This concept tries to provide more control of traffic, improved safety for pedestrians, control of pedestrian crossing locations, and minimal widening.

The typical cross section of the road includes a median with a minimum width of 10 feet next to the left turn lanes. The width would provide an area wide enough for pedestrians to stand on. The left turn lanes would be 12 feet wide, which is minimal width. The median would expand to at least 18 feet in areas where there are no left turn lanes. There would be a physical raised barrier along most of the median.

A 9 feet wide parking lane would be maintained only on the south side of the street. There would be no parking along the north side. One through lane in each direction would be maintained. The through lane would be 14 feet wide next to the left turn lanes and 15 to 16 feet wide next to the wide median areas. The wider through lane is needed for parking maneuvers and parking friction for the eastbound lane and for commercial traffic and possible bicyclists in both directions.

The left turn lanes will provide a storage area for traffic waiting to turn left and will virtually eliminate all the through traffic delay associated with the left turns. Equally important is the elimination of through traffic bypassing left turning traffic by swerving to the curb lane to pass on the right. This maneuver is of special concern where pedestrians are crossing.

Pedestrians crossing Cascade Ave at an intersection will only have to cross ½ of the roadway at a time. Even though by law pedestrians have the right of way at an intersection, it is safer if pedestrians can cross one direction of traffic at a time. Observations of traffic have shown motorists are more likely to yield to a pedestrian on a divided roadway than on an open roadway.

Pedestrians crossing Cascade Ave at locations other than an intersection will be minimal. The median barrier will discourage such crossings, depending on design. The elimination of parking on the north side will eliminate a number of potential pedestrian crossings from parked vehicles.

A raised median coupled with parked vehicles in the eastbound lane should have some “traffic calming” effect on traffic and speeds should be lower. Without parking on the north side, the traffic calming effects will be much less in the west bound direction.

Parking can be virtually maintained along the south side of Cascade Ave. All parking on the north side would be eliminated. There currently are about 46 parking spaces between Spruce St. and 6th St. on the north side. Parallel parking maneuvers on the south side will be a little more difficult
with the median. There is no opportunity for motorists to drive around the parking vehicle by traveling into the opposite direction lane. This could be considered a safety benefit but also a through traffic travel time deterrent. One concern is the impact of a car door opening into the single through lane of traffic.

The medians also help define the location and limits of intersections. Cascade Ave motorists will be more aware of the intersection and its potential conflicts. A few potential conflicts are eliminated (bypassing traffic) and conflict areas are better defined. The median better defines lanes at intersections, both for through traffic and entering traffic. The median is also a barrier and prevents mid block left turns further reducing conflicts.

The width of the median and the need to maintain intersection sight distance will limit the areas where any raised beautification efforts can take place. Low level planting areas and a few open areas for taller plantings, etc would be available.

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