



# Northwest District Association

April 7, 2023

**Portland Bureau of Transportation**  
1120 SW Fifth Ave, Suite 1331  
Portland, OR 97204

**ATTN: Mauricio Leclerc, Senior Transportation Planner**

**RE: Draft NW 21st & 23rd Intersection Enhancement Project Look Book**

The Northwest District Association reviewed the *Draft NW 21st & 23rd Intersection Enhancement Project Look Book*, undated, posted Apr 4, at our Planning Committee meeting on Apr 6. We offer the following comments, as requested in the NWPD SAC meeting on Apr 4. Please note that the committee had limited time to review the document, and these comments represent general comments that we believe would have bearing on the presentation being made at next week's Placemaking Workshop.

## **General**

1. The NWDA supports the goals of the NW in Motion plan, but has reservations about the implementation of the plan elements to date, specifically regarding urban design considerations and neighborhood buy-in to the specific design and layout of the constructed elements.
2. The priority deliverable from the IEP is guidelines for the layout, placement and specification of typical elements at the intersections and block frontages of the NW District's main streets, that may be utilized at other sections of those streets than the intersections within the scope of the IEP;
3. The NWDA asks that the IEP focus on the organization of these typical elements and not on an effort to create intersections with individual design motifs or specialty decorative elements;
4. Per the NWDA's resolution of Jan 24 2022, the existing streetscape elements utilized in the Slabtown redevelopment area should be used as a basis for design;
5. Funds are limited, and to that end the NWDA is identifying what are priorities, and what are not, in order to get as much applied use of available funds as possible. One-off and decorative elements are generally not supported for inclusion in the IEP.

## **Curb Extensions**

1. Curb extensions need to have radii appropriate for delivery vehicles;
2. Curb ramps and crossing markings need to align with the sidewalks that they serve, and be a clear extension of the path of travel, and avoid skewing;
3. Curb extensions constrain the area that bicyclists can stop within intersections, and not all are comfortable being in travel lanes;

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4. Curb extensions, by shortening the crossing distance, can create a false sense of security for pedestrians;
5. Curb extensions are generally seen as a priority for crossing the main streets, and should be limited in their use on side streets;
6. Is there a solution for grading around curb extensions that does not involve extensive regrading of existing streetbeds? Draining back to the sidewalk is generally not acceptable, see 23<sup>rd</sup> Pl/Thurman bus stop.

#### **Crossing Treatments**

1. The NWDA requests no additional decoratively painted streets at temporary curb extensions;
2. Decorative and textured crosswalks are not a priority and not supported;

#### **Community Placemaking**

1. Seating and bike racks; see General comments;
2. 'Street seats' are reviewed as a part of the Healthy Businesses Program. The NWDA supports their being phased off of main streets;
3. Bike corrals and bike-share stations need to be organized and have better urban design;
4. All other examples in this section reflect one-off or decorative elements that are not a priority and not supported;

#### **Pedestrian Lighting**

1. Pedestrian streetlighting is the clear priority for the NWDA;
2. The fixtures used at the Slabtown area are preferred;
3. The recently installed non-pedestrian streetlights on 21<sup>st</sup> (cobra-heads) create better lighting in the intersections, but worse shadows on the block frontages due to the height of the masts. Pedestrian lighting on the main streets needs to be pedestrian scaled, and illuminate the sidewalks and the pedestrians on them.

#### **Paving Treatments**

1. A consistent application of an alternative 'furnishings zone' material is a priority;
2. Examples in this section reflect one-off or decorative elements that are not a priority and not supported;
3. Consistency and organization of the layout of construction, expansion and control joints in concrete paving, especially at curb ramps, is requested;
4. Explore permeable gutters in lieu of storm swales.

#### **Vegetation**

1. Street trees and corresponding tree wells are priorities;
2. Planters reflect one-off or decorative elements that are not a priority and not supported;

#### **Transit Stops**

1. Emphasize clear organization, drainage and integration with adjacent frontage;
2. Avoid 'island' stop configurations, trading one hazard for another hazard and adding confusion;
3. Recognize limitations in the space that is available;

4. Why are there concrete 'bus pads' at some stops?

**Continuous Side Street Crossings**

1. Drainage issues are likely too significant to make elevated table crossings feasible for inclusion in the IEP;
2. Potential locations for elevated crossings should be significant gateways or nodes, and of the IEP intersections, only 21<sup>st</sup> and Glisan and 23<sup>rd</sup> and Glisan would be considered to be either;
3. Elevated crossings would be more of a priority where they act as a gateway to an adjacent park, such as 20<sup>th</sup> and Glisan and 25<sup>th</sup> and Quimby, both outside of the project area.

Best Regards,  
Northwest District Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Theisen', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Greg Theisen  
*Chair, Planning Committee*