

Status report on the St Johns Truck Strategy, Phase II, Project March 20, 2020 Fessenden / St Louis

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[members of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee 2011-2013]

1. Pedestrian Signal Beacons 2. Median Islands 3. Bike Buffer Lane Markings 4. “Bike Yield to Peds” Signs 5. Speed Cushions

Remarks and Expectations

The City of Portland formally recognized the need to improve safety along the Fessenden / St Louis corridor in the original 2001 St Johns Truck Strategy Plan. Since 2011 St Johns has actively worked with the city on the Phase II Plan and has eagerly awaited changes that would turn a dangerous—and deadly—illegal truck route into the safe pedestrian and bike friendly neighborhood street it was meant to be.

This document will outline what items still need to be done or redone by PBOT to meet professional standards..

Note: Status of features are discussed as compared with specifications agreed to in Feb, 2013, in the last Stakeholder Committee meeting, and as outlined in the Final Report or Oct, 2013 submitted to PBOT from the project consultants.

This project, initially to have been completed in 2017-18, has suffered multiple delays. Instead of starting the project in 2017, the city attempted to roll back the most serious of the infrastructure changes, all the pedestrian signals! The community protested and won them back.

Here we are in 2020 still waiting for this project to be completed to professional standards. It is difficult for neighbors to observe similar projects *in St Johns*, and in other neighborhoods only to compare the shoddy work done on Fessenden / St Louis. It is far past time for the city finish this project, and finish is *professionally*.

If this project is not completed—PROFESSIONALLY—in the very near future we will proceed to:

- Provide this report to all print and TV news outlets. Many have already done stories. They will be eager to follow up.**
- File a fraud/waste/abuse complaint with the Office of the Auditor of the City of Portland.**

SUMMARY OF NEEDED CHANGES / FIXES

MEDIAN ISLAND LANE MARKINGS NEED TO BE RESTRIPEDED ASAP!

THE OLD BIKE LANE MARKINGS NEED TO BE REMOVED.

“BIKES YIELD TO PEDS” SIGNS SHOULD BE INSTALLED AT ALL TREATED INTERSECTIONS, BOTH DIRECTIONS, ASAP!

ADDRESS CONCERNS ABOUT SPEED CUSHIONS:

SMOOTH THEM AND FINISH THE EDGES

1. PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL BEACONS

[RRFBs at Seneca and Midway, HAWK at Charleston]

The hardware for the pedestrian signal beacons has been installed. We are waiting on their activation.

2. MEDIAN ISLANDS

[at Tioga, Allegheny, Oswego, Seneca, Smith, Kellogg]



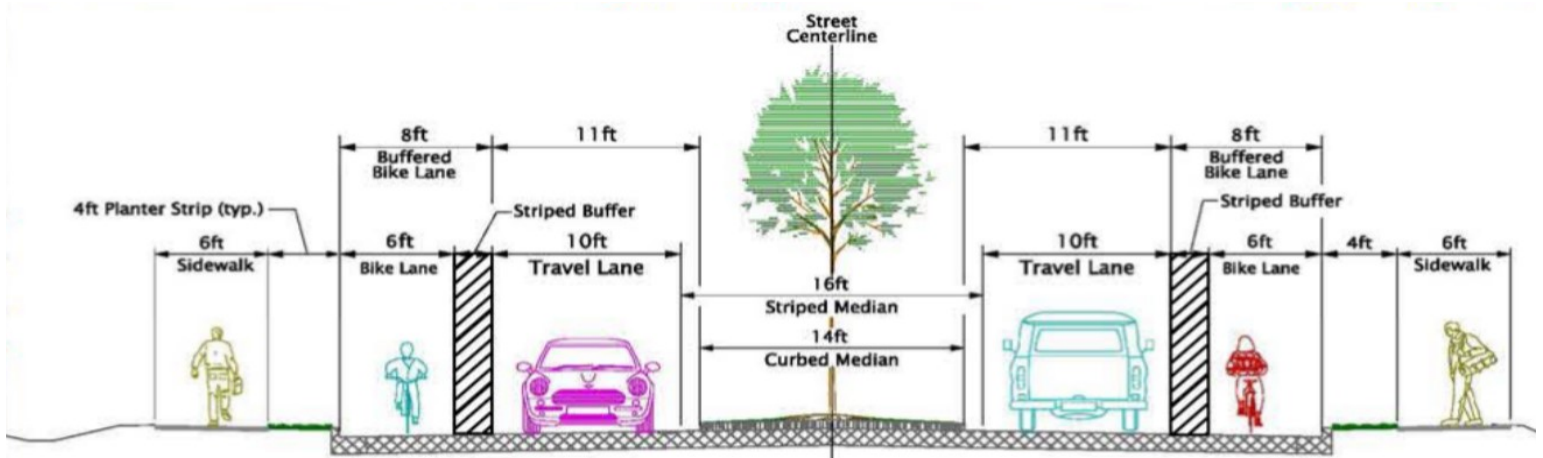
Comparison with construction on Columbia Blvd.

It is worth noting that this median island was just constructed on Columbia Blvd less than 1/2 mile from Fessenden. One has to wonder—why was this island constructed with appropriate lane markings at just about the same time that islands were built on Fessenden / St Louis without proper lane markings!

Much discussion in stakeholder meetings centered on the median islands. Emphasized over and over by the community was that we needed wide median islands. This was for two reasons:

1. Wide median islands slow traffic far more than narrow islands.
2. Wide median islands would be a disincentive to freight truckers, many of whom [about 500/day] routinely used this neighborhood corridor as an illegal 'cut-through' instead of the legal truck route on Columbia Blvd, and Lombard St, west of the St Johns Bridge.

It was agreed that islands would be 14' wide at the concrete edges and 16' wide at the outside of the lane markings. This was included in the Final Report and reconfirmed several times in emails.



Recommended Section at Median Island Locations

From Final Report

Evaluation

NONE OF THE TWELVE MEDIAN ISLANDS FOLLOW THE SPECIFICATIONS!

The good news is that most of the errors are due to the lane markings [where they exist at all] and can be easily fixed.

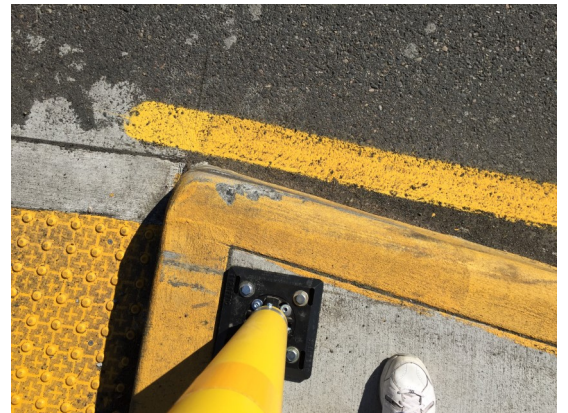
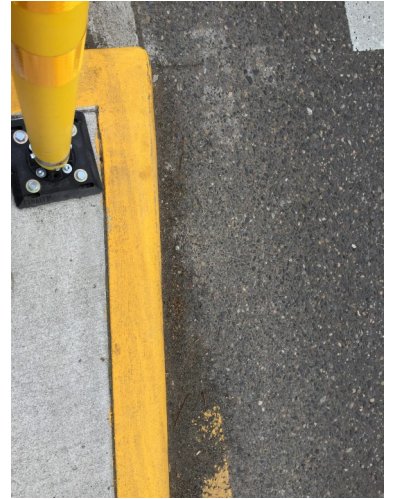
The concrete islands, which are supposed to be 14', are +/- 3" from the spec [although one is about 9" over]. 22 of the 24 island corners are incorrect.

Lane markings are some cases totally missing at the point where the islands meet the intersections, others just peter out to one lane marking almost making it to the intersection.

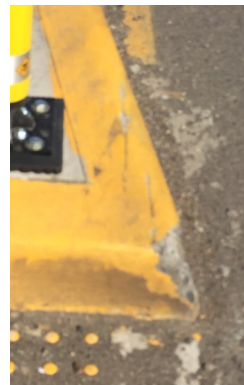
The significance of the missing lane markings is serious. Unlike in most other places the median islands on Fess/St Louis are constructed to have no 'break' in the island for pedestrians, so they do not curve in at both ends. The pedestrian walk zone for each island is directly next to the intersecting car lane. The ends of the islands come to a sharp point. Without the additional 1' of space, on each side, that each set of lane markings would add to the island, drivers can be disoriented and cut too close—in some cases *into* the islands. We know this to be true both because this has been told to us, but more empirically, several concrete corners have already been damaged!

MEDIAN ISLAND LANE MARKINGS NEED TO BE RESTRIPEDED ASAP!

EXAMPLES OF MEDIAN ISLANDS WITH POOR OR MISSING STRIPING



DAMAGED CORNERS



3. BIKE BUFFER LANE MARKINGS

The Fessenden / St Louis corridor is a popular route for traffic between Washington state and Washington County. As such, it has about 11,000 vpd, far higher than typical for a street classified as a “neighborhood collector”.

The corridor also bi-sects St Johns, with destinations on either side. This means that we expect the 15,000 residents [of St Johns and its close bound neighbor Cathedral Park] to be using the street a great deal once improvements are done. We especially look forward to this being a pedestrian and bike-friendly street for our children. In one section alone—our blind curve—over 1,000 children live. This is also a crossing route for our pool and large multi-use Pier Park.

We would like the bike lane/with buffer to be as functional as possible.

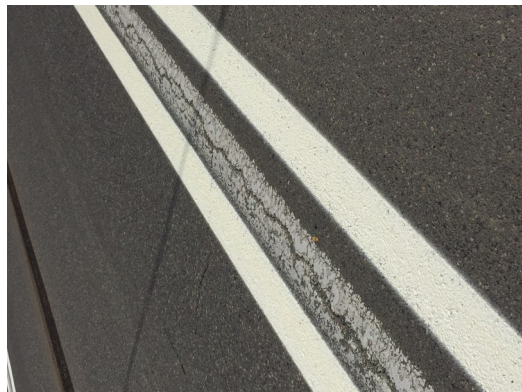
EVALUATION

Recently, when the bike buffer was striped, no consideration was made for removing the existing bike lane markings, resulting in a mess, to put it simply. See below.

The old bike lane markings need to be removed.

Additionally, given the heavy vehicular use and the large concentration of children in the area, we do ask PBOT if it could see its way clear to adding some bollards/ barriers in the buffers such as we have seen on some other streets. At the least, perhaps these could be added at some specific vulnerable locations:

IMAGES BIKE BUFFER—NEWLY STRIPED. OLD STRIPE NEEDS TO BE REMOVED.



4. “BIKES YIELD TO PEDS” SIGNS

For reasons similar to those mentioned earlier—the amount of existing traffic and increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic expected, and **because 40% of the population above the corridor are kids, seniors and/or people with disabilities**, we strongly advocated for markings or signs that remind bicyclists to stop for pedestrians at treated intersections. Children and seniors are vulnerable to far more serious injuries—in the case of seniors, potentially death—from being hit by a bicycle. Now, even more, with the recently legalized “Idaho Stop” we feel that this reminder is important.

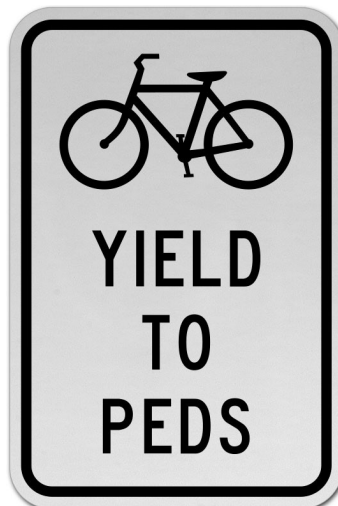
In response to an email sent by Donna Cohen on June 13, 2019 to PBOT about the “Bikes Yield for Peds” signs at treated intersections [similar to image], Dan Layden, Senior Project Manager, wrote:

“All of the items mentioned in your email are part of the project’s construction contract and will be completed by the contractor before the project is done this fall.” [Note the completion date for the project at this time was fall 2019!]

EVALUATION

As of now, no “Bikes Yield for Peds Signs” have been installed.

**THESE SIGNS SHOULD BE INSTALLED AT ALL TREATED INTERSECTIONS,
BOTH DIRECTIONS ASAP!**



5. SPEED CUSHIONS

In the original stakeholder meeting discussions we asked for speed cushions at the blind curve. For obvious reasons—because so many children live near it, because it is a route from/to the pool, the park, the library, the community center, etc. etc. And, that the speed limit at the curve be 25 mph.

PBOT, instead, installed the cushions along the whole Fessenden / St Louis corridor, and lowered the speed limit along the whole corridor to 25mph. It has certainly made for a calmer street.

EVALUATION

There are two problems:

1. The “cushions” are not smooth. Whereas on many other streets that have cushions [e.g. Willis, Vancouver] the ride over them at the posted speed is not uncomfortable, the cushions on Fess/St Louis seem more jarring and, for that reason, many people feel they have to go slower than the posted speed of 25mph. Obviously, a lot depends on the car you are driving as to the comfort level, but, this, combined with the fact that *so many* speed cushions have been put on the corridor, are causing some drivers to avoid the street altogether.

Time will tell as to whether not the overall traffic diversion is more than we expected. But, it is safe to say that if the cushions were smoother, this would be less of a problem. *Many* residents of St Johns have commented on social media about the cushions.

SMOOTH THE CUSHIONS FOR A LESS JARRING EXPERIENCE.

2. The edges of the cushions are extremely “raggedy” compared to any other speed bumps or cushions we have seen across the city. Edges that are uneven and rough [as opposed to “finished” edges seen on other streets’ cushions], gaps with ridges in the asphalt [or, whatever the material is]. Some heights seem inconsistent with each other. And, some neighbors feel they are already seeing them “fall apart”.

On the next page you’ll see some pictures of what we mean.

It is our understanding that PBOT does plan to work again on the speed cushions.

We’d like you to know what we expect to be addressed.

ADDRESS CONCERNS ABOUT SPEED CUSHIONS OUTLINED:

SMOOTH THEM AND FINISH THE EDGES

ON FESSENDEN / ST LOUIS!



ON OTHER STREETS!

