



Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee

1120 SW5th Avenue Suite 800
Portland OR 97204

Members

October 7, 2010

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Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
1900 SW 4th Avenue
Suite 7100
Portland, OR 97201

Subject: New Water Avenue Project

Dear Members of the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission:

At our September 2010 Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting Art Pearce, of the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), presented the New Water Avenue project. In discussion, we agreed with the need to realign the temporary roadway that exists and to transform the Old Water Avenue into a pedestrian plaza. At the same time, we do not support the New Water Avenue Project, as presented, with a sidewalk only on the west side.

In such an important area for pedestrians, at a Light Rail station, and with all the attractions in the area including the new Railroad Museum, it is a serious mistake, and shortsighted, to build a new street with only one sidewalk. We understand that staff is re-evaluating this design and are hopeful that our concerns will be addressed.

The cross section presented by Mr. Pearce at the meeting showed a west-side sidewalk, planting, and three traffic lanes, and then only planting on the east side, with a 9-foot swale at the eastern edge. He explained that there was no room for an east-side sidewalk. However, the continuous center turn lane here was not deemed necessary on the Old Water Avenue, which had a center median and turn pockets where necessary.

Mr. Pearce argued at the meeting that there were no destinations pedestrians needed to access on the east side. We are not satisfied by this analysis that fails to consider a number of factors. First, the west sidewalk will be crossed by driveway traffic accessing the planned new parking garage for OMSI, as well as being crowded with pedestrians. Second, the east sidewalk is the direct route for destinations on the east side of Water Avenue, including the PCC campus. Third, the Railroad Museum will have a window wall facing the New Water Avenue aimed at attracting the view of walkers. Fourth, the museum will have an entrance on the east side of the street, which will need pedestrian access. Finally, the single sidewalk does not consider the potential of future evolution of the district.

We believe the street should be designed with separated sidewalks on both sides, and a left turn lane only where necessary at the proposed garage. In this way, the future uses and future pedestrian traffic in this critical area of the Central Eastside will have the advantage of a "Complete Street", one with sidewalks on both sides as befits a heavily used pedestrian district. Hopefully that is what you will see on October 12th.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DAULWES', written in a cursive style.

David Aulwes
Chair, Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee

cc: Julie Ocken, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Teresa Boyle, Portland Bureau of Transportation
Art Pearce, Portland Bureau of Transportation
Leah Robbins, TriMet