

March 11, 2015

At its March 9, 2015, general meeting, the Foster Powell-Neighborhood Association (FPNA) voted to support prioritizing traffic calming efforts on SE 72nd Ave between Foster Rd and Powell Blvd as part of the proposed 'SE Seventies Neighborhood Greenway' (Transportation Project ID 70052).

In the case that the 'Seventies Greenway' alignment changes from what is proposed in the current *Draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan* (along 72nd between Powell and Foster), traffic calming is still a high need for this neighborhood street and the Foster-Powell Neighborhood Association supports assessing this action soon to encourage safe pedestrian access and alleviate increased vehicle usage in the future.

SE 72nd Avenue between Powell and Foster is a significant pedestrian access connecting several neighborhood amenities for Foster-Powell and adjacent neighborhoods:

- Mount Scott Park and Community Center, Mt. Tabor, Essex Park, and Kern Park.
- Businesses on Foster Avenue and Powell Boulevard
- Neighborhood schools including Arleta Elementary (the neighborhood school for much of the Foster-Powell Neighborhood), Marysville Elementary, Wild Lilac Child Development Community, Youngston School at Pioneer, Franklin High School, Atkinson Elementary, and the Kellogg Middle School Property.
- Major TriMet lines on Powell, Foster, Holgate and Division.
- The Holgate Public Library
- Portland Mercado (72nd and Foster)
- The Jade District
- North/South Connections to the Lents Neighborhood
- Connections to the Springwater Corridor Trail, as well as existing Neighborhood Greenways, utilized by many residents for commuting across the city.
- Farmers Markets and businesses in the neighborhoods of Montavilla and Woodstock

The importance of this neighborhood pedestrian connection is strongly identified in the current *Portland Comprehensive Plan* update as not only an 'Enhanced Greenway Corridor' but north portions are a 'Potential Habitat Corridor' between Mount Tabor and Lents Park (*Urban Design Direction* p 30-32, 2014). ***It is unacceptable to see this important residential street continue to be prioritized for automobiles.***

The Problem: SE 72nd Avenue falls along an increasingly common North/South roadway alignment. Cars can virtually cut-through the entire length of the city, from NE Columbia Boulevard to Johnson Creek, switching between NE 57th, NE/SE 60th, and SE 72nd Avenues. Drivers use these neighborhood streets to bypass congestion on I-205 or 82nd, traveling between North Portland and Clackamas County and all points in between.

While portions of this street configuration have been designed for a higher speed and capacity (or are at least wide enough to separate traffic from pedestrian use) the blocks of SE 72nd between Foster and Powell constitute narrow neighborhood streets that are not designed to handle the speeds or capacity of current usage. Cars and commercial trucks are often seen and heard traveling at speeds of 30-40 miles an hour, much higher than the posted 25 mph, especially at rush hour and in the morning as children are heading to neighborhood schools.

Adding to the traffic speeds, SE 72nd between Powell and SE Center is identified as a city emergency route and does not contain any traffic calming measures. Vehicles traveling North and South from adjacent stretches of SE 72nd (where the streets are designed for a higher capacity, or contain speed humps) are able to suddenly fly through the Foster-Powell neighborhood, unencumbered by calming

measures. The street is only three car-widths wide, so high speed vehicles are constantly weaving and pausing around parked cars and bicyclists, waiting for on-coming vehicles, thus increasing driver frustration, unpredictable traffic patterns, and aggressive driving. Frequently drivers feel the need to speed up, hurrying so vehicles traveling in the opposite direction can pass when paused behind a parked car.

***No one could argue that neighborhood blocks should be an alternate route to I-205.*** Action should be prioritized to discourage usage of these blocks for cross-city cut-through traffic. The current condition of this street is one that is not safe or inviting to pedestrians, children, pets, or the many families that call this street home.

#### Potential Solutions:

- The 'Seventies Greenway' proposal is identified in the current *Draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan*. While a safe, dedicated North/South pedestrian connection through the heart of Foster Powell is a desired amenity connecting pedestrians to the several locations listed above, it is understood that there is an effort to shift the Neighborhood Greenway alignments to the North and South (67th and 80th avenues). While many residents on SE 72nd have expressed the desire for this bikeway, in the case that the city determines that the 'Seventies Greenway' is not the best alignment, traffic calming measures still need to be taken to benefit pedestrians and residents along this street.

A draft greenway proposal by the SEUL Bikeway group includes a Greenway for a stretch of SE 72nd between SE Lafayette and SE Center. The FPNA supports prioritizing this stretch of 72nd as a Neighborhood Greenway connecting pedestrians in Foster-Powell to adjacent amenities listed above, to be considered in conjunction of the development 60's Bikeway as this route provides a more direct route to neighborhoods north of Mt Tabor. ***Traffic calming measures should be included in any Neighborhood Greenway proposal involving this stretch of SE 72nd.***

- Semi-diverters as seen as part of the 50's bikeway (52nd and Division, 52nd and Burnside) would be an effective measure against the similar type of cut through traffic seen at these locations and emergency vehicles would still be able to use the street. Properly designed diverters would send vehicles making longer North/South trips around the neighborhood at proper avenues (39th, 50th, and 82nd) while making the street available only for local traffic, as the street was designed.
- Emergency vehicle-friendly speed reduction devices as PBOT is testing throughout the city.
- Speed reduction. Currently speed is posted at 25. Vehicles traveling at this speed are routinely tailgated.
- Increased speed-limit signs While some 25 mph signs are currently posted, neighbors have reported at least one sign that was removed.
- Increased enforcement. Residents have notified the Portland Police Department of safety issues on these blocks and have seen an increase in police presence on the street as promised, however this hasn't successfully calmed traffic on this street.
- Increased street trees and stormwater retention facilities. Green street improvements have been shown to reduce speeds on neighborhood streets. Friends of Trees has been doing incredible outreach in the neighborhood to add new trees on 72nd and throughout Foster-Powell. New stormwater facilities would be a positive next step for the neighborhood.

Supporting City Plans and Strategies Associated with this Proposal:

- Portland's *Draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan*
  - Several comments on the *Map App* echo the need for traffic calming on SE 72nd.
  - Urban Design Direction: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/497442>
- PBOT *Bike Plan For 2030*
  - <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/44597>
- *Portland Transportation System Plan (2007)*
  - "Operate Neighborhood Collectors in Southeast Portland to function primarily as circulation for district traffic rather than as regional streets, even where they carry a significant amount of regional traffic." (Ch. 2d, p. 2-69)
  - <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/52495>
- *Foster Road Transportation and Streetscape Plan*
  - <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/57866>
- *Inner Powell Boulevard Streetscape Plan*
  - <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/477972>
- Safe Routes to Schools
  - <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/478702> (SE 72nd between Powell and Center is labeled a preferred route, the Neighborhood Association would argue that until traffic calming is installed, this is not true. The same goes for 67th at Holgate, where there is a need for pedestrian crossing improvements.)
- Powell Division Transit Project
  - <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/powell-division-transit-and-development-project>
  - As public transportation stops are identified along this project (likely at 72nd and Powell) there is a **potential for identifying funding** for pedestrian improvements on adjacent streets. As this is a key pedestrian access for public transportation, we hope the city can work with Metro and TriMet to identify and prioritize pedestrian improvements as part of this planning process.
- Metro's *Climate Smart Strategy*
  - "Make biking and walking safe and convenient."
  - "Make streets and highways safe, reliable and connected."
  - <http://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/climate-smart-strategy/strategy-elements>

Feel free to contact me at [campbell.danieljames@gmail.com](mailto:campbell.danieljames@gmail.com) or 503-459-8125.

Sincerely,

Dan Campbell