

Street Closure Pilot Project Proposal

Update – Old Town/Chinatown, Winter 2012

Proposal

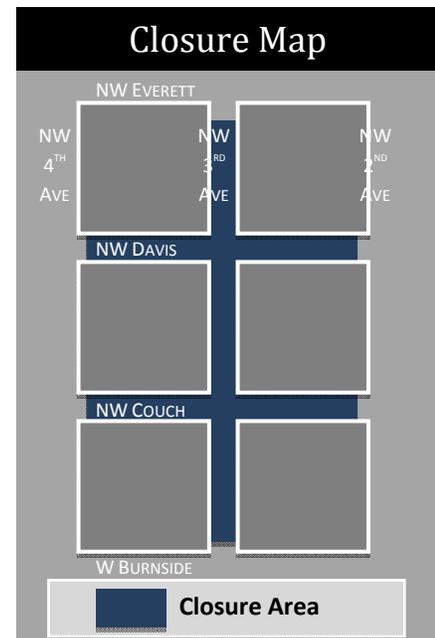
Based on volume of calls for police service and the ongoing concern for public safety, expand weekend closures of NW Couch St. to include two additional streets. Restrict the area to pedestrian-only traffic during specific evening hours. Establish the area as a no-parking zone during pedestrian-only hours. Define transportation zones for the use of taxi and limo services in order to ensure safe entry into and exit from the pedestrian-only area.

Closure Area

Between 10:00 PM and 3:00 AM on Fridays, Saturdays, and specific major holidays, the following streets will be closed to all vehicular traffic, including bicycles and skateboards:

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

Streets adjacent to the area will be open to normal traffic. NW 2nd Avenue and NW 4th Avenue will not be closed.



Concerns

Community feedback continues to be an essential element of the pilot project. Ongoing discussions with stakeholders have identified several common concerns. The project is intended to serve the needs of the community, with changes to be implemented as needed to address the concerns and safety.

Some common concerns are listed below. A more comprehensive list of concerns is available separately.

Closure Time

The original 9:00 PM closure time received significant pushback from the community and daytime business in the area. Working with the Portland Bureau of Transportation, an agreement was reached to push closure time to 10:00 PM with a full shutdown of the streets to be completed by 11:00 PM in the evenings.

“Festival” Atmosphere

Concerns were raised that the closure would create a “block party” or “festival” atmosphere, increasing rather than addressing issues already present. The intent is to create pedestrian-only public right-of-ways. Streets will not be permitted to be blocked by event structures nor will public drinking be allowed.

Noise

The closure area is known by the community to produce significant noise during nightlife hours. Concerns were raised that increased pedestrian accessibility may increase noise. Police in the area will be assigned noise meters to enforce noise ordinances. Citizens should file complaints if excessive noise is experienced.

Safety

Police receive a high volume of calls for service within the proposed closure area. Statistics collected between March and August 2012 place top locations for calls within or nearby the proposed closure area. Many of these calls are to address pedestrians struck by, or in conflict with, a vehicle. Adding NW 3rd Ave and NW Davis St. to the current pedestrian area on NW Couch will reduce the potential for such incidences and provide police with increased lines-of-sight while providing the public increased accessibility to officers.

In order to facilitate safe transportation into and out of the area, the proposal includes dedicated taxi, limo and pedi-cab zones. These zones will help maintain safe and orderly pedestrian traffic flow and allow officers to address concerns of illegal taxi activity.

Parking

The Entertainment Area will be designed to be open to pedestrian traffic only. In order to achieve this goal, no vehicles will be allowed to park on the streets within the closure area. "No Parking" signs will be posted in advance of the start date and a public information release will be sent out to the media to help educate the public about the changes. This will greatly reduce potential for vehicle-pedestrian conflict and damage to parked vehicles during the late evening hours.

Community

Historically, the area between SW Oak and NW Glisan, from Naito Parkway to Broadway has been considered by the community's Old Town/Chinatown Vision-Development Plan as the "Old Town Nightlife District." The vision of this area is one that is clean, safe, lively, and pedestrian-friendly. The proposal to expand the evening pedestrian-only area is perfectly aligned with the goals of the Vision-Development Plan.

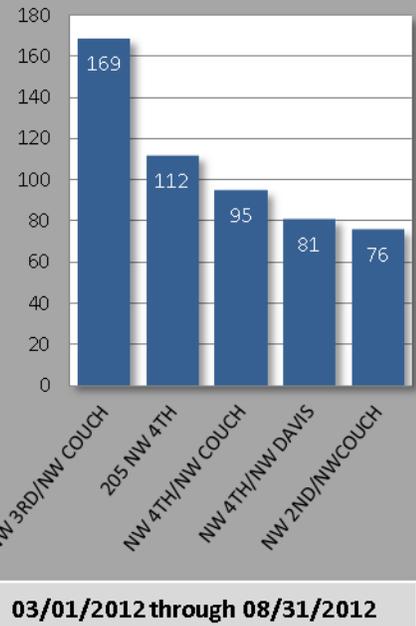
It is essential to receive input and feedback from area stakeholders. In keeping with this spirit of partnership, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement wishes to keep an open line of communication.

To provide feedback or concerns, or to request additional information, please contact:

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Calls for Service Top Five Locations



Old Town/Chinatown Vision Plan Boundaries



 Old Town Nightlife District
 Proposed Street Closures