

Community Concerns

Street Closure Pilot Project, Winter 2012

Overview

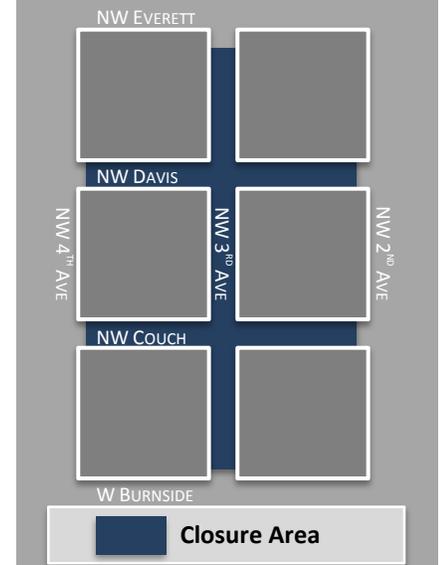
In fall, 2012, a street closure pilot project was proposed to foster public safety and establish a pedestrian-only area in Old Town/Chinatown during hours of high pedestrian traffic. Under this proposal, on Fridays, Saturdays, and major holidays* from 9:00 PM to 3:00 AM, police will close the following streets to vehicular traffic, including bicycles and skateboards:

- NW 3rd from W Burnside to NW Everett
- NW Couch from NW 2nd to NW 4th Ave
- NW Davis from NW 2nd to NW 4th Ave

Under the proposal, vehicles remaining parked on these streets during closure times will be subject to tow.

**New Year's Eve, Independence Day, St. Patrick's Day, Fat Tuesday, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Halloween*

Closure Map



Concerns

Community outreach was performed to assess impact and feasibility. Portland Police and representatives from the Office of Neighborhood Involvement met with stakeholders in the area to assess concerns, support, and to gather suggestions for changes and compromises to ensure the closures enact a net positive impact on the community. The most common concerns and proposed changes are listed below:

Concern: The 9:00 PM closure time will negatively impact daytime business.

Proposal: Many stakeholders have stated that a 10:00 PM closure time will alleviate problems posed by earlier closures. The proposal is moving forward with a 10:00 PM to 3:00 AM closure timeframe.

Concern: The already high noise level will increase and negatively affect residents.

Proposal: The removal of vehicles will reduce some noise. Additionally, officers assigned to the area have agreed to be trained with and carry decibel meters and to increase enforcement of noise ordinances in the area.

Concern: Street closures will create a "festival" atmosphere.

Proposal: No change is being made to the legal standing of the public right-of-way within the closure area. Public drinking will continue to be disallowed and the street will remain open to pedestrian traffic only.

(continued on back)

Concerns

Concern: The closures will disrupt traffic flow.

Proposal: During the pilot project, detour signs will be placed around the area to inform drivers of alternate routes. Impact will be minimal due to pre-existing restricted traffic flow in the area during proposed closure hours due to pedestrian overflow into the street, taxi queuing, and “cruising” in the area.

Concern: Parking spaces will be removed.

Proposal: Much of the area in the closure is a pre-designated no-parking zone during the proposed closure hours. The primary change is increased enforcement of these regulations.

Concern: Expanding pedestrian traffic will expand the clean-up required after the weekend nightlife hours.

Proposal: The pilot project will establish whether a long-term weekend closure project is viable. Once this has been determined, options for expanding Clean & Safe operations can be examined.

Concern: Disabled residents will lose street access.

Proposal: Police enforcing the street closures have agreed to make reasonable accommodations for access to disabled persons and necessary services.

Concern: Building owners and/or service providers will be unable to provide emergency resident services.

Proposal: Reasonable accommodations will be made to allow for emergency access.

Concern: Blockades will not stop drivers, bicyclists, etc. from moving or ignoring the closure.

Proposal: Those violating the closure will be subject to citation. Additionally, barricades will be manned by reserve officers and/or cadets.

Concern: The increased police presence will create a “crackdown” atmosphere.

Proposal: Following the Vancouver, B.C. model, officers will be encouraged to continue taking a “meet and greet” approach to policing in the area.

Information

To provide additional community feedback or concerns, or for more information regarding the street closure pilot project, please contact:

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