

July 10, 2019

Amy Willhite
Angela Wright
Gaffney Lane Neighborhood Association

Dear Amy, Angela, and Gaffney Lane Neighborhood Association.

Thank you for taking the time to write a Molalla Avenue Phase III project comment letter (April 30, 2019). We also appreciate the opportunities you have taken to discuss and share information since writing your letter. As of the time of this letter we have received and shared a variety of project support documents including:

- Kittelson and Associates Technical memorandum(s) dated March 4th (30% Design Memo) and June 19th (60% Design Memo),
- Kittelson and Associates Gaffney Lane Letter Response memo dated June 13th (Draft) and June 14th (Final)
- Report and memo strip maps in various stages of design

General - Given the detailed information contained in the technical memorandum and the neighborhood response memo, this letter avoids restating the technical analysis/justification and consultant recommendations. This letter attempts to address some of the non-technical aspects and tackle the inferences on team interaction with the neighborhood.

The Molalla Avenue improvement projects have a long history including reports that date back to 2001 on access management and bike and pedestrian safety. As a multi phased project, the past projects all have had extensive public involvement and this third phase is no different. I have been at the forefront of design concepts, finding funding for the project, as well as being one of the project's key advocates. Familiarity with the operational concerns of this corridor is high. Attending many neighborhood meetings and hearing many suggestions that in general have been about improving pedestrian safety and

delivering a project that better meets the needs of the neighborhood. These suggestions along with the project staff who use the corridor and obviously the technical and professional opinions of our design consultants are the basis for where this project is headed.

While a long history of interaction with the community provides great perspective, having timely input including a refresh of what may have been stated in years past is always best. Project specific public information and involvement (i.e. project websites, project open houses, community surveys, and direct communication with the key project staff) is the best way for a community member or represented organization like the Gaffney Lane Neighborhood Association to help in guiding the design. The neighborhood letter was a great way to accomplish this.

Wells Fargo/Black Rock Driveway - The recommendation to limit turning movements at this location along the corridor is well justified in the Kittelson documents however, I also suggest that aside from traffic counts, this intersection is different than the Fir Street intersection in that unlike Fir Street it serves a private development that has many access options beside the Wells Fargo/Black Rock driveway. The majority of the problem as it relates to Molalla Avenue is the back-ups on the private property at this driveway, resulting in rushed and often risky driver actions to get in or out of this driveway. If we did not have the turn lane storage needs for vehicles turning off Molalla Avenue onto Beaver Creek Road west bound and the signal was warranted, the addition of the signal would likely be triggered as a land use action upon a private project and funded by the developer. While there are cases of agency funded signal projects that serve private development, in this case given the constraints of the project funding I will continue to recommend to the City Commission that using our limited capital funds on a signal at this location is not appropriate, particularly when the use of access management such as the median is the responsible recommendation.

Aside from limiting driver access, the proposed median would provide a safe refuge for crossing pedestrians. This is consistent with recommendations from the TriMet pedestrian and Transit review from 2011 which recommends: "Provide an additional, protected pedestrian crossing on Molalla Ave, just North of Clairmont Way, to connect the apartments on the west side of Molalla to the shopping center on the east side of the street. Consider

treatments like medians with pedestrian refuges, and pedestrian warning signs, like Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) to assist people with crossing the street.

Clairmont Way and Gaffney Lane Intersections - The current plans for these intersections include provisions for dedicated turn lanes consistent with the neighborhood's desire and expectations. While both of these intersections are complicated by constraints, alignment, and existing access, the project team is committed to reconfiguring these intersections to the degree possible and we expect both to be much safer for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. These intersection improvements have always been a project objective.

2013 Gaffney Lane signal improvement history – I found my 2013 email about commitments to make signalization improvements. Here is the excerpt:

John wrote (2013): The intersection you are referring to is a safety concern. Mostly for pedestrians and particularly the movement you described in your initial inquiry. Aside from the grant application we are currently working with Clackamas County to upgrade the signal controller and pedestrian signals at this location. I don't know the exact status of this work but it is to be completed in this current budget year and this work along with several other signal upgrades along Molalla is currently underway. We will be paving Gaffney Lane at this location this summer, possibly Molalla too (assuming we have the budget). Given the constraints at this location I don't see either road getting much wider but I do see it getting much safer. So rest assured it's on the radar and I agree it needs to be added to the TSP.

As committed back in 2013, the signal controller upgrades that I understood to be desired were completed and pedestrian button and pedestrian signal heads were upgraded. According to the Clackamas County signal manager at the time, to the degree possible and with the current lane configuration, the intersection was optimized as much as possible and with pedestrian safety at the forefront. Split phase signal operation dedicated for the Gaffney Lane left turn movements may have been considered in 2013 but if so I can only assume that it was never implemented due to the loss in efficiency and complexity of the necessary changes using the existing signal equipment and lane configurations.

As discussed, our thoughts are that the proposed dedicated turn lanes at Gaffney Lane will require a third lane and re-alignments of the signalization that is not an option without more right of way and the new signals.

Fir Street - Signalization at Fir Street has been something I have considered on the table as key users along Fir Street and the Post Office have inquired about adding the signal for years. The project scope did not include the addition of the signal because during the project scope and estimating for the grant application it was assumed that the signal would not be warranted even at full 2040 build out. When developing the scope and fee for the project design the question of intersection analysis at Fir Street came up and we made the appropriate decision to include this intersection in our analysis. Given the lack of certainty for signalization for Fir Street this would not have been a neighborhood meeting update item before the design process was underway.

Garden Meadows Drive Pedestrian Crossing – The design team continues to conclude that an enhanced pedestrian crossing at Garden Meadow (200 feet north) is not recommended due to proximity to the Fir Street signalized intersection. The north leg of the Molalla Avenue/Garden Meadow Drive intersection will continue to have an ADA accessible ramp and the crossing will continue to function as a legal crosswalk. However, this location remains a concern for pedestrians due to the high volume of traffic, vehicle speeds, and pedestrian/vehicle conflicts with Wilco traffic exiting the driveway, making the left turn onto Molalla Avenue southbound.

Given the 2014 neighborhood expectation for an enhanced crosswalk at this location and the recent neighborhood response to the proposal to move the pedestrian enhanced crosswalk further south, our design team has considered multiple locations for the crosswalk. The City's desire to honor the grant intent to include three midblock crosswalks is high and the Post Office is an obvious pedestrian generator. Overall the pedestrian counts for both Garden Meadow and Char Diaz are very low but the potential for users is thought to increase if enhanced crosswalks exist.

There is not an exceptional location for this crosswalk given the existing driveways and Garden Meadow Drive turning lane needs. Yet I'm convinced that optimizing the spacing for these enhanced crosswalks is a useful neighborhood benefit. In addition, aligning the crossing with the Alvaro Lane neighborhood pathway, and consideration for the pedestrian

July 10, 2019

Page 5

generators from Molalla Square and Meadows Courtyard, further justify the proposed crossing.

Char Diaz Drive Pedestrian Crossing – As per the Garden Meadow Way discussion, the Char Diaz crossing is also complicated by driveways. There is also concern that the crossing be placed far enough north to provide a clear sight line for drivers moving north as they progress around the sweeping corner fronting Oregon City Point. Again the crossing spacing targets that the design team is trying to balance is good in that it provides the Char Diaz user a close crossing option to get to either the TriMet bus stop or the Oregon City Point and also provides the Lazy Creek Lane and Sebastian Way users a responsible crossing option that is 200 and 400 feet away. The proposed location for the crossing and pedestrian refuge also accommodates the turning and acceleration refuge needs for side streets and driveways.

I'm hopeful this letter combined with the Kittelson Associates documents is considered open and honest communication. As staff we solicit and value public project collaboration at any point in the design process but we especially value it early in the design process. We continue to reach out to the community to garner project feedback. While we recognize you have the benefit of this preview of our 60% open house update, we also encourage you and the neighborhood to be active in the balance of the public involvement process. If one of us can help by attending one of your neighborhood meetings please let me know.

Sincerely,

John M. Lewis, P.E.

Public Works Director

CC: Oregon City Commissioners

Tony Konkol, City Manager

Dayna Webb, City Engineer