

Portland Commercial Street Corridor Study: Stakeholder Meeting #1
Thursday, October 4, 2018
SUMMARY

Over fifty stakeholders attended the invitation workshop at the Casco Bay Lines meeting room at 5:30-7:30 p.m. Stakeholders represented the fishing and lobstering industry, fisheries, hospitality, non-profits, restaurants, retail, offices, pier owners, land owners, and several others.

City staff introduced the WSP lead consultant Jennifer Conley who introduced the project scope. Also introduced were Jane Lafleur, public engagement consultant from Maine; Megan Savage, WSP Public engagement; Dan Kennedy, WSP Maritime; City staff were Bruce Hyman and Bill Needleman. Jessa Berman represented PACTS and the Regional Planning Commission who is funding the study.



Working Together
To make Commercial Street Work



Please join us for Commercial Street Stakeholder Session #1

The City of Portland is working with WSP consulting team to develop a *Commercial Street Operations and Master Plan* to create a safe and functional street that meets the many needs of uses on Commercial Street and the working waterfront. Your participation is essential to developing a useful plan that integrates the needs, knowledge, and expertise of all users of Commercial Street. Commercial Street is critical to the City.
Let's make it work, together.

- *What does Commercial Street mean to you and your business?*
- *What industry or constituency do you represent? Freight, Fisheries, Retail, Tourism, Hospitality, Neighbor, other ...?*
- *Where are you located? How and when do you use Commercial Street?*
- *What works well and what are the problem areas for you, your business or your customers?*
- *What suggestions do you have for improving the traffic flow of cars, trucks, bikes, busses, and people?*
- *What else should the consultant team know?*

Thursday, October 4, 2018
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Casco Bay Island Transit District (CBITD)
Terminal Conference Room
56 Commercial Street Portland
(light refreshments provided)

Agenda

1. Sign-in and identify your location(s) on large map, refreshments
2. Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)
3. Short presentation by the project team – Study purpose and what we've heard and done so far (15 minutes)
4. Open and facilitated discussion about highlighted target areas and request for areas missed/additional information (45-60 minutes)
5. Brief discussion of missing stakeholders i.e. who is not at the table (15 minutes)
6. Next steps (5 minutes)

Stakeholders divided into six large groups, each table hosting a facilitated conversation by a consultant or staff member. The groups were asked to discuss:

- *What does Commercial Street mean to you and your business?*
- *What works well and what are the problem areas for you, your business or your customers?*
- *What suggestions do you have for improving the traffic flow of cars, trucks, bikes, busses, and people?*
- *What else should the consultant team know?*

Participants placed blue and green dots on their place of work or home and red dots in places where there are challenges or problems.







All ideas were captured by a facilitator or a scribe. These comments are shown below. Where duplicates occurred between groups, the item is checked.

	Table #1	Table #2	Table #3	Table #4	Table #5	Table #6
Working Well						
Business is booming; there are tourists; large number of people	✓	✓		✓		
Free parking at ends of corridor	✓					
Proximity of Commercial Street to the Bay	✓					
Parking is adjacent to Maine Trade Center						✓
Assigned parking spaces						✓
Multiple egress locations for vehicles						✓
Agreement with Merrill's Wharf was good; nets at end of wharf	✓					
Edge of water	✓					
The center turning lane		✓				
The lighted crossing near Becky's Diner		✓				
The diagonal parking		✓				
The new parking machines and the smart phone app		✓				
Snow removal space/storage space in the middle of street; snow is a problem for just one day-then it's gone.		✓	✓		✓	
WCZ is working well-keeping industry and residents apart is working well (group 2); combined all of us; protecting working waterfront must happen (group 4)		✓			✓	
Shared street works well		✓				
There are no speeding problems!			✓			
It is a multi-use street; solving a problem might create others			✓			
Many crosswalks are a benefit but you could take them all out and it would still work, as it does in Europe/			✓			
Commercial Street is the "life blood" of Portland			✓			
There is room to stage deliveries along West Commercial; it is underutilized				✓		
It is a beautiful place to live! Restaurant experience is a "real" working waterfront feel. Unique. Valuable uses, keep working waterfront; support jobs.				✓		✓
Pedestrians crossing allow left turns-they create a break in the traffic.				✓		
The light at Beacon Street backs up traffic but allows left turns on to the bridge, helpful with truck turns				✓		
Peak tourist season goes until end of October!					✓	
Advertising of Commercial Street works well but it is a double-edged sword-i.e. people know about it.					✓	

Spreading businesses down to Western Commercial Street						✓	
Overall – diverse business, street it handling it all well						✓	
City keeps the street clean						✓	
		Table #1	Table #2	Table #3	Table # 4	Table #5	Table #6
Not working well							
Signals not working well; not synchronized; need SMART lights at all of them		✓					
Vehicles versus pedestrians versus deliveries and pick-ups		✓					
Lobsters are dependent on tides		✓					
At times, deliveries etc., blocking two sides of commercial street and truck deliveries at certain times of day-limits visibility for others		✓	✓				
Vendors at corners and vendors in general		✓					
Snow in the middle of the street		✓			✓		
Jaywalkers-pedestrians don't use crosswalks; no pedestrian control		✓	✓			✓	
Lighting in front of Thomas block		✓					
No room on sidewalk around tables, etc., should give limits to impact to sidewalk, not a certain feet of tables (i.e. at Rira)		✓					
Bike enforcement		✓					
Stacking parking		✓					
Too many crosswalks; cut in half? Make fewer more visible; can't get out of wharf unless someone lets you.		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Consider sky walks to alleviate street level pedestrian conflicts				✓			
Choke point at trolleys		✓					
Lots of idling on commercial street; water quality, air quality, fish health		✓					
Concern about development all around, not just in this corridor, but also impacting this corridor		✓					
Intersection problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custom House and Pearl acts as an unofficial 4-way stop • Park/High at York and High Commercial • Delay from Beach causes back up to Park/High • Concern regarding East end developments • Traffic backs up off C Bay Bridge to Commercial Street 		✓				✓	
Traffic by Benny's-2 lanes needed, not merge on in-bound			✓				
Development west of Casco Bay Bridge (marine Industries) is it too slow?			✓				

Rush hour traffic does not work well at 4-6 p.m.; have had to change work flow to avoid traffic			✓			
Head-in parking/diagonal parking stops and starts traffic flow			✓			
On cruise ship days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street artists block sidewalks • Sandwich boards and displays block sidewalks • Vendors don't need permits/rent/taxes 				✓		
Driver distraction and inattention, parking				✓		
Franklin hotel, 1 car blocks all lanes				✓		
Signage and lights will detract from character of street; light near Beck's is already an issue				✓		
Boat access - being able to get through the crowded area to the boat and/or the delivery trucks- bait coming in, product going out.				✓		
The freight delivery at 5am specific to the retail shop at the corner of Commercial and Market St. The owner's trucks have issues maneuvering the area.				✓		
Problem with access to vessels and parking: On-going legal action the fishing community is pursuing because even though the area between Portland Pier and Custom House Wharf was historically deeded to load/unload, it is not being observed.				✓		
Long travel times because of heavy traffic					✓	✓
Deliveries-work for some					✓	
Tour busses backing up in summer and fall					✓	
Taxis block road when cruise ships arrive					✓	
Light at Franklin is too long even when there is no traffic and poor compliance in summer. At gridlock, pedestrians cross off the light.					✓	
Busses clog the bottom of Pearl Street and idle for a long time					✓	
Union and commercial-pedestrians cross off signal					✓	
Unrestricted pedestrian crossings					✓	✓
Sidewalks are too narrow to accommodate the volumes					✓	
Sidewalks further narrowed by vendors and restaurant outdoor seating					✓	
Lots of diverted traffic on Fore Street					✓	
Emergency vehicles can not always get to sites when needed					✓	
There has been a lot of change in the last 5 years					✓	
A working waterfront cannot relocate					✓	
Tough access for working waterfront to run a business						✓
Development of Eastern Waterfront – Problematic; WEX and VETS first choice; concentration of development on peninsula; worried about hotel on water side-opens door to more traffic						✓

Suggestions/Ideas/Needs	Table #1	Table #2	Table #3	Table #4	Table #5	Table #6
Bicycle and jaywalker enforcement	✓					
Parking enforcement	✓					
Enforce sidewalk vendors better		✓				
Free Satellite parking with shuttles; develop viable transit options for commuters; City should build a parking garage on West Commercial Street/trolley and shuttle; parking garages on both ends	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public transportation	✓					
Shuttles for cruise passengers					✓	
Police officer in corridor	✓					
Sustainability of street with sea level rise	✓					
Further embrace Signage re: fisheries and fishing industry	✓					
Better striping especially for right turn lanes by Center/Union. Creates safety issues		✓				
Eliminate some crosswalks	✓	✓				
Better signal timing	✓	✓				
Narrow the street and put a median down the middle		✓				
Meter the parking from Becky's to the fish pier		✓				
Don't preclude "shared street" opportunities		✓				
Make no zoning changes in the WC2 on the water side		✓				
Restrict delivery hours		✓				
Do not allow "horse and buggy" operation-it blocks traffic too much		✓				
Add traffic officers during cruise ship times to direct traffic and pedestrians		✓				
Restrict tour busses from blocking traffic		✓				
Have tour busses load in Ocean Gateway/Amethyst Lot instead of Commercial Street; bus parking for motor coaches causes congestion; there is too little of it.		✓			✓	
Southbound ramp to I-95 on Washington Ave is another outlet to spread out traffic		✓				
More street connectivity (Franklin)		✓				
At I-295, improve wayfinding and signage-do not direct to Commercial Street		✓				
More data and observation- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ by Benny's-the merge ✓ Valley-Vets bridge Bottleneck ✓ Left turn at Franklin-Eastbound ✓ More streets ✓ Do a forecast of increased traffic based on approved development 		✓				
This is a designated "great street"; balance all demands!			✓			
Have a warning system for pedestrians for when trucks leave the wharfs.			✓			
Make "raised" crosswalks			✓			

Make one lane for commercial vehicles only; make a commercial corridor on the waterfront side			✓	✓		
Move tourist parking areas away			✓			
Allow for other modes of transportation- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less personal vehicles • parking at west commercial street, shuttle down the street • hop-on, hop-off bus; park and pick up outside this area • find a way to deter extra cars like education, alternative transportation/transit, and mass trans 			✓			
Vehicles versus people-if you solve the vehicle issue will the pedestrian issue solve itself?			✓			
EMS concerns and response times			✓			
13 wharves - \$240 million annually last year			✓			
Development is expected to cause more traffic problems			✓			
City needs to address access to and from wharves			✓			
Population growth and hotel occupancy rates			✓			
Competing uses for space is forcing fishermen out			✓			
"this is the last wild west"			✓			
Need to balance trucks and deliveries for a large range of uses				✓		
Solve problems before we add more traffic!					✓	
Improved signage					✓	
Avoid light at High Street					✓	
Add a marketplace for vendors like at Pikes Place in Seattle						
Right-size the crosswalks					✓	
Make great public access, safe for people to view the authentic working waterfront					✓	
Traffic signal should be at Park Street instead of High Street (if we need one at all) because everyone comes off the bridge down that street.					✓	
Do non-summer data collections; tourism is just as heavy in September and October					✓	
Value differences summer and winter: economics for parking lot developer; a small % of workforce can afford the monthly parking fee						✓