

# Bike and Walk Salem: Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update and Safe Routes to School Plan

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## Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #2

Thursday January 20, 2011

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Pringle Hall Community Center, 606 Church Street SE

## Attendees

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### Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members

- 1 Bill Cummins, Disabled Service Provider
- 2 David Fox, Salem Planning Commission
- 3 David Fridenmaker, School Facilities Department
  
- 4 Gary Obery, Vision 2020 and Bicycle Transportation Alliance
- 5 Heather Swanson, West Salem Neighborhood
- 6 Jan Nelson, Stand for Children
- 7 Kate Tarter, Northgate Neighborhood
- 8 Ken Simila, Northeast Neighbors
- 9 Kevin Baker, School District, Transportation
- 10 Kelvin Detwyler, Parks and Rec. Advisory Board
- 11 Leah McMillan, SE Salem Neighborhood (Alternate for Jeff Leach)
- 12 McRae Carmichael, Salem Community Development
- 13 Michael Wolfe, South Salem Cycle Works
  
- 14 Ray Jackson, Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study
- 15 Rodger Gutierrez, Oregon Department of Transportation
- 16 Tonya Johnson, Marion County Health Department

### Project Team

- Julie Warncke, City of Salem  
Kevin Hottmann, City of Salem  
Sue Geniesse, Transportation & Growth Management Program  
Sumi Malik, CH2M HILL
- Rory Renfro, Alta Planning + Design  
Mariah VanZerr, CH2M HILL

### Citizens in Attendance

- Dan Evans  
Nick Fortey  
Eric Lundgren
- Al Smith

## Meeting Summary

This meeting summary documents the major conversation items from the January 20, 2010 meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) for Bike and Walk Salem, the City of Salem's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update and Safe Routes to School Plan. The summary is

organized by agenda item. For details about the materials reviewed during the meeting, please see the meeting handouts<sup>1</sup>.

### **Agenda and Process Overview**

Sumi Malik opened the meeting and provided an overview of the needs identification process, public involvement activities to date, the role of the SAC, and an update on the project timeline. She explained that the draft needs assessment findings are based on data provided by the City and stakeholder agencies, a thorough public involvement process, field work on foot and bicycle, school site walkabouts, and a review of relevant plans and policies. She explained that the role of the SAC is to review the draft needs assessment, provide feedback, and ask questions.

### **Bicycle, Pedestrian, Safe Routes to School, and ADA Needs Identified**

Rory provided an overview of the existing bicycle and pedestrian networks within Salem and their current condition. He noted that bicycle lanes are currently present on the majority of major arterials and collectors within Salem, but that east/west bicycle network connectivity is currently lacking. He also mentioned that bicycle facility needs vary by trip purpose and by type of cyclist. For the pedestrian network, he noted that sidewalks currently exist on the majority of roadways within the downtown area, the residential neighborhoods that surround downtown, and in the outer areas of Salem that were annexed into the City prior to development. Sidewalks are less present in the residential areas between these two areas (areas that mostly developed in Marion County and were annexed after development). He also described the distribution of transportation disadvantaged populations in Salem, which include households without access to a private vehicle. Transportation disadvantaged populations are clustered in the Portland Road area, south of Mission Street, and on either side of the I-5 corridor, where major pedestrian barriers and limited bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity present challenges.

Next, Rory discussed the findings from the crash data analysis. Crash data from 2005 – 2009 showed a total of 292 bicycle-involved crashes and 225 pedestrian-involved crashes. The most common collision type for bicycles was due to conflicts with turning vehicles. The most common collision type for pedestrians was due to both motorists failing to yield to pedestrians and the illegal presence of pedestrians in the roadway (i.e. jaywalking). High crash corridors and high crash intersections are listed below:

High crash corridors for both bicycles and pedestrians

- Commercial Street,
- Lancaster Drive,
- Center Street, and
- Market Street.

High crash corridors for bicycles only

- Wallace Road,
- Liberty Street, and

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<sup>1</sup> Meeting handouts included the meeting agenda, a printout of the PowerPoint presentation, Draft Technical Memo 2: Critical ADA Routes, Draft Technical Memo 4: Safe Routes to School Needs Assessment, Draft Technical Memo 5: Pedestrian Needs Assessment, Draft Technical Memo 6: Bicycle Needs Assessment, and the Needs Identification Public Involvement Summary.

- Mission Street.

High crash corridors for pedestrians only

- State Street,
- "D" Street, and
- Broadway Street.

High crash intersections for bicycles

- Wallace at Glen Creek,
- Liberty at Superior,
- Center at Hawthorne,
- Lancaster at Market,
- Commercial at Madrona, and
- Lancaster at Wolverine.

High crash intersections for pedestrians

- Liberty at Center,
- Lancaster at Sunnyview,
- Liberty at Ferry,
- Pringle Parkway at Winter,
- State at 25<sup>th</sup>, and
- Taggart at Wallace Road.

Rory mentioned that a major limitation of the crash analysis is that data are only available for bicycle and/or pedestrian collisions with vehicles that get reported in police reports. Data on near misses, close calls, and bicycle and pedestrian collisions that do not involve motor vehicles are not available.

The results of the Needs Assessment for the downtown core revealed several positive attributes and several opportunities for improvement. Positive attributes in the downtown core include an active sidewalk environment, pedestrian crossing treatments (including curb extensions and pedestrian refuge islands), shared-lane markings for bicycles, and a bicycle locker program for bicycle parking. Some of the opportunities for improvement in the downtown core include narrow sidewalks, double left turn lanes for vehicles (which decrease pedestrian safety), crossings closed to pedestrians (which creates out-of-direction travel requirements), uncontrolled crossings (such as Union and Commercial), and locations with improper bike lane striping.

Additionally, Rory noted that the needs assessment included a detailed inventory of the existing passenger infrastructure at major transit stops within Salem. Improving bicycle and pedestrian network integration with the transit system outside of the downtown core was identified as a key need. Specifically, pedestrian access to transit stops east of Lancaster Drive, lighting, and short and long-term bicycle parking at transit stops were identified as key opportunities for improvement.

Next, Rory discussed the needs assessment findings for mobility-impaired pedestrians. The assessment included thinking about the needs of people with wheelchairs, canes, crutches, and prosthetic devices; people with visual and audio impairments; people with cognitive impairments; and the needs of older adults and children who may have increased difficulties

judging speeds and distances. To conduct the needs assessment, the project team began by defining key mobility-impaired user destinations (through the input of a small group meeting with disabled Salem residents), and then connected these destinations to identify critical ADA routes throughout the City of Salem. The project team then noted areas with clusters of key destinations and conducted a focused data collection effort along these key corridors. The corridors included Lancaster Drive, the “Y” intersection of Commercial and Liberty south of Mission, and Wallace Road. Some of the opportunities for improvement in these key corridors include repairing damaged sidewalks, removing sidewalk obstacles, and improving driveway cross-slopes and the number of driveway crossings. Some of the general issues identified throughout Salem include the need for more audible pedestrian crossing signals, improvements to diagonal curb ramps, and gaps in the sidewalk system.

To identify needs for the Safe Routes to School component of the plan, the project team conducted both a general city-wide assessment and a detailed assessment of 5 schools that were selected by City staff. The city-wide assessment included a review of the pedestrian and bicycle “walk zone” surrounding 33 elementary, 8 middle, and 6 high schools located throughout the City. The “walk zone” is generally a 1 - 1.5 mile radius around each school that is determined by Salem-Keizer Public Schools. Key findings from the citywide assessment include low sidewalk coverage near the schools in far eastern Salem, low bicycle facility coverage near schools in West Salem and far eastern Salem, challenging topography near schools in West Salem and South Salem, and that the best street connectivity exists around schools in inner West Salem and in the downtown core. Additionally, freeways, major roads, railroads, waterways, and discontinuous local streets serve as biking and walking barriers for the majority of middle and high schools in Salem (elementary school walk zones often do not extend past these barriers). The 5 schools that were reviewed in more detail include Englewood Elementary, Hoover Elementary, Washington Elementary, Faye Wright Elementary, and Walker Middle School. Detailed “walkabouts” were conducted for these schools during student arrival and dismissal times so that the project team could note the locations of obstacles or challenges facing student pedestrians/bicyclists. The findings of the detailed walkabouts are included in Draft Technical Memo 4: Safe Routes to School Needs Assessment.

### **Group Discussion and Opportunity for Feedback – Needs Assessment**

The group discussed the results of the draft needs assessment. One SAC member asked whether lower traffic volume streets that may be good to bike on, but are not designated as bike routes, are included in the bicycle facility coverage estimate. Rory responded that only designated bicycle facilities are included, but that there may be excellent lower traffic volume roadways that should be considered for official designation as a bike route or a bicycle boulevard. Rory also noted that the sidewalk coverage estimate may be artificially low, due to a lack of available sidewalk data in east Salem. Additionally, several SAC members noted that different types of cyclists have different needs (such as child vs. adult cyclists) and that what is considered “bicycle-friendly” will vary by the type of user. Rory mentioned that the plan would consider solutions for all users of the system and that diversifying the system to meet the needs of different types of users would likely be a part of the solutions considered in the final plan.

Some of the SAC members had questions about the crash analysis and how the crash rates were calculated. Rory explained that the crash rates were calculated using reported crashes and available data from the 2000 Census and American Community Survey (ACS). Rory reiterated that the crash data is only as good as current crash reporting requirements and that SAC

members should keep in mind that near misses, close calls, and bicycle and pedestrian collisions that do not involve motor vehicles are not reflected in the crash analysis findings. Rory explained that this is why the crash analysis has been supplemented by a broad public outreach effort. One SAC member expressed that the ten pedestrian fatalities reported in the crash analysis was high, and recommended that the goal should be to have zero pedestrian fatalities.

Another SAC member asked whether the Safe Routes to School Assessment included planned new schools within the school district. Rory responded that data is not currently available for these schools, so they are not included in the assessment. Another SAC member mentioned that many schools are set back from the property line and that she is concerned about bicycle and pedestrian access to the school from the sidewalk. David Fridenmaker mentioned that bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation within school sites will be considered during the site planning phases of the new schools. Additional discussion surrounding the Safe Routes to School Needs Assessment included the need for covered bicycle parking at school sites, and the need to improve the siting of schools. Specifically, one SAC member mentioned that schools are often sited on outlying inexpensive lands, which creates a housing/schools imbalance. This person recommended that transportation issues should also be considered when siting new schools.

SAC members also discussed the need for improved bike parking facilities and bicycle access at new development sites. The bike parking at Center 50+ was noted as an example of a new building with poor bicycle parking facilities. The Joan Kroc Community Center was noted as an example of a new building with poor bicycle access. SAC members recommended that building codes and design standards in Salem be examined to eliminate this type of problem in the future. Sumi mentioned that a review of the Development Code is included in the project scope and that the project team would be making recommendations for code amendments.

Another SAC member asked whether the final project selection process would consider the number of people that would benefit from a project. Sumi noted that projects would be selected using a number of evaluation criteria, including how well a project accommodates a broad range of users. The complete list of criteria is included in Technical Memo #3: Evaluation Criteria.

## **Public Involvement Results**

Sumi Malik provided an overview of the public involvement activities conducted to collect input on the biking and walking needs in Salem. She noted that the public involvement activities included an online questionnaire (in both English and Spanish), a parent questionnaire, a series of small group meetings, several “listening stations”, and an interactive online comment mapping tool.

Sumi provided a brief highlight of the online questionnaire results, which included 812 responses, and the finding that 81% of respondents said they want to bike more to get places in Salem and that 82% said they want to walk more to get places in Salem. This was despite the fact that 95% of respondents said they have access to a private vehicle. Additionally, 60% of respondents said they prefer to bicycle on lower traffic volume streets or routes completely separated from cars, whereas 14% said they don’t mind bicycling in a bike lane on streets with heavy traffic. Respondents noted that the number of cars, vehicle travel speeds, and inadequate or missing bike lanes or off-street paths were significant obstacles to biking more in Salem.

Moderate obstacles to biking more included the weather and a lack of available bicycle parking. For walking, 42% said they prefer to walk on streets with lower traffic volumes, whereas 36% said they don't mind walking along streets with heavy traffic if sidewalks are present. Respondents noted that travel distances and missing/inadequate sidewalks were both significant obstacles to walking more in Salem. The weather was noted as a moderate obstacle to walking more in Salem.

General themes from the parent questionnaire are reported for parents who said they do not allow their children to walk or bike to school. These parents said that the speed and amount of traffic along the routes to school, the distance between the school and the home, safety issues at intersections and crossing locations, weather, and concerns about violence or crime were all obstacles to allowing their children to walk or bike to school.

Sumi explained that small group meetings were held with representatives from the disabled community (ADA), the downtown business community, the transit-dependent community, senior citizens, and the youth community. Listening Stations were held at the Kidical Mass event, the Breakfast on Bikes event, the Joan Kroc Community Center, M&S Sales, the Salem Center Mall, and the Lancaster Mall. General feedback from the interactive comment map and the small group meetings and listening stations resulted in the identification of several bicycle and pedestrian "hot spot" areas throughout the City of Salem. These hotspots include:

- Lancaster Drive,
- Commercial & Liberty (both downtown and at the "Y" intersection south of downtown),
- The downtown core/State Street area,
- The Salem Parkway/River Road area,
- East/west connections from the Union Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge,
- Rails on Front Street,
- Chemeketa Street,
- West Salem,
- Hawthorne Road,
- Portland Road & Silverton Road (Fairground),
- Kuebler Boulevard, and
- Broadway Street.

General bicycle deficiencies noted from these public involvement efforts include the need to address missing connections to parks and community destinations; for more bike lanes, off-street and shared-use paths; for stop signs to be turned to facilitate bikes, for vehicle speed limits to be reduced, for intersection crossings to be improved, for better wayfinding signs; and for more bicycle parking and lockers.

General pedestrian deficiencies and deficiencies for those with disabilities noted from the public involvement efforts include the need to address missing sidewalks, for intersection crossing improvements, for sidewalk maintenance, for audible pedestrian signals, for improved pedestrian and ADA connections to transit, for improvements to driveway cross-slopes, and for a reduction in crossing distances.

General deficiencies for transit dependant populations include the need for safe and free overnight bike parking, free helmet programs, and bicycle education programs. Improved transit service hours and frequency were also discussed as needs.

### **Group Discussion and Opportunity for Feedback – Public Involvement Results**

One SAC member asked about the parent questionnaire findings and whether the concern about violence/crime was referring to abduction or “stranger danger” issues. Sumi explained that these concerns were school specific and varied by school location and neighborhood.

Another SAC member asked about the phrasing of some of the bicycle and facility preference questions in the online questionnaire, and whether the results are indicative of true bicycling facility needs. Sumi explained that the questionnaire results should not be considered “scientific” but that the findings can help to inform the needs identification conversation.

Another SAC member inquired whether questionnaire respondents were asked about bicycle facility types, such as buffered bike lanes or cycle tracks. Rory noted that specific bicycle and pedestrian treatments are included in the project toolkit but were not included in the online questionnaire. It was noted that the majority of the public is not yet familiar with these terms, and that the aim of the questionnaire was to identify preferences and needs, not to ask the public to weigh in on engineering solutions. Another SAC member asked about traffic speed bumps. Rory noted that speed bumps and speed cushions are also included in the project toolkit.

Another SAC member questioned whether the stated preference of many questionnaire respondents for lower-traffic volume streets made sense in Salem due to the “hub and spoke” design of the City. Additionally, several SAC members noted that while diversifying the system was important, improving the continuity and consistency of the existing system was also a priority. The project team explained that improvements to the existing system would be considered in conjunction with needs related to system diversification. Ultimately, it was noted that the bicycle system should be designed to serve all users, including the “interested but concerned” and the “strong and the fearless” categories of riders.

### **Public Comment Period**

Nick Fortey, the Traffic Chair of the West Salem Neighborhood Association spoke and provided a list of comments for the project team to consider, including:

- Consider the limitations of the crash data. Ask what is missing from the current data?
- Look at key trip generators in West Salem, including the Safeway in the Edgewater District, Roth’s, and Orchard Heights Park.
- Consider major pedestrian barriers, such as Glen Creek Road.
- Encourage the MPO to conduct longitudinal travel studies to look at what actually drives the adoption of alternate travel modes.
- Consider the impacts of potential future land uses on the pedestrian and bicycle systems.
- Complete an overlay of school bus routes, Cherriots bus routes, and transit stops to assess needed crossing and pedestrian improvements near transit stops.
- Consider buffers and stormwater treatments to help improve the quality of the pedestrian experience on major roadways.

**Next Steps**

The SAC was asked to review and provide comments on Memo #2, and Memos #4-6 by January 28<sup>th</sup>. The SAC was asked to submit their feedback electronically using the comment form provided. SAC comments will be reviewed and incorporated into the final versions of the memos. Four project open houses will be held during the week of January 24<sup>th</sup>. SAC members were asked to distribute event flyers throughout the community. The next SAC meeting will be held in March.