

## Woodstock's Unimproved Streets

Woodstock's unimproved streets have been a neighborhood issue for decades. Eight percent of Woodstock's streets are unimproved, as compared to two percent of all streets citywide.

Woodstock's 1995 Neighborhood Plan contained a good description of the problems of unimproved streets. It stated the following objectives for unimproved streets, but contains no guidance as to how these objectives are to be realized: *but is vague on solutions*

Objectives:

~~2.1 Evaluate unimproved rights-of-way to determine which streets should be given the highest priority for full multimodal improvements and which should be considered for bicycle and pedestrian pathways, conversion to linear parks, or street vacations.~~

~~2.2 Study the feasibility of improving unimproved or partially improved east-west rights-of-way to facilitate circulation and relieve traffic congestion within and around the Village Center (now termed the Woodstock Neighborhood Center).~~

~~2.3 Minimize the negative impacts of additional traffic on adjacent residential areas when improving streets.~~

In the spring term of 2010, a group of five PSU Masters in Urban Planning students did a thorough study of Woodstock's unimproved streets titled "Roadway not Improved." Two conclusions of this report were that streets were not being improved because the cost of Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) was prohibitive for adjacent residents and because residents adjacent to streets needing improvement feared that street improvement would result in an undesired increase in traffic.

On January 11, 2011, the PSU group gave a presentation of their findings from "Roadway not Improved" to the Portland Planning Commission.

Perhaps some of you can remember that presentation. The report can be accessed at <http://www.RoadwaynotImproved.com>.

*Also that more flexible and context sensitive options for street improvements were needed.*

The majority of Woodstock's unimproved streets cluster within a ¼ mile of the commercial core of the Woodstock Neighborhood Center, which is essentially Woodstock Boulevard between SE 39<sup>th</sup> (or SE Chavez) and SE 52<sup>nd</sup>. Language in the proposed 2035 Draft of the Comprehensive Plan calls for increased density and a "wider variety of housing options" close to Neighborhood Centers (see Policy 3.30). Most blocks adjacent to Woodstock's commercial core are designated for R 2.5 zoning, meaning that the City's vision is for these blocks to be developed as rowhouses or

*Jerry Griffiths  
4128 SE Reedway*

similar development at double the density of their current R5 zoning. This intended higher density development is effectively blocked by the presence of the unimproved streets since up zoning from lower to higher density is contingent on having adequate infrastructure to support the density increase. The point here is that while the Comp Plan envisions higher density in and around the Woodstock Neighborhood Center, the continued existence of extremely substandard streets undermines that objective.

From the neighborhood's perspective the goal of improving key neighborhood streets is not as straightforward as it might initially seem. Many residents see positive qualities in the unimproved streets. Often they serve as a de-facto buffer between commercial and residential areas. And the degraded aspect of these streets prevents them from being used by pass-through traffic trying to avoid congestion on Woodstock Boulevard.

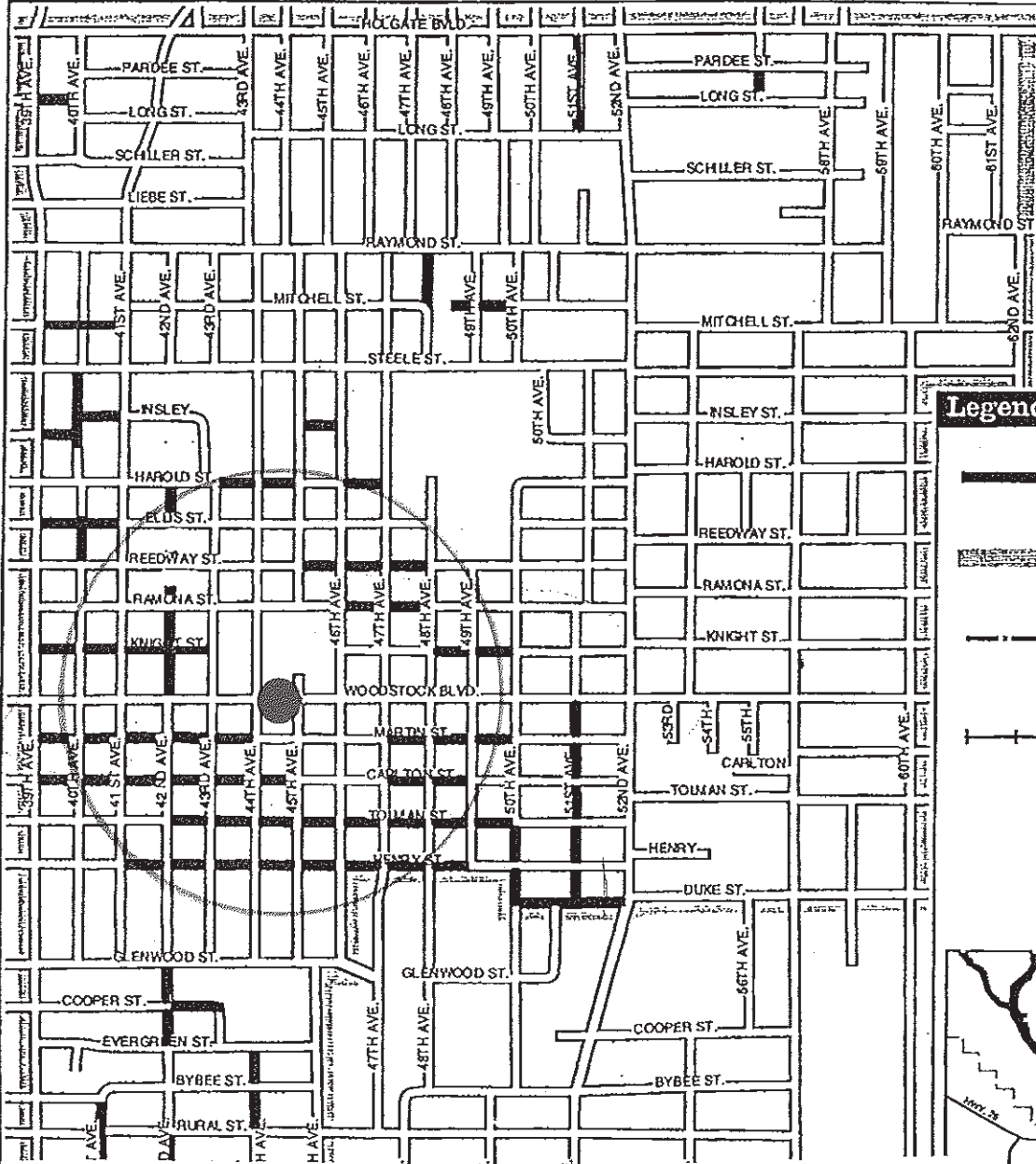
Woodstock needs city help to develop an overall plan for these streets to enhance our Center's role as a 20 Minute Neighborhood, to provide attractive and convenient pedestrian and bicycle pathways, as well as allowing limited vehicle access for increased housing density. Such a plan should also strive to preserve the buffering qualities and the disincentives to cut-through traffic that these streets in their present condition afford today.

Both SE Knight and Martins parallel the Woodstock business district. With commercial lots being different depths, some residents face the backs of commercial buildings. In our recent charrette, neighbors from these streets were shown several applications that could be used to buffer them with landscaping, head in parking, bike and walking paths. Residents liked the "street by street" approach and would be most comfortable with street improvements that were flexible in their approach and sensitive to context.

TERRY BRITTON

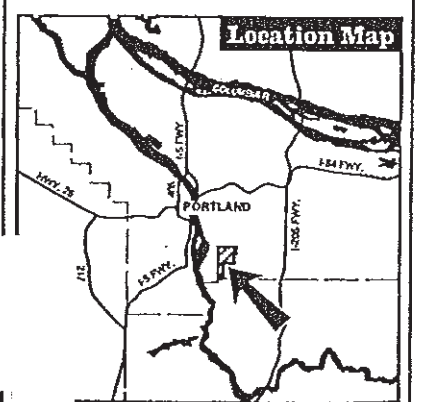
# Map 5

## Unimproved Rights of Way

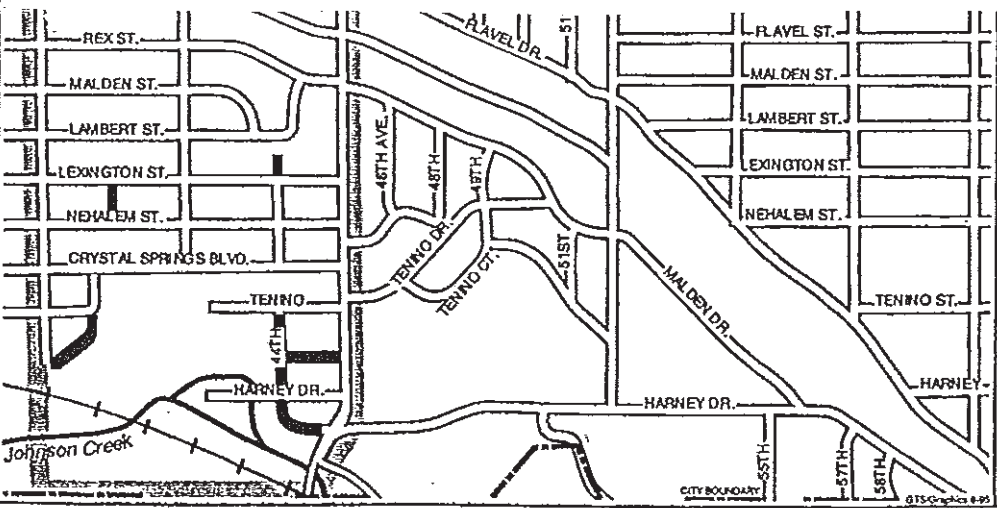


**Legend:**

- Unimproved Rights of Way
- Neighborhood Boundary
- City Boundary
- Railway (Springwater Corridor)



### UNIMPROVED STREETS W/IN 1/4 MILE OF WOODSTOCK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER



## WOODSTOCK Neighborhood Plan

NORTH

0' 1,000'

Scale In Feet

June 1995  
Bureau of Planning  
City of Portland, Oregon