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The Newsletter of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

People Places – Not Parking Spaces

WPC Responds to Plans to Add Parking and Traffic to the Transit Mall

by Joyce Felton

Downtown Portland versus the suburban mall. The retail environment is the contest. Who do you think would win? We're rooting for downtown Portland, and we believe that a healthy pedestrian environment is one of the main reasons Portland's downtown retail has an edge.

In an effort to improve the already fairly robust retail environment of downtown, the Portland Development Commission (PDC), in partnership with the Association for Portland Progress (APP), commissioned a study to identify ways to support and encourage downtown retail businesses. "Portland Downtown Retail Strategy" released in April includes a variety of recommendations.

Most of the recommendations are sound and supported by the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition. The recommendations include strategies to facilitate the renovation of Meier & Frank in



WPC activists and AORTA's Ray Polani (below right) at Transit Mall action.

its existing location, policies to protect and enhance existing independent retailers, strategies to recruit selected retailers, as well as urban design improvements. Urban design recommendations include improvements to the Bus Mall such as lighting, shelters, and improved maintenance.

But replacing sidewalks along the Bus Mall with vehicle travel lanes and 32 parking spaces was, unfortunately, one of the high-priority recommendations. After the parking recommendation was highlighted in the press in February of this year, WPC wrote an

(continued on page 2)

Late-Breaking News: Mayor Katz Weighs In on Mall Issue

According to *The Oregonian*, Mayor Vera Katz announced on August 28 that the issue of allowing parking on the transit mall is "off the table." She has asked the Portland Development Commission not to include the parking proposal in its downtown retail strategy.

Planning Commission Briefing on the Downtown Retail Strategy

by April Bertelsen

At the request of the Portland Planning Commission, a briefing was held before the Planning Commission on the Downtown Retail Strategy. The briefing was given by Ross Plambeck from Portland Development Commission and Bureau of Planning staff on the evening of Tuesday, August 27.

Having read the Downtown Retail Strategy, members of the Planning Commission expressed their range of concerns regarding elements of the Downtown Retail Strategy. There was much discus-

sion about the potential market demand for retail in Downtown and what kind of retail should be located in downtown Portland as a regional retail destination. In addition, the Planning Commission members expressed concern over proposals to increase the parking supply in the downtown core, particularly on-street parking on the transit mall.

The proposed parking on the transit mall was referred to as "teaser parking," parking that gives the appearance of available parking to attract potential customer

(continued on page 4)

They Want to Pave Paradise, to Put in Some Parking Spots! On the Transit Mall No Less.

by April Bertelsen

Members of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition gathered on the transit mall for a street theater event to celebrate the existing pedestrian space and express their concern over a proposal to reduce the sidewalk in order to install on-street parking spaces along eight blocks of the transit mall. The event was co-sponsored by the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) and supported by the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA).

On Friday, August 23, just around the afternoon rush hour, people paraded down the sidewalk from the Urban Center at Portland State University to

5th Avenue in vehicles made of cardboard, PVC piping and even a "mobile home tent." License plates included "SPC HOG" and "PVC SUV." Their destination was the freshly taped and striped parking spaces on SW 5th Avenue and 6th Avenue between Taylor and Yamhill. Single Occupant Vehicles (of cardboard) circulated between the two blocks looking for a parking spot.

The vehicles were greeted by reporters and cameras from local media. Participants struck up conversations with people passing by and handed out fliers describing the proposal and how to give input into the decision-making process. Ellen Vanderslice, WPC President, spoke before the people gathered on the sidewalk to explain the PDC proposal and the purpose of the afternoon street theater.

The proposal to put on-street parking on eight blocks of the transit mall is

(continued on page 3)



Annual Walk to School Day Just Around the Corner

by Ellen Vanderslice

International Walk to School Day will once again be celebrated this year, on Wednesday, October 2. More than 20 million children, parents and community leaders are expected to participate in events around the globe over the course of the day.

A broad statewide partnership led by the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition and the Oregon Department of Human Services Health Services has been working to promote Walk to School Day in Oregon. The goals of Walk to School Day in Oregon are:

- to promote active, healthy lifestyles for Oregon's children
- to make streets safer and friendlier for walking
- to raise driver awareness of children walking and promote safe walking skills
- to build unity in the community.

Parents and neighborhood leaders are urged to organize local school events on October 2. A number of resources to help make organizing an event easy and fun are available on the Walk to School Oregon website, at www.walktoschooloregon.org. Organizers can order posters, hang tags and "I walked to school today" stickers at no cost, thanks to this year's sponsors. If you are planning an event, please register at www.walktoschool-usa.org.

Burnside Plan Nears Final Form

by Doug Klotz

The Burnside Transportation Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee has chosen the Alternative C design for the west side half of the plan area.

Under this alternative, a "couplet" of two one-way streets would be created between NW 2nd Ave. and NW 19th Ave. Burnside would be two lanes in the eastbound direction only, and NW Couch would be two lanes in the westbound direction. This would allow Burnside to be reconfigured with 12 foot sidewalks on each side, with street trees, and on-street parking.

Couch would be configured the same as it is now, except it would be one-way westbound, and would carry much more traffic. Transitions to this couplet would happen at NW 2nd, and at NW 19th. Lower Burnside, between Park and 2nd, would retain the median with trees, with the eastbound traffic using the south half of the street. Options for use of the north half of the

street remain under discussion.

At the July 31st meeting, the fate of a similar couplet on the east side was discussed. The committee agreed to create a similar couplet on East Burnside and NE Couch between NE 14th and NE 3rd. The fate of the notorious 12th/Sandy/Burnside intersection was voted on at the very end of that meeting, after hearing much testimony from property owners on the one-block section of 11th between Couch and Burnside.

The planned solution to the 12th/Burnside intersection included routing southbound 12th Ave. traffic west one block on Couch, and then southward on 11th. Sandy between 7th and 12th would be vacated, with traffic using 7th to reach Burnside. Because of concerns that not enough outreach on Sandy had been done, as well as the 11th Avenue concerns, the committee voted to truncate the planned changes to Sandy.

This means that the 12th/Sandy/Burnside intersection, although missing the Sandy leg to the east, will still be as dangerous and inconvenient for pedestrians as it is now. This is ironic, as the main focus of the eastside work in the plan had been on "fixing" this intersection, especially for pedestrians.

Transit Mall:

Cars vs. People *(continued from page 1)*

"In My Opinion" piece published in the *Oregonian* in March outlining our objections to the notion.

WPC hopes to raise public awareness about the negative impacts of the PDC proposal and is urging citizens to express their opinions to Portland's City Council.

On-street parking is often used successfully in urban designs to encourage pedestrian activity because parked cars provide a buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians. However, in this case that benefit will be outweighed by an increased sense of isolation that will result from the parked cars. The parked cars will isolate the sidewalk from view and street activity. A feeling of isolation can make downtown seem less welcoming to potential shoppers. The way it is now, with no parked cars blocking the view, people across the street as well as bus passengers and drivers can easily see the sidewalk.

The PDC report acknowledges the importance of pedestrian activity as one of the crucial characteristics of a vital downtown. We believe it's downtown's competitive edge, and that by providing more access to automobiles on the bus mall, we'll lose that advantage. We don't believe anyone wants that to happen.

Mayor Katz Gives Segway Transporter a Spin

Mayor Vera Katz recently tried out the Segway Human Transporter at Oregon Health and Science University.

Segway inventor Dean Kamen was in Portland at the invitation of North Macadam district developer Homer Williams and OHSU to see if the Segway could be used in the corridors of OHSU to facilitate quick movements by doctors and researchers.

The WPC board will consider taking a position on the use of Segway people movers at its Thursday, October 24 board meeting. See page 4 for time and location details.



*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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Planning Advances for Waterfront Park, Naito Parkway

by Anne McLaughlin

Portland is in the midst of planning changes to two major elements of its downtown waterfront: creating a long-term Master Plan for Waterfront Park and choosing a design for the reconstruction of Naito Parkway from NW Davis to SW Market. Both plans feature a sidewalk along the east side of Naito Parkway, the west edge of the park.

The Waterfront Park Master Plan will guide future design and development of the park, though there is no funding for construction of the elements being chosen. Pedestrian-oriented features include the Naito Parkway sidewalk, a meandering walkway through the length of the park, and the esplanade pathway on the eastern edge. There will also be new or improved pedestrian access from the Morrison and Burnside Bridges.

A Draft Master Plan was reviewed at a series of preview days and an Open House in May. The Portland Parks Bureau is now refining the plan based on that input. Citizens will have an opportunity to review the draft Final Master Plan at a public meeting

Council Deletes At-Grade Option for King Viaduct

Portland's City Council on July 18 voted unanimously to shelve any further discussion of an "at-grade" option for the King/Grand viaduct where US 99E crosses the UPRR tracks and SE Division Street.

Business interests in the Central Eastside were concerned that freight movement into the district would be slowed by a proposed signal at SE Division Place. The design of the viaduct that stretches from Stephens south to Woodward will now proceed.

Eight-foot sidewalks as well as shoulders that can serve as bike lanes will be included on the viaduct. Connections from the viaduct to the surface streets below shown in the most recent presentation differed from what had been discussed previously, so more Design Advisory Committee meetings seem likely.

on Tuesday, November 19, at the Portland Building 2nd floor auditorium. There will be presentations at noon and 7 pm. Public comments on that document will be taken until December 10. The Park Bureau expects to present the Final Master Plan to the City Council in January 2003. For more details on the May Draft, and the process, see <http://www.portlandparks.org/waterfrontpark/masterplan.htm>

The Naito Parkway reconstruction is a project of the Portland Office of Transportation (PDOT). It involves pavement replacement, addition of bike lanes, crosswalk improvements to ADA standards, stormwater and drainage improvements, lighting and landscaping. The project budget is \$5.7 million, including \$5 million in federal dollars. Construction is expected to occur April 2004 to April 2006. Anne McLaughlin represents WPC on the Project Advisory Committee (PAC).

The PAC has been meeting since April to review issues and select a cross-section design alternative. At its first meeting, the group gave its highest priority scoring to improving the street crossings between downtown and the Park.

Constraints affecting the project are adding the bike lanes, retaining the northbound left-turn lanes into downtown and onto the Morrison Bridge (I-5 and I-84), as well as minimizing impacts on the park, such as tree removal. In order to accommodate

Pave Paradise: Event Garners Media Attention *(continued from page 1)*

part of a larger Downtown Portland Retail Strategy (see story, page 1). WPC values downtown retailers and supports efforts to strengthen the local economy, but we think there is more to be lost than gained by the proposed travel lanes and parking spaces.

Members of WPC and AORTA were joined by other citizens and supporters of the cause. Metro Councilor Rex Burkholder attended the event and expressed his support for keeping the Transit Mall intact and attracting more pedestrians to the retail businesses on the transit mall. Burkholder recommended investing money in hybrid buses to limit the noise impact of buses, as an alternative to constructing travel lanes and parking spaces on the

five vehicle lanes and two bike lanes, it is necessary to increase the traffic-carrying width of the street by about three feet. The committee has considered various methods of accomplishing this:

- widening toward the east by using some of the 7-12 feet of street right-of-way that is now in park use
- narrowing the median to as little as two feet
- narrowing the sidewalk/planting areas on the west (downtown) edge of the right-of-way
- narrowing the traffic lanes.

Widening to the west or east would cause removal of trees, and widening to the west would add costs for utility relocation. Narrowing the median to two feet would preclude any median plantings and reduce the pedestrian-refuge aspect of the median.

As of August 13, the PAC had agreed on a cross-section that provides, in each direction, a five-foot bike lane, a ten-foot outside travel lane, an 11-foot inside travel lane with a 12-foot median. Where there is a left-turn lane, it will be ten feet wide and the median will be four feet wide. This median width will provide for pedestrian safety and may well allow for trees to be planted. There were some issues still to be resolved

The PAC will meet again on September 10th to review PDOT's research into the unresolved questions, such as the feasibility of trees in the four-foot medians.

transit mall. With cleaner, quieter buses people would be even more inclined to gather on the transit mall and sit at outdoor cafes.

Find Out More

To learn more about the Downtown Retail Strategy visit the PDC web site at <http://www.pdc.us/projects/down.html>. You can download the document in PDF format at http://www.pdc.us/pubs/dev_downtown.html. You can tell PDC staff what you think by calling 503-823-3200.

The Downtown Retail Strategy may go before Portland City Council as early as this fall, although the date has yet to be scheduled. You can inform the Mayor and Commissioners of your opinion by sending your comments to the City Auditor Attn: Gary Blackmer, Auditor, 1221 SW 4th Ave., Room 140, Portland, OR 97204. Watch the City Council agenda posted on the web at www.ci.portland.or.us/agenda/index.htm for the upcoming hearing.

Celebrating A Centennial of Sidewalks

by Doug Klotz

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the adoption of Portland's first ordinance requiring concrete sidewalks. Before July 1902, wooden plank sidewalks were the norm (complete with planting strip and wooden curb).

The sidewalk in the photo dates from that year. The date stamp is about 400 feet south of Hawthorne Blvd., on SE 35th Place. Its mid-block location saved it from the destruction that often occurs during ramp installation at corners. "PF" likely stands for contractor P. Franzel, whose house still stands across the street from this location.



Downtown Retail: Make Mall Work Better First

(continued from page 1)

to retailers. Commissioners critiqued the "reckless and rash" nature of proposing teaser parking on the transit mall to prop up retail, for it is oblivious to the function of the transit mall in the region and jumps to a solution before the problem has been adequately categorized. The Commission advised first looking at how to make the transit and pedestrian systems work better before asking the question of whether vehicles and parking should be put on the transit mall.

The Downtown Retail Strategy will be incorporated into the Downtown Development Strategy and to City Council hearing in October.

"Walk Ways" Exhibition

A PICA art exhibition will survey 30 years of art that explores walking as a subject.

Show runs September 4 through November 2 at PICA, 219 NW 12th, #100, Portland. For more information call 503-242-1419

New WPC Board of Directors Takes Office

A new slate of officers and directors was elected to lead the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition at its June 19 Annual Meeting.

The new Board includes Ellen Vanderslice, President; Anne McLaughlin, Vice President and Treasurer; Linda Baker, Recording Secretary; April Bertelsen, Corresponding Secretary; and Board members at large Joyce Felton, Dan Polette and Doug Klotz.

Outgoing board members Pam Alegria, who served as President from 1996 to 1999, Steve Dotterrer, Board member since 1993, Brian Newman, President from 2000 to 2001, and Allison Zimmerman, Treasurer since 1996, were recognized for their service to the Board.

Ellen Vanderslice presented the First Annual Golden Shoe Award to Steve Dotterrer for his longstanding service and dedication in many roles, including as WPC Board member and as the car-free Chief Transportation Planner for the City of Portland.

Mark Your Calendar

The dates for WPC's Board meetings for the remainder of 2002 are:

September 26

October 24

Consider position on Segway Transporter

November 21

December 12

Willamette Pedestrian Coalition Board Meetings

For information call - 503-223-1597

Meets 7:00 to 9:00 pm

on the fourth Thursday of each month, on the 9th floor of the Portland Building 1120 SW 5th (on the Transit Mall)

Portland Pedestrian Program Citizen Advisory Committee

For information call - 503-823-4326

Meets 7:00 to 9:00 pm

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

*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*



Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

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