ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Bassett, Carlson, Collins, Lillquist, O’Brien, Perrie and Mayor Barry.

Others present were City Manager Barkley, Public Works Director Akers, Civil Engineer Mayo, Deputy Clerk Keno and approximately eighteen members of the audience.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ON UNIVERSITY WAY

At Council’s June 20 regular meeting a petition was received that identified pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns on University Way and D Street. The petition was signed by many residents of the historic district, business owners in the neighborhood, and other interested individuals and requests a change to University Way roadway marking that provides one lane of traffic in each direction with a continuous center turn lane, and on street bicycle lanes. Additionally, a signed University Pedestrian Area “UPA” is requested to encompass University Way from Main Street to Alder Street, and D Street from University Way to Dean Nicholson Boulevard. The petition requests a uniform speed limit of 20 miles per hour in the designated UPA.

Staff has completed a review of traffic count and accident data within the proposed UPA, and has prepared information for Council to consider in formulating a response to the petition.

Public Works Director Akers reviewed the individual concepts presented by the petition along with the traffic data, and staff recommendations on the various changes requested. He also outlined costs for ideas Council may want to explore to address the pedestrian traffic concerns.

University Way Re-striping:

The City Transportation Plan identifies University Way as a major arterial with a required level of service (LOS) “C” to be maintained on the roadway. Although the petition requests LOS not be considered in the analysis process, staff is required to consider it. Level of service issues associated with the roadway as it currently exists, and as it would function in the requested lane format (one lane of traffic each direction with a continuous center turn lane, and on street bicycle lanes) were discussed. Under the existing marking pattern University Way is estimated to operate at LOS “B” throughout its length. Employing a three lane section on University Way would degrade the LOS on the involved roadway sections as follows: Main Street to Ruby Street – LOS C; Ruby Street to Sprague Street – LOS D; and Sprague Street to Alder Street – LOS E. If the striping plan requested by petition is selected it will be necessary to modify the comprehensive plan to allow traffic on the arterial street system to degrade to LOS E. Cost of the three-lane configuration would be
approximately $65,000 due to the cost of pavement marking. The current marking material would need to be ground off. It would be cheaper to paint the lanes; however, painting would need to be done twice a year due to wear.

Comparisons of accident experience on a three lane roadway (Main Street) versus a four lane roadway (University Way) were reviewed.

Another issue that exists on University Way that is not prevalent on Main Street is the misalignment of intersections in the area between Main Street and Sprague Street. Three lane roadway sections provide a deceleration opportunity for traffic turning from the arterial as well as a merging opportunity for traffic entering the arterial from side streets. Often times the attention of entering traffic using the center turn lane is focused on traffic behind them in order to merge, and are less attentive to traffic or situations in front of them. On a conventional roadway with uniformly aligned blocks and limited driveways this condition is manageable, but in an area with misaligned intersections and marked crosswalks it can be extremely dangerous. Staff recommends against implementation of a three lane section for this reason and the associated issue of level of service. However, staff does support enhancements for pedestrian traffic crossing University Way west of D Street, and for pedestrians crossing D Street at 9th and 10th Avenue. Visibility of crosswalks at 9th Avenue and 10th Avenue could be improved with additional signage. Markings at these locations were upgraded in 2003 to a high visibility green/white crosswalk bar, and this pattern will be repeated after sealcoat work has been completed in August. Additional signage would improve the visibility at these locations and enhanced night visibility could be provided with additional area lighting. Costs for street lighting at both locations would be approximately $2,500 per location with no current budget authority for this item.

University Way provides a significant challenge with respect to pedestrian crossing. Data developed by the Federal Highway Administration that provides guidance on crosswalk installation based upon speed and lane configuration was used as the basis for Council’s previous action to direct removal of the marked crosswalk on University Way at Anderson Street. If pedestrian crossing is to be enhanced between Main Street and D Street additional crossing protections must be provided. These enhancements could take the form of high intensity marking, additional signage, hand carry flag standards or other low cost measures at all of the existing crossings. However, traffic growth on the avenue will continue to impact the ability to cross safely, and consideration should be given to installation of electronic crossing protection. Given the costs associated with this type of protection it might be best to identify a location within the area of concern and concentrate the funding to provide push button actuated light protection ($20,000-$55,000). Cursory review of a possible location to receive this type of treatment based upon proximity to protected crossings upstream and downstream would seem to favor a crossing on the west side of Pine Street if a single crossing were to be proposed. In the event funding could be obtained for a protected crossing, the remaining unprotected but marked crosswalks should be removed.
Bicycle Lanes on University Way:

The City’s bike route plan identifies two alternate locations for east west bicycle passage adjacent to, and south of CWU. The plan proposes that either University Way or 7th Avenue be upgraded to Class II bicycle designation as a medium priority project in the plan. Class II designation on University Way will either require widening to accommodate the bike lanes, or marking to accommodate bikes with a resulting LOS degradation. Class II designation on 7th Avenue can be accomplished with minor shoulder widening and marking. For this reason it is staff’s recommendation to direct any funding available for bike route designation onto the 7th Avenue corridor with connections to the campus at Chestnut Street, Walnut Street and D Street in lieu of the three lane proposal the petition requests. The cost for a bike lane on 7th Avenue only would be approximately $14,000.

University Pedestrian Area (UPA) Designation/Speed Reduction:

The petition also requests establishment of a UPA with signage to indicate the boundaries to “designate these special streets as streets where the pedestrian has the right of way”. If Council wishes to make this designation it will be necessary to purchase and install at least 4 prominent signs to delineate the boundary of the UPA. If that is an action Council wishes to pursue it would be appropriate to call attention to the increased potential for pedestrian traffic, but not advisable to indicate the area where the pedestrian has the right of way. Under current traffic law the pedestrian has the right of way at all marked crosswalks and at all intersections regardless of crosswalk marking.

With respect to speed reduction in the limits of the UPA a reduction in speed from 25 mph to 20 mph has a corresponding reduction in traffic handling capability of approximately 10 percent. This reduction, when applied to the average daily traffic (ADT) on the roadway results in a LOS of C or better on the 4-lane section, and could be implemented without violating the LOS limits established in the comprehensive plan. However, it is doubtful speed reduction can be realized without significant and regular enforcement. Speed studies that have been conducted on University Way in the past have revealed an 85th percentile speed of 27 mph. A speed reduction on D Street is also possible with LOS degradation and would likely have a higher compliance due to the residential nature of the roadway.

Council asked questions of staff. Staff indicated it would be difficult to make any difference in the traffic counts when Alder Street is extended to Helena Street. Some traffic will transfer to Water Street; but expanded development to the North will impact traffic in these areas as well. The four feet per second time frame for pedestrians to cross the sidewalk at signal lights was felt to be inadequate. Council requested staff do timing checks on the crosswalk signals particularly on Water Street. In answer to Council inquiry, the City could compete for a pedestrian safety grant at the University Way location.

Council took comments from the audience. Audience members spoke in support of the petition's
requested three lane roadway configuration, speed limit enforcement and pedestrian friendly street
design. One audience member distributed photos of pedestrian friendly crosswalks, paddles, nodes
and signage used in other cities. In answer to Council inquiry, University Way is not wide enough for
pedestrian nodes in the intersection; however, the City does have enough right-of-way. Staff’s
recommendations are stop gap solutions; the Comprehensive Plan process is the forum in which to
address these issues. Staff would have to research the use of pedestrian paddles (collapsible mid-
road signs) in the State of Washington.

Council consensus was to request more staff research on what pedestrian safety items would be
eligible for grant funding. Also, Council wants a staff proposal for a stop gap pedestrian crosswalk
safety program that may include timing checks on crosswalk signals and signage. Council would like
to review staff’s report on grant viability at the August 15 meeting.

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 9:14 p.m. O’Brien

Affirmed

**RECONVENE**

Reconvene meeting at 9:15 p.m. and recess to executive session to discuss acquisition of Carlson
real estate after a five minute recess.

The executive session will last approximately ten minutes and no action will be taken.

Vote on motion.

Affirmed

**RECESS**

Council recessed to executive session at 9:20 p.m.

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 9:27 p.m. Carlson

Affirmed

_________________________________________________________________

Mayor

ATTEST: ________________________________________________

City Clerk