

Busy Capitol Highway

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the stroller onto the road.”

“With the flow of traffic and high speeds, it was no easy task,” said Gardner.

The couple recently made a video of impassable areas due to mud. Wade, Gardener and their two-year-old daughter live off of Southwest Capitol Highway and Alice Street.

Wade, who is a civic educator and organizer, and past vice chair and secretary of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, agreed to be interviewed by *The Post* for this story. What follows are excerpts from that interview.

Q: *What is the one thing you’d like the city to know about your dilemma?*



An artist's conception of Capitol Highway, complete with sidewalks, facing north toward Southwest Lobellia Street. (Graphic courtesy of Portland Bureau of Transportation)

A: Capitol Highway is devoid of so many of the street improvements that other Portlanders take for granted. No sidewalks, bike lanes, curbs, or crosswalks mixed with high speeds and often distracted and unyielding drivers make this section of Capitol extremely unfriendly and unsafe for pedestrians.

This is my neighborhood. This is where I walk with my daughter nearly every day, yet some days, I feel like I’m being an irresponsible parent who is putting my little one in harm’s way. I shouldn’t have to feel that way.

Q: *Are you planning on taking additional action?*

A: My family plans to continue to document our struggles with walking along and across Capitol Highway and to share these with staff and commissioners for Portland’s Bureau of Transportation as well as Portland’s Bureau of Environmental Services.

I will remain active in my neighborhood and appreciate the (Multnomah Neighborhood Association) organizing around these issues. I have had opportunities to speak with city representatives and highly encourage other people with these concerns to (engage).

Q: *What would your dream be for this*

situation?

A: Capitol has the potential for my family and Multnomah to realize a “20-minute neighborhood” - to safely access a store, a library, a school, a park on foot.

It’s unfortunate to know that Capitol has been a priority project for street improvements since the ‘90s, yet this one mile stretch remains unimproved.

My dream would be to see that 20 minute neighborhood realized, to have a safe and navigable sidewalk from Taylor’s Ferry into the Village, to add crosswalks along the way, to have the city’s bureaus work *together* and be flexible with codes to make that happen.

In my dream, Capitol would be a conduit for community where people stroll and bike with their families and visit with their neighbors and not just another way for speeding cars to get from point A to point B.

Q: *Are there any stories of neighbors or parents who share your concerns?*

A: When you’re walking along Capitol you don’t pause long to have

conversation. You see people like dog walkers, bus riders, caregivers with kids challenged by the exact same things that you are.

That muddy patch around a bend that you can’t push your stroller through. Parked cars in the right of way forcing you into the street. That stream of cars that just won’t stop to allow you to cross the street.

Wade said she plans to keep fighting and won’t stop until the issue is resolved. The city has been promising funds and redevelopment for this stretch of Capitol Highway but other priorities and budget cuts have become barriers to progress.

According to Moses Ross, chair of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, this issue will remain on the neighborhood’s agenda for years to come.

“We’ve invited (City Commissioner) Steve Novick,” Ross said, “to a future meeting.”

Novick is the commissioner in charge of the Bureau of Transportation and a Multnomah resident.

“All we ask for is an equitable process,” Wade concluded. “Fairness must be addressed when budgeting is allocated.”

“What might cost \$3 million on the east side (of the Willamette River) may cost \$20 million on the west side due to topographical/environmental challenges.”

Don Snedecor contributed to this story. To read the Capitol Highway Plan Refinement Report 2011(which focuses on future construction of the Garden Home segment) please go to <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/49304>. The Multnomah Neighborhood Association meets every second Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., at the Multnomah Arts Center, Room 30, 7688 SW Capitol Hwy.

Hayhurst Playground

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entail. She has formed a committee which is researching various grants to jumpstart the project. Then they hope to connect with a variety of companies with deep pockets to help fulfill this dream.

“Hayhurst is quite a unique school,” Kreutz explained as her six-year old swung on the bars. “One side of the school encompasses the Odyssey program which enrolls by lottery; the other half is called the ‘Neighborhood’.”

It was evident by the compost bins, raised beds, and dormant gardens that this school aims high and encourages creativity and a sense of the way people used to play in the day.

“We have years to go,” Kreutz ended. “We’ll get there with the community’s support.”

Tax deductible donations can be mailed to: Hayhurst Elementary School, Attn: Dream Big Project, 5037 SW Iowa St., Portland, 97221, or go to the website, <http://hayhurstdreambigproject.weebly.com> and click on the ‘donate now’ button. Please make your check or money order payable to Hayhurst PTA and include the Dream Big Project on the memo line.

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