

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

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #3

Tuesday March 15, 2011

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

Pringle Hall Community Center, 606 Church Street SE

Attendees

| Stakeholder Advisory Committee Members | | Project Team |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Bill Cummins, Disabled Service Provider | Julie Warncke, City of Salem |
| 2 | David Fox, Salem Planning Commission | Kevin Hottmann, City of Salem |
| 3 | David Fridenmaker, School Facilities Department | |
| 4 | Gary Obery, Vision 2020 and BTA | Sumi Malik, CH2M HILL |
| 5 | Nick Fortey, West Salem N.A. (alternate for Heather Swanson) | Rory Renfro, Alta Planning + Design |
| 6 | Jan Nelson, Stand for Children | Mariah VanZerr, CH2M HILL |
| 7 | Carel Dewinkel, SCAN | |
| 8 | Marta Chan, Minority Community (alternate for Amador Aguilar) | Citizens in Attendance |
| 9 | Delfina Chan, Minority Community (alternate for Amador Aguilar) | Jen Akeroyd |
| 10 | Kevin Baker, School District, Transportation | Kerry Toper |
| 11 | Jeff Leach, SESNA | |
| 12 | McRae Carmichael, Salem Community Development | |
| 13 | Michael Wolfe, South Salem Cycle Works | |
| 14 | Ray Jackson, Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study | |
| 15 | Steve Oulman, Department of Land Conservation and Development | |
| 16 | Tonya Johnson, Marion County Health Department | |

Meeting Summary

This meeting summary documents the major conversation items from the March 15, 2011 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 handouts¹.

Agenda and Process Overview

Julie Warncke opened the meeting and Sumi Malik provided an overview of the agenda. Sumi explained that the purpose of the meeting was to present the draft pedestrian solutions and the public involvement comment maps and collect feedback from the SAC. She noted that the bicycle and safe routes to school solutions would be presented at the next SAC meeting.

Draft Pedestrian Solutions

Rory Renfro presented on the draft pedestrian solutions. He explained that the recommended pedestrian projects and strategies are intended to:

- Build upon investments in the existing and planned system
- Serve a broad range of pedestrians (including users of various ages, confidence levels, trip types, and abilities)
- Enhance the existing system to better serve users
- Expand the system to streamline walking connections and develop new routes to better serve existing and future destinations
- Establish seamless links with surrounding communities including Keizer, and Marion and Polk counties, and
- Enhance user safety and comfort

Rory began the presentation with a discussion of the recommended citywide efforts to improve Salem's pedestrian environment. Rory briefly discussed the following citywide recommendations:

- **Completing the citywide sidewalk inventory** and inspection;
- **Corridor and intersection upgrades**, including sidewalk infill, crossing treatments, and upgrades to accommodate pedestrians with disabilities;
- **Transit access enhancements**, such as direct pedestrian links to transit stops, covered passenger shelters, and good lighting;
- **Streetscape enhancements** to help create an attractive pedestrian environment, such as street trees, ornamental lighting, street furniture, outdoor dining, awnings on building facades, and public art;
- **Green street enhancements** that address stormwater management while improving walkability and calming traffic, such as bio-swales, curb extensions, street-side landscaping and reducing impervious surfaces;
- **Pedestrian way-finding signage** to orient pedestrians to and through destinations, and highlight features that may have otherwise been overlooked by the community; and
- **Education and promotional programs** to promote safety, raise awareness of walking as a legitimate transportation mode, and encourage residents to walk more often.

Rory then provided an overview of current street design standards and described suggested changes to the standards to foster a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Some of the suggested changes (particularly for new City-constructed streets) include:

¹ Meeting handouts included the meeting agenda and Draft Technical Memo #7: Pedestrian Plan Concepts.

- expanding the minimum sidewalk width to accommodate side-by-side walking and walkers traveling in opposite directions,
- providing planter strips on both sides of the street to better accommodate driveway aprons, minimize sidewalk cross-slope, and ensure easier access for wheelchair users, and
- establishing a 12-foot minimum width for shared use paths in order to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and other users traveling in both directions at once.

Rory then provided a high level overview of the draft proposed pedestrian recommendations for site-specific projects. The recommendations are listed in the appendix of Memo #7 (available on the project website) and depicted in maps by City quadrant. The recommended project solutions include sidewalk improvements (as part of new construction, infill along existing streets, and upgrades to existing sidewalks), shared-use paths (both new paths and connections between existing paths), and intersection improvements (primarily located along Salem’s major street network).

Group Discussion and Opportunity for Feedback

After a 15 minute break for SAC members to look at the maps and ask staff questions, the group reconvened to discuss the proposed solutions and provide feedback to the project team. The following is a brief summary of the group discussion, described in Q and A format.

Q. For the short shared-use path segments proposed to connect West Salem neighborhoods, would these be located within city streets or on private property?

A. Potentially both. Studies would be needed to determine specific routing. Targeted outreach would be needed to determine the specific alignments that work best for the community, especially if private property is crossed.

Q. How will the proposed solutions be prioritized?

A. Since there are more proposed projects than the budget can afford, project prioritization will be an important part of this process. Prioritization will happen in the next phase of this project, using the evaluation framework (Memo #3), likely within the June 2011 timeframe.

Q. Do the proposed solutions consider future land-use changes? For example, as the land uses intensify along Wallace Road, mid-block crossings will be needed to safely connect pedestrians with transit stops and prevent unsafe crossings.

A. We are thinking about this, both in terms of where there are needs now and where anticipated future needs may arise (especially as areas on Salem’s outskirts develop).

Q. I believe certain segments of the Geer Line Railroad corridor in SE Salem where shared use paths are proposed have been sold; would this be an obstacle?

A. The City would have to purchase the right-of-way back from private property owners in order to build certain segments of the proposed Geer Line Trail (particularly west of Lancaster Drive). This would be challenging, but can be done if the community wants it.

Q. Is there still a bike/ped undercrossing under the Mill Creek Highway?

A. A crossing remains there, but does not currently meet standards. It would be expensive to upgrade, but it can be done if that is what the community wants.

Q. Why is the shared-use path from Riverfront Park to the Civic Center not on the map?

A. You are right that it should be on there. We will correct the map, thank you.

Q. This is a bike-related comment, but I can't make the next SAC meeting, so I will submit the comment now. Please consider biking connections from the Fairmont Park area to Riverfront Park. Currently, cyclists can't use Commercial going north, so they are forced to take Liberty, which is unfriendly to bicyclists. High Street has a large hill and Church Street is really too far out of direction. A bicycle connection from Saginaw to Commercial would be welcomed to help alleviate this.

A. Thank you for your comment. We will consider this idea as we develop the recommended bicycle solutions.

Q. What criteria were used to select the proposed pedestrian solutions? I see my walk to work on the proposed solution maps, and those are good sidewalks.

A. Information from the needs analysis, public involvement activities, and the ADA Critical Routes were used to inform the identification of the proposed pedestrian solutions. Note that the lines for sidewalk infill that you see on the map don't mean that infill is necessarily needed along the entire segment shown by the line, just that there are sidewalk gaps within that segment that should be addressed. Also note that the sidewalk improvement recommendations are based on the City's sidewalk conditions database, which was started in 2005 and is still being updated. The City recently hired a new employee to manage the database and to help update the GIS layer. However, the project will move forward using the best available data currently in the database. If any solutions move forward based on old or outdated data, maintenance crews will catch the discrepancy "on the ground" and call it out before any improvements are made.

Q. How do we connect neighborhoods and parks together to increase connectivity? For example, it would be nice to connect Fairmont Park to Candalaria Park in South Salem? Are there other parks throughout the community that we can link up?

A. This is a great question. The draft recommended pedestrian network was developed with connections to parks (and other key destinations such as shopping, employment, schools, etc.) in mind. If SAC members have additional ideas for parks that should be linked by the pedestrian system, please let the project team know.

Q. Would it be possible to get a shared-use path along the east side of the Willamette River? Is there a sewer line utility easement that could be used?

A. The City did just get an easement through the Boise Property to connect to Minto-Brown Island. However, a shared-use path along the east side of the Willamette River would require crossing railroad tracks. At-grade pedestrian crossings are not allowed by railroads, so a

pedestrian over or undercrossing would be required. This would increase the cost of the project substantially. The planned bridge linking Minto-Brown and Riverfront parks, along with a supplemental path linking this bridge to the existing Minto-Brown pathway system, will significantly improve bike/ped connections between downtown and South Salem.

Q. Will the improvements to Kuebler Blvd. make crossings more difficult for pedestrians?

A. The improvements to Kuebler will include two 11-foot travel lanes in each direction, a center turn lane, and 6 foot bicycle lanes on either side. Crossing Kuebler will be like crossing Commercial Street; it will be wide. For new signalized intersections, the City will assume a pedestrian crossing speed of 3.5 feet per second, which will delay vehicles slightly, but provide more time for pedestrians.

Q. Boone Road, between Sunnyside and Commercial Street is in need of sidewalks.

A. Thank you, we will look into this section of Boone Road and consider adding it to the recommended pedestrian solutions.

Julie closed the discussion period by posing a question to the SAC members. She brought up the fact that there are a number of places in town that have paths that connect to schools/parks, and paths that connect through them, but that many of the paths are closed during certain times of day and at night. She asked the SAC members if they think it is okay to have a bicycle and pedestrian network that is not open 24-hours a day. After a brief group discussion, the SAC members generally agreed that there would be some locations where 24-hour access would not be practical, but that the City should look into expanding the path hours and addressing safety and security concerns in as many locations as practical. Julie agreed and asked SAC members to keep in mind that not all of the shared-use paths shown on the maps in Memo # 7 are open 24-hours as they conduct their review.

Public Involvement Comment Maps

Next, Sumi presented an overview of the five public involvement comment maps that were posted on the walls at the meeting and that the SAC members had a chance to review during their 15 minute break. Sumi explained that the maps displayed the most common needs heard throughout the public involvement process in each of the City of Salem quadrants, including Downtown Salem, West Salem, South Salem, Northeast Salem, and Southeast Salem. Specifically, the maps show the needs that emerged as themes from the small group meetings, listening stations, online survey, interactive comment map, and public open house events. Sumi noted that the comments displayed on the maps do not represent all of the public comments heard, but rather represent a high level aggregation of the most common locations/issues that were mentioned.

Sumi provided a brief overview of the most common needs identified in each quadrant and mentioned that the maps can be downloaded from the project website. The next step will be to reiterate to the public what we've heard from them and show them how we've taken their issues into consideration. Sumi said that the public involvement comment maps will be presented at the next round of public open house and listening station events.

Group Discussion and Opportunity for Feedback

Following Sumi's presentation, SAC members had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. The following is a brief summary of the group discussion, provided in question and answer format.

Q. This is more of a comment than a question. Can you look into paving the shared-use path that goes through Bush Pasture Park so that it is more convenient for bicyclists? Also, please ensure that connections are provided to the path off of both the east and west sides of Winter Street.

A. Thank you for your comment, we will look into including this in the proposed bicycle solutions.

Q. Did school needs come up?

A. We do have a list of schools that were identified as need areas from the public involvement comments. However, these are not shown on the maps because only a few members of the public mentioned school areas and the maps show only those needs that were mentioned repeatedly by the public. However, the list of schools mentioned is available on request and will be included in the SR2S solutions.

Q. I noticed the comments about the stop signs on Saginaw Street. Why are the stop signs there?

A. Early traffic calming efforts on this street resulted in the addition of stop signs. The intent was to deter vehicle cut-through and speeding. However, the stop signs also deter bicyclists. If we pull out the stop signs for bicyclists we will also have install additional traffic calming measures to ensure that vehicles don't increase their usage of Saginaw as well.

Q. In general, are sidewalks needed on both sides of a street, or is a sidewalk on one side of a street considered sufficient?

A. Usually the City aims to have sidewalks on both sides of a street, although there are some situations where a sidewalk on one side is thought to be okay. For example, low traffic volume neighborhood streets often only need a sidewalk on one side of the street, although it is ideal to have them on both sides of the street (if that is what the neighborhood wants).

Q. I see Lancaster Drive mentioned on the public involvement maps, but not reflected on the proposed pedestrian solutions maps in Memo #7; why is that?

A. Multiple driveways on Lancaster Drive create problems for pedestrians and people with disabilities. This project will include taking a look at the Salem Revised Code and City ordinance language to address connections between the pedestrian network and land uses. A result of this effort could include the recommendation of an access management plan for the Lancaster Drive corridor to address these issues.

Q. In terms of development, when a new development comes in and turns their back on the main street, then nobody maintains the sidewalk (such as on Doaks Ferry Road and Glen Creek Road). This is not a maintenance issue, it is a development issue. How will the project address this problem?

A. You are correct that this is a development issue, and it is also an enforcement issue. The City has a lot of issues with this and will work to provide stricter enforcement in key sidewalk repair and replacement areas.

Q. It would be great if the TSP could identify more detail on how we can achieve long term goals (through inducements/benefits, identifying issues before they come up, etc). It feels like we are always addressing problems 5-6 years after the fact. Is there a way the City can be more proactive to help prevent problems from occurring in the first place?

A. Currently, the proposed solutions focus on addressing existing needs on the ground. Many cities use bicycle and/or pedestrian advisory committees to help them review development applications to see how proposed developments would impact bicycle and pedestrian needs. Also, a City Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator could help identify issues before they become a problem.

Q. Can this project do anything about the speed of traffic heading west on Rural Avenue from Commercial Street, or is this outside the scope of this project?

A. The City has a neighborhood traffic calming manual that describes traffic calming treatments and the thresholds needed to qualify. Radar guns can be checked out for up to one week by members of the public to do spot studies. Currently, the threshold is at least 600 cars per day to qualify for a traffic calming treatment.

Public Comment Period

The floor was opened up for public comments. No public comments were made.

Next Steps

The SAC was asked to review and provide comments on Memo #7 by March 25th and to submit their feedback electronically using the comment form provided. It was noted that Memo #7 and the five public involvement maps are available for download off the project website and hard copies are available by request. Julie asked the SAC members to comment on what is being proposed at each intersection in Memo #7 and to keep the diverse array of user needs in mind as they conduct their review.

Julie also noted that there will be four project open houses held during April - two on Tuesday, April 26th and two on Wednesday, April 27th. Sumi noted that the week of April 18th has been identified for the next SAC meeting and asked the SAC members to identify the date that would work best for them on a sheet that was passed around the room. The date of April 19th was selected for the next SAC meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.