

I documented the Division/Union stampings two years ago because I thought it was ironic that Division was once Union. How many other small reminders of Portland's past have been lost because written city policies have not been faithfully followed?

## Willamette Pedestrian Coalition Board Meetings

For information call - 223-1597

Meets 7:00 to 9:00 pm

generally on the fourth Thursday of each month, Room A of the Portland Building 1120 SW 5th (on the Transit Mall)

February 26

March 26

April 23

May 28

June 25

July 23

August 27

September 24

October 22

November 12

December 10

## Portland Pedestrian Program Citizen Advisory Committee

For information call - 823-4326

Meets 7:00 to 9:00 pm

on the third Tuesday of each month, in Room A of the Portland Building 1120 SW 5th.

## South-North Light Rail Readies for Alignment Decision

On February 27, the South-North Light Rail project will publish its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) commencing a 60-day public comment period.

The DEIS outlines the various possible alignments and design options for the line which could run from Clackamas Town Center through Downtown Portland and north towards Vancouver, Washington. Comments received will help local jurisdictions and eventually Metro Council arrive at a "Locally Preferred Alternative."

For further information on the South-North DEIS workshops and hearings, call Metro's Transportation Hotline at 797-1900.

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**Willamette Pedestrian Coalition**

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