



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 4, 2024
TO: Chair Ramos and Transportation and Mobility Commission members
FROM: Emily Benoit, Senior Transportation Planner; Brett Setterfield, Associate Transportation Planner
RE: **St. Johns and St. James Safety and Mobility Project – Phase 1 Update**
CC: Rebecca Kennedy, Deputy Director; Kate Drennan, Transportation Planning Program Manager

Overview

The [St. Johns and St. James Safety and Mobility Project](#) (Project) is exploring opportunities to create and implement safety and mobility improvements on NE St Johns Boulevard/Road and NE St James Road between Fourth Plain Boulevard and NE 68th Street. This memo is an update on Phase 1, including a summary of the corridor’s existing conditions and community engagement activities.

Figure 1: Project Timeline



Existing Conditions

The Project Team collected data for an in-depth technical analysis of the corridor for current and forecasted future roadway conditions. The information is documented in the Existing Conditions [Report](#) and [Appendix](#). The analysis includes, but is not limited to:

- Traffic counts for speed, volume and turning movements at peak times and 24-hour counts on weekday and weekend for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Inventory of traffic control devices, street lighting, and transit related data.
- Pavement, striping, sidewalk, curb ramp and crosswalk locations and conditions.
- Facility level of traffic stress for pedestrians and bicycle and small mobility users.
- Existing relevant plans, reports and street design standards.

Figure 2: Project Corridor Segments Map



Corridor Segments and Land Uses

The land uses along St. Johns Boulevard/Road and St. James Road are primarily commercial, with numerous businesses operating along the corridor, and higher density residential directly adjacent. The surrounding area is a mixture of low- and medium-density residential neighborhoods, and several affordable housing developments have either been constructed, or are planned in the project area. The northern edge of the project area, and continuing north into Clark County, is zoned industrial and has many manufacturing businesses.

The corridor is also listed as a Pedestrian Corridor in the [Transportation System Plan \(TSP\)](#) and has two different trail connections: the Burnt Bridge Creek Trail crossing just north of SR-500 and the Ellen Davis Trail running west from St. Johns Road just south of NE Minnehaha Street. The northern segment of the corridor is listed as a Freight Corridor in the TSP.

Collision History

Collision data was collected for the last five years (2018-2022) on the corridor. Five people walking and three people on bikes were involved in collisions with vehicles. Three of these were in a marked crosswalk and one in an unmarked crosswalk. One of the crosswalk collisions resulted in a fatality at Fourth Plain Blvd and Fort Vancouver Way. The highest density of collisions were near NE 33rd Street and NE 44th Street.

There were 39 collisions between vehicles, mostly occurring at major intersections. The greatest number of serious injury collisions occurred in Segment 5, between Minnehaha Street and NE 68th Street, which also has the widest lanes and highest speeds. The corridor south of SR-500, Segments 1 and 2, which has fewer lanes and lower speeds, also had fewer collisions.

Pedestrian, Bicycle and Small Mobility, and Transit

Complete Streets aim to reduce the level of stress for all users on the roadway. The level of traffic stress (LTS) for pedestrians and bicycles, from 1 being the least stressful for users to 4 being the most stressful for users, are determined by the existing lanes and widths as well as posted speeds (see in Table 1).

Conventional 4-6 foot striped bicycle and small mobility (BSM) lanes currently run the length of the corridor, excluding the stretch of St. Johns Blvd between Fourth Plain Blvd and Fort Vancouver Way where there is no BSM lane. Based on the current conditions, the TSP recommends protected BSM facilities for the corridor, with connections to Fourth Plain Blvd, NE 49th Street, NE 54th Street and NE Minnehaha Street.

Segments 1 and 2 have the most sidewalks, fewer and narrower vehicle travel lanes, and slower speeds. Segment 3, which is over SR-500, was downgraded from LTS 2 to LTS 3 due to high vehicle turning movement that create more conflicts between user types and long crossing distances over highway ramps. Segments 4 and 5 have sidewalks that are less than 6-feet wide, some areas with missing sidewalks, and high traffic speeds.

C-TRAN Route #25 runs along the length of the project corridor, starting on Fort Vancouver Way in the southern section. Routes #6 and the Green Vine run along Fourth Plain Blvd, at the southern extent of the project area. Ridership on all three routes is considerably higher on weekdays compared to weekends, with the Fort Vancouver Way/St. Johns Blvd and St. James Road/NE 52nd Street stops delivering the highest numbers of boardings.

Roadway

St. Johns Boulevard is striped with two lanes from Fourth Plain Blvd to Fort Vancouver Way and up to SR-500 with a center turn lane. The rest of the corridor is striped with four lanes, two in each direction, and center turn lanes or turn pockets throughout. There is on-street parking through much of the corridor, with a gap between Fort Vancouver Way and Petticoat Lane approaching SR-500 and north of NE Minnehaha Street.

The pavement conditions vary throughout the corridor, with only St. Johns Road scheduled to be repaved. There are multiple crosswalks in varying conditions and driveways along the project corridor, with a higher concentration of driveways in the southern portion south of NE 33rd Street and in the northern portion between NE 49th Street and NE Minnehaha Street.

Traffic: Speed, Volume, and Counts

The posted speed gradually increases as vehicles travel northbound, from 25 mph to 35 mph and finally 40 mph at NE Minnehaha Street. The average speed also increases as vehicles move north, from an average of 34 mph to 42 mph. The highest traffic volumes are at the southern section between Fourth Plain Blvd and Fort Vancouver Way.

The traffic volumes are highest in Segment 1, closest to Fourth Plain Blvd and range from about 3600 to 9600 along the corridor. The roadway between major intersections, such as Fourth Plain Blvd, SR-500, and NE Minnehaha St, have lower volumes than the roadway at these major intersections.

There are more pedestrians than bicycles and small mobility devices at intersections, with the greatest number of pedestrians (76 in 24-hours) at St. Johns Road and NE 49th Street. The highest number of both pedestrians and bicycle and small mobility users are located at the intersection with the Burnt Bridge Creek Trail at Petticoat Lane.

Traffic: Current Level of Service (2023)

Most intersections along the project corridor operate at a level of service (LOS) C or better. The only intersection with an LOS of F, for any time, is at St. Johns Blvd/E 33rd Street during the weekday evening peak. This intersection operates at a LOS of E during the weekday morning peak and a LOS of D during the weekend midday peak, all due to the east/west movements. There is space available at intersections for vehicle to go through in a signal cycle along the corridor, with the exception of the intersections with SR-500, St. Johns Road and Minnehaha Street, and St. Johns Boulevard and E 33rd Street during peak evening hours. A few vehicles may have to wait for the next signal cycle at these intersections during peak hours.

Traffic: Future Level of Service (2028 and 2040)

Traffic conditions in future years 2028 and 2040 are consistent with the current year, with also only the St. Johns Blvd/E 33rd Street intersection operating at a LOS below C. The intersections also perform similarly to the current year in peak hours. At the same major intersections, it is estimated that in 2028 one to five vehicles may wait an additional signal cycle. In 2040 that number grows to one to six vehicles, and includes the intersection of St. James Road/NE Minnehaha Street during the evening peak hour.

Opportunities and Constraints

The corridor is a critical north-south connection in the city and utilized by many different types of travelers and modes, for different trip purposes along a range of land use contexts. Each segment has unique opportunities and constraints, including:

- **Segment 1 - Fourth Plain Blvd to Fort Vancouver Way:** Two major intersections with east-west connections and transit access, but conflict points are numerous with many driveways and poor sightlines.
- **Segment 2 - Fort Vancouver Way to Petticoat Lane:** Important connections to trails and other Complete Streets projects, but the NE 33rd Street slip lane and SR-500 interchange create many higher speed conflict points and long distances between crossings.
- **Segments 3 and 4 - Petticoat Lane to NE Minnehaha Street:** One-way traffic flow creates opportunities for conflict reductions between user types and increased visibility, but there are many driveways and there lacks consistent on street mobility lane protection.
- **Segment 5 – NE Minnehaha Street to NE 68th Street:** Connection to a trail and vacant parcel develop opportunity, but higher freight traffic, railroad crossing and transition to County facility.

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Plan (CEP) outlines Project engagement by identifying outreach strategies and tools by Project Phase, with intent to meaningfully involve the community throughout the planning process. The CEP is a living and working document that will be revised as needed to adapt to emerging Project needs as the planning process unfolds. The CEP has three main goals to inform and involve the public throughout the Project:

- **Goal 1:** Build community awareness and shared understanding of project needs, ways to participate, and a variety of design strategies that can be used to address safety issues.
- **Goal 2:** Enable well informed participation from historically disadvantaged communities to provide input on the Project.
- **Goal 3:** Gather and use public input during the decision process, maintaining transparency at each step.

Phase 1 Engagement

The first phase of community engagement included the creation of a [project webpage](#) on BeHeard, development of an online survey in English, Spanish, and Russian, and email updates for those interested in learning more about the project. The Project Team also reached out to schools, Neighborhood Associations, businesses and faith institutions near and along the corridor to hear about their experiences and concerns. An in-person open house was also held in conjunction with the [Upper Main Street Safety and Mobility Project](#) on April 17, 2023 at Discovery Middle School to hear from community members in the area about their uses and needs on the corridor. A summary report of the early community feedback is underway and will be shared with the public and Transportation and Mobility Commission later this summer.

Phase 2 Engagement

The second phase of community engagement will seek feedback on potential design elements and options for different segments and intersections on the corridor. This phase of engagement will include the sharing out information on how these design elements and options will be evaluated in the planning process and developed into short- and long-term recommendations. Planned outreach activities include community conversations, partner interviews, another online survey, email updates, tabling events this summer on the corridor and across the city as well as and continued engagement with the Transportation and Mobility Commission.

Next Steps

Over the next several months, the Project Team will be working with the community, Transportation and Mobility Commission and other stakeholders to develop and evaluate potential design options and elements to improve safety and mobility on the corridor. The Project Team will have a design workshop with the Transportation and Mobility Commission this Fall and a recommendation hearing this Winter.

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