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The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

INSIDE:

Multnomah Days includes street fair, parade, live music, petting zoo and more!
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Gibbs Street Pedestrian Bridge named for Congresswoman Hooley during grand opening

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

The opening was three weeks late due to a faulty elevator. The opening ceremony was several days late, with the structure already in active use. But on July 14 City officials and neighborhood activists dedicated the new Gibbs Street Pedestrian Bridge, named for former Congresswoman Darlene Hooley, its biggest benefactor.

The bridge, which crosses Interstate 5 from Southwest Kelley to Macadam avenues, provides direct pedestrian and bike access between the old Corbett and Lair Hill neighborhoods and the new South Waterfront.

Because the grade change would have required a steeply sloping ramp if the bridge had ended on ground level on the east end, instead it terminates 68 feet in the air. There are stairs to the ground, but also a handicapped-accessible elevator.

Mayor Sam Adams, who presided at the opening ceremony, said that before the bridge's completion, walking or biking between the two sides of the neighborhood "meant a one-mile

trek that was impossible for someone not reasonably spry and fearless. Today it is a mere 700 feet."

Together with Interstate 5, the Portland Streetcar, the Oregon Health and Sciences University's aerial tram and the planned Portland to Milwaukie light rail line, the new bridge will make the South Waterfront a "multimodal hub. To make it vital, we needed to make it accessible to all users," said Adams.

The bridge was conceived, in part, as mitigation to the neighborhood for the tram, whose effects were widely feared.

Mark Williams of OHSU said the university viewed construction of the bridge a part of a partnership with



Former Congresswoman Darlene Hooley is joined at the Gibbs Street Pedestrian Bridge dedication by (from left) Mark Williams, Jim Gardner, Don Baack, and Mayor Sam Adams, July 14. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

its neighbors. "There's no way we could have gotten this built by any one player," he said.

Past transportation projects, such as I-5, had "served to cut the neighbor-
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Bike Central



There were bikes (and bicyclists) everywhere in Multnomah Village during the Sunday Parkways event, July 22.

(Photo courtesy of Patti Waitman-Ingelbretsen)

Speed limits to dip on Maplewood Road and other Southwest streets

NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS

By Jillian Daley
The Southwest Portland Post

Maplewood, Hillsdale and Hayhurst neighborhood association residents could see speed limit changes on streets in their areas this summer.

Portland City Council this month could approve dropping the speed limit from 25 to 20 mph on some low-traffic residential streets, including a few roads in the southwest, said Kyle Chisek, a capital projects manager at the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

Chisek said the potential slowdowns in Southwest Portland are: Maplewood Road, from 45th Avenue to 52nd Avenue; 52nd Avenue, from Maplewood Road to Vermont Street; 60th Avenue, from Miles Court to Vermont Street; Illinois Street, from 45th Avenue to Shattuck Road; and Westwood Drive, from Terwilliger Boulevard to Sunset Drive.

If passed, the changes will occur by the end of September in this area, Chisek said. In anticipation of the change, the city planned to start installing speed bumps in July every 350 feet on Maplewood, Southwest 52nd and Southwest 60th avenues. Illinois Street already has speed bumps in place, and Westwood Drive cannot add them because it is so steep, he said.

The Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3150 in 2011, allowing cities to decrease the speed limit by 5 mph on roads with less than 2,000 cars a

day. Before the bill went into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, Oregon Department of Transportation previously held the authority to set speed limits, according to a bill summary.

The roads where the city plans to decrease the speed limit are called "neighborhood greenways," Chisek said. A neighborhood greenway is a street with little traffic and a low speed limit where pedestrian and bicycle traffic safety is top priority.

In the last three years, the city has improved 50 miles of neighborhood greenways, allocating \$900,000 per year to support the upgrades, Chisek said.

Maplewood Road also is designated as one of the City of Portland "safe routes to school." The city works to improve crosswalks and other safety features on those routes, and they have organized group walking and biking trips to and from school.

The Portland Bureau of Environmental Services is doing ditch maintenance and shoulder work on Maplewood Road, clearing out weeds from the drainage ditch and adding crushed rock.

Those changes will provide a stable area for the Bureau of Transportation to pave the shoulder. That will give pedestrians a safe point of refuge on the road, which has no sidewalks, Chisek said.

"These projects are basically alternatives to busy streets, and they're good streets that we're trying to make better for biking and walking."

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