

**From:** M Sean Green [mailto:seangreen@mac.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, March 24, 2016 2:05 PM

**To:** Planning and Sustainability Commission <psc@portlandoregon.gov>

**Cc:** Wagner, Zef <Zef.Wagner@portlandoregon.gov>; Gonzalez, Cevero

<Cevero.Gonzalez@portlandoregon.gov>; Commissioner Novick <novick@portlandoregon.gov>; Hales,

Mayor <mayorcharliehales@portlandoregon.gov>; Treat, Leah <Leah.Treat@portlandoregon.gov>;

Commissioner Fritz <amanda@portlandoregon.gov>; Commissioner Saltzman

<dan@portlandoregon.gov>; Commissioner Fish <nick@portlandoregon.gov>

**Subject:** TSP Testimony

Dear TSP Planners, PBOT, Councilors;

I am writing to draw your attention to the current plans for the Irvington / NE 7th Ave area in the TSP. Residents of my street have noticed a fairly dramatic increase in non-local or “cut-through” traffic on our North-South streets, especially at rush hour. I am suspicious that this is driven by severe congestion on I-5 and MLK, spilling over onto NE 7th Ave - which was a quiet residential neighborhood street, even though it is adjacent to MLK.

As I have mentioned in previous correspondence, we desperately need the city’s help in solving this traffic architecture problem. My neighbors and I have no serious issue with increased density, but our safety and quality of life should not suffer because others want to live in Washington suburbs, want to commute by auto, yet don’t want to pay the actual costs of that infrastructure. Our neighborhood streets were never meant to be alternatives to a bumper-to-bumper I-5 N.

As part of the TSP, Commissioner Novick has suggested changing a currently planned greenway from NE 9th Ave to 7th Ave. While I wholeheartedly support the need for traffic calming on NE 7th Ave, the current plan calls for diversion - closing 7th Ave to through traffic at two or more locations. PBOT planners have told us they expect increased traffic on adjacent streets, and that this increase is “acceptable.” The outlined greenway plan for 7th Ave would be problematic in several respects.

The first and for me most serious problem, is that diverted traffic would be sent into Irvington, along much smaller and less capable neighborhood streets. My street, 8th Ave, is the **only** adjacent N-S route other than MLK. The traffic lane between parked cars on my street (measured last week just in front of my house) is about 14 feet. We have already seen serious problems when 7th has been closed to through traffic because of construction. If there is any further increase in traffic, it will be quite dangerous and dramatically change our street - which is already used as a “de-facto” greenway by pedestrians, children, and bicyclists avoiding 7th.

A second problem is that 7th Ave currently has multiple median rounds that are quite dangerous for bicyclists. In order to have a safe greenway for both autos and bicyclists, these median rounds would need to be removed. I believe these costs are not included in the current plan.

A third problem is the amount of traffic currently carried by 7th Ave - City counts are out of date; even so, they are incompatible with the stated nature of greenways on the City website. Last week, around five PM, I had some trouble crossing 7th @ Knott as a pedestrian because

there was an ~ 2 block long line of autos desperate to get through that intersection. The number of autos coming through at certain times is far, far above the limits suggested for greenways.

Diversion potentially reduces traffic loads; but this leads directly back to the first problem - while closure of 7th may reduce traffic and allow effective use as a greenway, that would cause severe trouble for adjacent streets - trouble that would overall reduce safety greatly, and which I think would exacerbate rather than ameliorate the problems that prompted consideration of 7th as a greenway in the first place.

I strongly encourage the council to either (a) retain the current plan for a NE 9th Ave greenway or to (b) include plans to close not only 7th - but also all adjacent N-S residential streets to through traffic.

The latter may be preferable in the long run, as 7th has some advantages in connection to the lloyd district, and really does need effective traffic calming. I want to emphasize that the current “half-measure” specified in the plan would generally worsen traffic problems, not improve them.

Additionally, I would ask council members to consider what city policy should be when conflicts such as this arise - involving city residents vs. largely non-local commuters. Regardless of which avenue is designated a greenway, our historic neighborhood needs protection - or parts of it may become de-facto highways that are not livable.

Many thanks for considering this view.

M. Sean Green

2618 NE 8th Ave  
Portland, OR 97212