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The Newsletter of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

Replacement King-Grand Viaduct May Include Sidewalks

The design of the replacement structure for the SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard Viaduct may now include sidewalks. Portland's Pedestrian Advisory Committee learned at its March meeting. At a previous open house, ODOT staff had only presented a design that did not include sidewalks.

The King Boulevard and Grand Avenue viaducts in Southeast Portland form an important link in the transportation system spanning the Union Pacific railroad and SE Division St. The King viaduct (built in 1937 as the Union Avenue Viaduct) includes sidewalks on both sides, five stairways, ornamental railings and ornamental lampposts on its 1639-foot length. The Grand Avenue branch was added in 1965 with no sidewalks and it cut off the east sidewalk on the older viaduct.

The state now plans to replace the King viaduct with a new, wider structure with the same number of through traffic lanes.

Including sidewalks would add approximately \$3 million to the \$22 million project, according to Mark Wigg of ODOT. Wigg discussed the difficulties of including sidewalks on the new structure, because a planned future ramp from I-5 would join the west side of the viaduct and interrupt the sidewalk. On the east side of the Grand Avenue viaduct (which will remain), a walkway would have to be added to get pedestrians over the UPRR tracks.

Keeping sidewalks on this section of Hwy. 99E is crucial, as the current ground-level grade crossing of the railroad tracks below the viaduct at Grand Avenue and Division will soon be closed. Union Pacific petitioned several years ago to close the crossing, and the City of Portland and ODOT agreed with that request. At the time, a request to keep the crossing open only for bikes and pedestrians was



Looking north on the King-Grand viaduct from near SE Taggart Street.

not heeded. ODOT is trying to get that decision reversed, but is not optimistic.

All of Hwy. 99E in the city of Portland (McLoughlin Boulevard, King and Grand) is designated a "City Walkway" in the City's Pedestrian Master Plan, except for the 10-block stretch from Powell to SE Stephens

that includes the viaduct.

In addition, much of McLoughlin south of the viaduct has sidewalks, including some recently added by ODOT as part of the Tacoma Avenue overpass.

A final design is still being developed. For more information, call Mark Wigg at 731-8200.

Join the Earth Day Pedestrian Action in the Pearl District on April 22

The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition will be sponsoring a Pedestrian Action on Thursday, April 22 in Portland's Pearl District, an emergent urban neighborhood north of downtown.

The action will take place starting at 5 pm at the intersections of NW 13th and Glisan, and NW 13th and Everett. Everett and Glisan serve as a couplet for traffic leading through the neighborhood and to the Broadway and Steel Bridges. These streets will see an increase in vehicle traffic when the Lovejoy Viaduct is demolished this summer to help development in the River District.

In keeping with the ambience of this neighborhood of art galleries, it is

expected there will be an artistic flair to the event. For more information, call Pam Alegria at 771-7258.

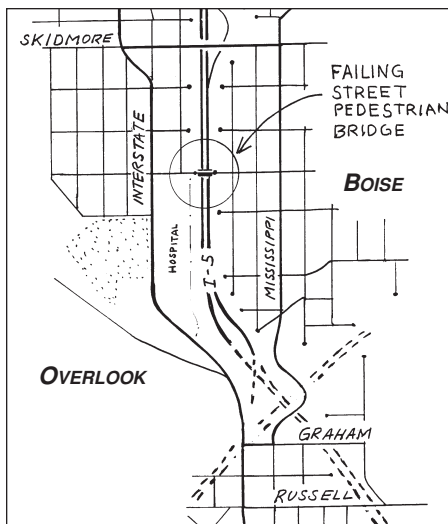
Hawthorne Bridge Reopening Fest Set for April 24

A celebration of the reopening of the Hawthorne Bridge will occur on Saturday, April 24, from 10 am to 4 pm on the bridge and its eastside approaches. There will be a ribbon cutting at noon, as well as booths and entertainment. The WPC will have a booth at the event. Stop by and visit! The bridge reopens for traffic April 25.

Controversial Failing Street Pedestrian Bridge may be Rebuilt between Overlook and Boise Neighborhoods in N. Portland

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) may rebuild the Failing Street Pedestrian Bridge and reopen it, but a final decision has not yet been made. The bridge is the only way for walkers to get across I-5 in North Portland between NE Graham and NE Skidmore St., a distance of over three-quarters of a mile.

The bridge has been closed since 1991 at the request of the City of Portland. Overlook neighbors and the Police Bureau believed crimes were committed on the west side of the bridge with the criminals escaping east to the Boise neighborhood by using the Failing Bridge. Crime statis-



tics west of the bridge apparently showed a drop after the bridge closed, although crime in both neighborhoods has dipped in recent years.

ODOT is doing a paving overlay of I-5 which will raise the road grade. New federal standards for overhead clearance are now also higher. ODOT is faced with the question of whether to raise the bridge to meet new standards, or tear it down. The ramps to the bridge also do not meet current ADA accessibility standards, so they will be changed if the bridge is rebuilt.

ODOT's initial contacts were with police officers who work in Overlook who were in favor of closure.

Then ODOT held randomly selected "focus groups" and found most participants wanted the bridge closed, although there was some support for reopening it.

At a meeting of community leaders, the Overlook Neighborhood Association was vocal in its opposition to the bridge. The Boise representative, thinking the closure was going to happen anyway, said the Boise Neighborhood would not oppose the closure. WPC president Pam Alegria indicated the WPC would support the neighborhood positions on the issue.

In the meantime, support for reopening the Failing Bridge was beginning to surface in the Boise Neighborhood. Kay Newell, active in the Boise Neighborhood Assn., and the Mississippi Target Area Steering Committee, circulated petitions at businesses on N. Mississippi Avenue, gaining strong support for reopening the Failing bridge.

When ODOT held an open house on February 25, 1999, Boise residents were there to support the reopening, while Overlook residents were present opposing it.

At the open house, one of Overlook's community police officers, John Rebman, said that he didn't think the benefits of the bridge outweighed the cost to rebuild it. He said those without cars could walk the extra seven blocks to Skidmore to get across the freeway to Kaiser Hospital, the No. 5 bus line on Interstate Avenue, etc. No Boise neighborhood officers were at the meeting.

In mid-March, the Boise Neighborhood voted to support reopening the bridge. That action, along with pressure from Boise residents and pedestrian activists, caused the City's Pedestrian Program to look more closely at the issue. The Ped program had initially deferred to the apparent lack of neighborhood support.

By the time the Portland Transportation Bureau representatives met with Police Bureau representatives in late March, the Police Bureau had decided to take a neutral position, deferring to PDOT. Commissioner Charlie Hales wrote to ODOT saying the city wanted the bridge rebuilt and reopened.

Many comments about the bridge insisted the new design should not have "hiding places" – areas not visible from streets on both ends. Neighbors also are pushing for sound walls along the freeway. A difficult design issue is how to have sound walls and still have people on the bridge visible from the neighborhood.

ODOT's decision is due April 12. For

more information, call Christie Holmgren at ODOT at 731-8281.

Other endangered bridges

Even if the Failing Bridge is rebuilt, there are two other pedestrian-only bridges in North Portland which police officers would like to have closed. One is across I-5, connecting Saratoga to Bryant Street, and the other is across Going Street at Concord Avenue.

Unlike Failing, neither of these bridges has the advantage of being designated a City Walkway in the Pedestrian Master Plan. It will be more difficult to argue for their necessity on a policy basis. However, both provide important links in the pedestrian network.

Klotz Honored with Naito Award

by Mary Rose Navarro

Urban Forestry Coordinator, Portland Parks & Recreation

The Urban Forestry Division of Portland Parks and Recreation announced that the third annual Bill Naito Community Trees Award will go to Doug Klotz. Mr. Klotz is a founding member and past president of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition and a tireless advocate for the health of Portland's Urban Forest. Chris Scarzello of the Portland Planning Bureau nominated Doug for this prestigious award.

Portland's Urban Forestry Commission created the Bill Naito Award in 1997 in honor of the late builder and community leader who did so much to beautify Portland with trees. Through humor, persistence and imaginative approach to projects, Naito inspired many to recognize the beauty that trees bring to our city.

Similarly, Doug Klotz has used humor, patience and persistence to improve the effectiveness of our city's landscape ordinance. In fact, he is perhaps more familiar with the regulations than some planners and building inspectors are. In January 1996, Doug gave a presentation to the permit center staff describing the correct way to read landscape plans that are submitted with building permits. Doug developed his own illustrated handout from site plans that had been approved by planning staff. The session was a real "eye-opener" for staff and Doug handled the presentation quite deftly. The permit center staff kept his handout and regularly makes copies for new employees.

The Bill Naito Community Trees Award was presented to Mr. Klotz at the city's annual Arbor Month Kick-off Celebration on Monday, April 5. For more information about Arbor Month, contact Mary Rose Navarro at 823-4443.

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**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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Editor.....Doug Klotz
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Ross Island Bridge Sidewalk and Railing to be Modified when Bridge is Refurbished

The single narrow sidewalk on the north side of the Ross Island Bridge is in danger of getting even narrower when maintenance work is done later this summer. The current sidewalk is 5 foot, 4 inches wide, and narrows to 5 feet at the railing posts.

Bridge owner ODOT was concerned about safety of the ornamental cast concrete railings on the bridge and wanted to replace them with solid, smooth concrete "Jersey-barrier" type railings. ODOT's historic resources branch, and the City of Portland both objected to this modification of a National Register listed bridge.



ODOT's next proposal was to add metal guardrails bolted onto the face of both railings. This would have narrowed the sidewalk to approximately three feet wide. Portland and

ODOT's local pedestrian/bicycle program staff fought this concept.

The latest version is a completely new sidewalk and railing with the sidewalk moved out two feet to get wider travel lanes. The new railing would reproduce the old cast concrete one, with metal guardrails bolted to it. The sidewalk will be wider, but bolting the guard rail to the concrete rail-

Committee Develops Statewide Driveway and Corner Ramp Design Template

In an effort to ease the difficulties of concrete contractors who have to build different driveway, curb ramp and sidewalk designs in different jurisdictions around the state, the ODOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Program is developing a common set of drawings which can be used throughout the state.

While engineers from several jurisdictions around the state (including Jerry Markesino from Portland) are participating in these meetings, there has been no public involvement so far. Some who worked on Portland's Pedestrian Design Guidelines are concerned that Portland's designs will be dropped in favor of what the committee decides upon.

Discussions apparently included a meeting with the states' Access Management personnel, who wanted the driveways to be much "flatter" so drivers would not have to slow down

to cross them. When the drawings and specifications are finished, there will be a period for public comment.

For more information on this issue, call Michael Ronkin at (503) 986-3555,

Transportation Projects Prioritized

On May 4, the Metro Council Transportation Committee and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation will hold a hearing on their recommendations for projects to be funded over the next four years with \$75 million in federal transportation funds. Jurisdictions throughout the region have proposed almost \$400 million in possible projects.

Call Metro or go to their webpage to get information on the projects. The WPC urges its members to look over the entire proposed funding list. There are good pedestrian projects throughout, not just in the "Pedestrian" category. For example, the "Boulevard" category includes projects like the Hawthorne pedestrian project in Portland and a



(Above) Ross Island Bridge from west end looking east. Only the north side of the bridge has a usable sidewalk. An open house on April 26 will be the first opportunity for public input on bridge plans. (Left) Detail of historic bridge railing.

ing will reduce the width of the sidewalk to five feet, slightly narrower than the sidewalk currently. It also appears the curbs will be sloping so as not to snag vehicles which might wander into the curb (or onto the sidewalk). A wider sidewalk with extra accommodation for bicyclists is not being planned.

The battles over the sidewalk configuration have thus far taken place with no public meetings or other public involvement. The first opportunity for public input on the bridge, and how it might function for pedestrians and bicyclists, will be at an open house on Monday, April 26, 3:30 to 8:30 pm, in the Great Hall of the National College of Naturopathic Medicine (formerly the Ross Island PCC campus) at 049 SW Porter Ave.

For more information, call Project Manager Kirk Hampson at 731-8468, or Darlene Maddux at 731-3262.

WPC Annual Meeting

Don't miss the Annual Meeting of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition to be held Thursday, May 21, 7 pm in Room A of the Portland Building.

The group Citizens for Sensible Transportation will speak about the "Regional Transportation Plan."

Gresham project to make Division a pedestrian-friendly street. Testify in person or in writing. Many thanks for your help in promoting a pedestrian-friendly region.

May 4 hearing, 5:30 pm, Metro Council Chambers, 600 NE Grand, Portland.

Or, you can send your thoughts:

- E-mail: trans@metro.dst.or.us
- Snail mail: MTIP, Metro Transportation Department, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, OR 97232
- By web page: Metro has what it calls an electronic open house, by which you can access information and leave comments at Metro's web site at www.metro-region.org

Duniway Park, YMCA Benefit from New Pedestrian Crossing



(At left) A jogger takes advantage of the new crosswalk at the reconfigured intersection of SW Barbur and Sheridan.

For many years, crossings were allowed on only two sides of the intersection, making access between Duniway Park, the Metro YMCA and downtown difficult and dangerous. In 1997, the Portland Pedestrian Program added one crosswalk and changed the signal to stop the two lanes of traffic turning onto southbound Barbur Boulevard. Drivers stop when there is a pedestrian in the crosswalk, but drive through the red lights after the pedestrians cross. Perhaps a "No Turn on Red" sign would clarify the intent.

Willamette Pedestrian Coalition Board Meetings

For information call – 223-1597
Meets 7:00 to 9:00 pm

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

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.

Barbur Boulevard Streetscape Plan to Hold Second Workshop May 5

The second workshop on the Barbur Boulevard Streetscape Plan will be held on May 5th, at Jackson Middle School, 10625 SW 35th Avenue, from 6:30 to 9:00 pm. Thirty-five people attended the initial workshop on March 1. Maps and drawings of proposals to improve Barbur Boulevard as a pedestrian environment were on display for comment.

The advisory committee has also further examined using median refuges to

make it easier to cross the street. The problem is that where there is a median refuge, there normally is not a left turn lane. In many locations, businesses want left-turn access. Designs including a median refuge just before the left turn lane were shown to the advisory committee at its March 9 meeting. Lights embedded in the roadway to alert drivers to pedestrian crossings also were discussed.

Funding for the planning process ends in June. Funding for building the improvements is on the list of requests Metro will consider at MTIP hearings (see article on page 3). This project is labeled "PBL4, Barbur Blvd" for \$882,000. The request for that funding was made by ODOT.

For more information, call Ellen Vanderslice at 823-4326.

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