

Notes on the Multnomah Boulevard Bicycle and Pedestrian Project

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

In mid-January The Post interviewed Rich Newlands with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT). Newlands is project manager of the Multnomah Boulevard Bicycle and Pedestrian Project.

Newlands is scheduled to give an update on the project at this month's Multnomah Neighborhood Association meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the Multnomah Center, Room 30, 7688 SW Capitol Hwy.

Newlands said the \$4 million (construction budget is approximately \$2.2 million) project has been limited to a six-block section of Southwest Multnomah Boulevard between 25th and 31st avenues.

While originally to be a phased in project heading west from 22nd Avenue all the way to 40th Avenue, apparently future planning and construction aside from these six blocks has been abandoned due to lack of funding.

Jim Peterson, owner of nearby Custom Woodworking, has been corresponding with The Post as well. Peterson said he asked at each neighborhood meeting (that Newlands gave progress reports) if the project was on budget and Newlands replied that the project was under budget. "I was at no meeting where it was discussed that elements of the

plan were being pulled for budget problems," said Peterson. "When and where was the meeting where a reduced project was discussed?"

According to Newlands, the north side will include a complete build out of sidewalks, curbs, and bike lanes. The south side will be limited to a single multi-user track as well as a "green gutter," a three-foot-wide grassy strip which will act as a buffer between automobiles and the track for bicycles and pedestrians.

A new signalized crosswalk with a flashing beacon will be constructed at Southwest 25th Avenue.

Eliminated have been sidewalk widening and connectivity between 25th Avenue east past 22nd Avenue to the new Safeway supermarket (Southwest Barbur Boulevard and Capitol Hill Road) along the north side of Multnomah Boulevard.

According to Newlands, this was due to the high cost of acquiring right-of-way from the owner of the existing apartments (which would have reduced available parking).

Additionally, a stretch of the multi-user lane on the south side between 25th east to 22nd was eliminated do to the high cost of reconstructing the retaining walls.

Peterson, whose business lost out in the cutbacks, argued that expensive engineering and rebuilding of some retaining walls on the south side of Multnomah Boulevard was expensive and unnecessary.

"Please remember that a project's budget is much more than the construction contract (design engineering, right-of-way, and construction management)," said Newlands.



This photo of Oleson Road shows what the north side of Multnomah Boulevard may look like with sidewalks, curbs and bike lanes. (Photo by Roger Averbek)



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