

MEMORANDUM

CH2MHILL

Bike and Walk Salem – Needs Identification Public Involvement Summary

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Introduction

To help identify biking and walking needs within the City of Salem, the project team embarked on an extensive public outreach process. From August to December of 2010 the project team conducted eleven outreach meetings (5 small group meetings and six “Listening Stations”), and launched an online and paper questionnaire in both English and Spanish. Additionally, a Google-based interactive mapping tool was developed to allow members of the public to pinpoint specific locations that have a biking or walking need in Salem. Special efforts were made to reach out to project stakeholder groups, including families with school-aged children, the downtown business community, cycling advocacy groups, senior citizens, the youth community, the Hispanic community, the disabled community, and low-income, transit-dependent populations. This memo provides a summary of the feedback received from these stakeholder groups and the general public throughout this public outreach process. The memo summarizes input received through outreach meetings followed by summaries of input received through the questionnaires and online mapping tool. Finally, the memo captures lessons learned to inform future public outreach efforts. The information contained in this memo will be used to help identify bicycle and pedestrian system needs in the City of Salem, including those for school children and for persons with disabilities. Outreach efforts focused on developing the Safe Routes to School Plan, specifically walking audits and parent questionnaires, are summarized separately in Memo # 4, Safe Routes to School Needs Assessment.

Outreach Meetings

Small Group Meetings

Five small group meetings were held from October – December 2010 to gather input from key stakeholder groups about the locations of biking and walking needs in Salem. Key stakeholder groups invited to participate include representatives of the disabled community (ADA), the downtown business community, transit-dependent populations, senior citizens, and the youth community. Table 1 describes the location and time of each small group meeting, and the number of attendees at each meeting.

TABLE 1
Small Group Meetings

Stakeholder Group	Date	Time of Day	Number of Attendees
Disabled Community (ADA)	Wednesday, 10/13/2010	4:15 – 5:45 pm	9
Downtown Business Community	Wednesday, 12/15/2010	8:00 – 9:00 am	6
Low-Income/Transit Dependant	Wednesday, 12/15/2010	10:00 – 11:00 am	3
Senior Citizens	Wednesday, 12/15/2010	1:30 – 2:30 pm	6
Youth Voice	Wednesday, 12/15/2010	3:30 – 4:30 pm	3
Total			24

At each meeting, members of the project team provided an overview of the project purpose and objectives, background, and the project timeline. The project team then asked meeting participants to brainstorm the top 3 walking, bicycling, or access to transit related transportation needs in Salem that regularly face members of their stakeholder group. Participants were encouraged to provide either general feedback or location-specific feedback, according to their preference. Meeting participants shared their top three concerns with the group and a member of the project team took notes on a flip chart. Once all meeting participants shared their comments, group members were asked to vote for the ideas they felt were the most critical by placing a sticky dot next to the idea on the flip chart. In this way, members of the project team were able to quickly identify the top biking and walking issues and priorities for each stakeholder group.



Figure 1: Small Group Meeting at Salem Center 50+

Listening Stations

Listening stations were held at popular locations to help outreach the Bike and Walk Salem project to the public and gather input on biking and walking needs within the City of Salem. From August to November 2010, project team members went to 6 locations throughout the City designed to target input from the cycling community, families with school children, the Hispanic Community, and the youth community. Table 2 describes the location and time of each Listening Station and the population group accessed at each location.

TABLE 2
Listening Station Locations and Audience

Location/Event	Date	Time of Day	Target Audience
Kidical Mass Event	Sunday, 8/29/2010	5 – 7 pm	Cycling Families
Breakfast on Bikes, BTA Event	Friday, 9/24/2010	7 – 10 am	Bicycle Commuters
Joan Kroc Community Center	Saturday, 11/20/2010	9 - 11 am	Families with School Children
M&S Sales	Saturday, 11/20/2010	12 - 2 pm	Hispanic Community
Salem Center	Saturday, 11/20/2010	3 - 4 pm	Youth Community
Lancaster Mall	Saturday, 11/20/2010	5 – 7 pm	Youth Community

In general, Listening Stations can be a good public outreach tool for engaging members of the public that may be less likely to engage in typical public involvement processes. At each Listening Station, members of the public had the opportunity to learn about the project, speak with the project team, and provide on-the-spot input on biking and walking needs in the City of Salem. Members of the project team distributed informational flyers about the project (available in both English and Spanish) to passersby and let people know about the opportunity to take the online questionnaire. Approximately 215 English flyers and 90 Spanish flyers were distributed. Participants were able to provide feedback in a number of ways, including marking maps of Salem’s bicycle and pedestrian systems to show the locations they feel need improvement, or by providing verbal comments to the project team. Additionally, participants at the Listening Stations held in November had the option of taking the Bike and Walk Salem questionnaire at the booth, either online (laptops were provided) or by filling out a paper copy. At M&S Sales, a Spanish speaking consultant and Stakeholder Advisory Committee member Amador Aguilar joined the consultant team and helped to translate the paper questionnaires for members of the Hispanic community.

Summary of Outreach Meeting Feedback

The feedback received at the outreach meetings (small group meetings and listening stations) is summarized below by general comments and infrastructure needs. Infrastructure needs are discussed by geographic area.

Comments that were voted as high priority or that were heard more than once are starred with an asterisk (*). Comments that addressed bicycling and walking needs near school locations are shown in **bold**.

General Comments

Several themes emerged from the comments heard at the outreach meetings. For bicycling, many people commented on the need to increase the extent and connectivity of the bicycle system overall. Specifically, people said that more bike lanes and shared-use paths are needed. Additionally, many people expressed that biking on major arterials in Salem feels unsafe due to high auto travel speeds and that more bicycle facilities on lower traffic volume neighborhood streets would be a better option.

For pedestrians, many people commented that the extent and connectivity of the pedestrian system needs to be increased. The need to add sidewalks, add marked crossings near schools, and improve sidewalk maintenance (so that people with disabilities can use them safely) was heard repeatedly. Additionally, several people expressed that more/improved walking maps are needed in order to better highlight the trails and pedestrian paths that already exist in Salem.

Overwhelmingly, people expressed that there is a strong need in Salem for education programs for bicyclists, pedestrians, and skateboarders on the law, safe behavior, and on how to share the roadways and sidewalks appropriately with other users. Additionally, driver education, awareness, and enforcement programs were also expressed as a strong need to ensure that drivers know how to appropriately share the road with pedestrians, bicyclists, and disabled persons.

Additional general, non-location specific comments are listed below:

Bicyclists and Pedestrians:

- Bikes need traffic-separated paths to reduce conflicts with pedestrians and vehicles.
- Improve bicycle wayfinding signage.
- More bicycle parking and lockers are needed.
- More bicycle-specific signal heads are needed at major intersections.
- More street lights are needed on neighborhood streets.*
- Provide incentives for people to bike, walk, or take transit instead of driving (ex. taxes on studded tires).

People with Disabilities:

- More audible pedestrian signals. Audible pedestrian signals are often needed the most at intersections that are not busy, but where many people cross, because it is more difficult to hear traffic at these locations. More audible signals are needed in places where a pedestrian push-button is needed to be pressed to get a walk signal. Another solution would be to provide a walk signal automatically without need for a pedestrian push-button to be pressed.*
- ADA and pedestrian access to transit stops needs to be improved.*
- Driveways are often not level with the sidewalk, which creates problems for people with disabilities.*
- Longer crossing times at crosswalks are needed. In many places the time allowed for a pedestrian to cross is inadequate for people with disabilities, especially at intersections with long crossing distances.*
- Pedestrian signals are often placed out of reach for wheelchair users.
- Repair defective curb-cuts at intersections and for driveways. Some curb-cuts are narrow, have a steep slope, or leave a gap between the curb cut and the roadway, which are dangerous for wheelchair users.

- The needs of those who are wheelchair users or vision impaired need to be considered during construction (for example, the lack of a striped crosswalk at Commercial Street and Madrona Avenue during construction in fall 2010). Pedestrian crosswalk lines are helpful to those with limited vision. If a pedestrian crossing is relocated providing crosswalk lines would be safer for those with limited vision. The relocation of temporary bus stops needs to allow for a wheelchair lift to extend to the sidewalk.

Transit Dependent Populations:

- Expanded transit hours of operation are needed to increase access for transit dependent populations*
- Reduced transit fares are needed to increase access for low-income populations*
- Safe and free overnight bike parking is particularly needed for low-income populations; many would cycle more except that their bikes are frequently stolen because they have no safe location to lock their bike overnight.
- Free helmet and bicycle education programs would increase riding among low-income populations.

Infrastructure Needs

Downtown Salem

In general, location specific comments in downtown revolved around the theme of needing to make downtown Salem a better multi-modal hub for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, skateboarders, and drivers alike. Specific location-based comments are described below:

- Bike lanes/facilities are needed on:
 - State Street between 12th & 25th.*
 - 12th Street north of State Street where drivers get frustrated with bicyclists taking the traffic lane.*
 - Center Street between 17th & I-5.; note bike lanes exist between 17th and I-5, but a section is temporarily missing due to construction at the State Hospital (24th to Park). Bike lanes will be replaced during the summer of 2011.
 - Summer Street at Marion Street.
- Better bike/ped east-west connections are needed across the Union Street bridge. There have been near misses and crashes at Commercial.*
- North/south bicycling is difficult in downtown (along Cottage, Commercial, High, Church, etc). Angled parking and poor driver visibility are problems on these streets. Winter Street is okay, but it is a bit too far out of direction for many bicycle trip needs. Please consider a cycle-track on High or Church.*
- Better pedestrian amenities are needed, including pocket parks, cross-walks, mid-block crossings, and town square features. *
- Traffic calming is needed downtown.*

- The bus stops at the library and city buildings do not have curbed landing pads, making the ramps onto the bus too steep for wheelchair users. The area between the Peace Plaza and the bus stops have no tactile markings.*
- Diversion of north-south auto-through traffic out of downtown and onto another street (Front?) would help cyclists.*
- Ordinance language is needed to require bike racks and showers in new buildings.*
- Consider two way traffic in downtown to support bicycle commuters.*
- Better bicycle amenities are needed downtown, including bike parking (corrals), bike lockers, and repair shops.
- More sharrows are needed Downtown (like those on Chemeketa)
- Remove/turn the stop signs on Chemeketa to help make it a good cycling alternative to State Street.
- Throughout downtown, there are several places (likely where drivers can take a right turn on red or left turn on red if it is a one-way) where pedestrians are not allowed to cross one leg of the intersection. This treatment puts drivers first and is an inconvenience to pedestrians and walking in the downtown area.
- Replace and/or no longer build curb-ramps that are in the center of a corner; two curb-ramps oriented to each intersection leg would be better. Directional curb-ramps are needed. A single, center curb-ramp places wheeled users directly into the intersection, and they must wheel around to the appropriate crosswalk. A single curb-ramp can be confusing to motorists who cannot tell which way wheeled user wants to cross. Drain grates can also sometimes be placed in front of a curb-ramp. Specific locations are: Willamette University, Saturday Market, and the State Capitol.
- Amtrak is difficult to access for persons with disabilities. A nearby intersection with multiple legs of high-volume traffic is hazardous to cross. The intersection is diagonal, and the north-west orientation of audible signals is hard to decipher. The crossing time is also short.
- Tactile flooring at the new bus terminal is needed.

North Salem (Grant & Highland Neighborhoods/Salem Parkway/Liberty & Commercial)

- More marked crossings near **Grant Elementary** are needed*
- A bike lane is needed on Front Street between Marion Street and River Street (the adjacent traffic is very high speed and the tracks are a hazard for cyclists).*
- Heading south on River Road into downtown, the intersection of the Salem Parkway with Liberty and Commercial is very dangerous for cyclists (even with the bike lanes).*
- A stop sign is needed at Church and Columbia near **Highland School**.

Northeast Salem

- More bike lanes are needed on Market Street.
- Bicycle access needs to be improved to the following locations:

- the Joan Kroc Community Center – (suggest bike lanes on Salem Industrial Drive and a trail to connect Bill Frey Road to Hyacinth Street),
- the **Jane Goodall Environmental School/Waldo Middle School** (suggest bike lanes along Silverton Road and Lansing Avenue).
- Cycling feels dangerous in the following locations:
 - Hawthorne Avenue between Center Street and Sunnyview Road,
 - Cordon Road between Silverton Road and Market Street
- Missing, narrow, and/or incomplete sidewalks are a problem in the following locations:
 - Around the Boys and Girls Club.*
 - Fisher Rd and Brown Road,
 - Silverton Road between Portland Road and I-5, and
 - on the Portland Road rail-road undercrossing, in vicinity of Silverton Road.
- More marked crossings are needed near **Parrish Middle School***
- Mid-block crossings are needed at the following locations:
 - At Chemeketa Community College by Lancaster
 - Portland Road between Pine Street and I-5
- North Salem Veteran Resources has poor access for persons with disabilities.
- D Street @ Savage and D Street @ Park are difficult to cross for wheelchair users. Englewood East and Englewood West public housing is nearby.
- Missing sidewalks around McKay High School are a problem.*
- Cycling on Lancaster is dangerous in general and difficult because of the frequent driveways and frequently turning vehicles. *
- Sidewalks & better street lighting are needed near the Lancaster Mall, specifically on Center Street between Lancaster and Cordon Road.

South Salem

- Bike lanes are needed in the following locations:
 - 25th Street and Airway Drive SE from Mission Street to Turner Road.
 - River Road (bike lanes needed on both sides of the street; the current bike lane has blind curves).
- A bike path is needed along Croisan Creek Rd to connect parks.
- The following locations are dangerous for bicyclists:
 - 25th Street between Mission & State Street
 - The intersection of Liberty Road, Commercial Street, and Fairview Avenue (by the Roth's grocery store). Some parallel, lower traffic streets exist, but they are circuitous and the hills on them are steep.

- Airport Rd south of State Street has a very narrow bridge with little room for bikes and pedestrians.
- Turner Road and Kuebler Boulevard in the vicinity of I-5, because of very narrow overpasses.
- From River Road S. onto Miller Street S. the ramp needs to be wider to accommodate bicycles.
- Sunnyside Road south of Kuebler Boulevard - the sidewalks are intermittent and pedestrians often walk in the bike lanes.
- Safe crossings for persons with disabilities are needed on Commercial between Vista and Madrona.
- The left-turn only lanes near **Leslie Middle School** are hazardous. Left-turn only lanes and right turning vehicles can be hazardous to disabled pedestrians since motorists do not pay attention to people crossing.
- Cycling on Lancaster is dangerous in general and difficult because of the frequent driveways and frequently turning vehicles. *
- Improve wayfinding signs and lighting around Minto-Brown.*
- More bicycle and pedestrian paths/trails needed to and from Minto-Brown Island Park.

West Salem Area

- Union Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge – better connections needed for bicycles and pedestrians from the bridge into both West Salem and into Downtown.
- Restripe Doaks Ferry Road for a bicycle lane.
- Explore the potential for an off-street path connection from Glen Creek Road in West Salem that is in the vicinity of Walker Middle School. There are some existing paths with stairs, but these could be designed differently to accommodate bikes better. Glenview Way or other dead-end/cul-de-sacs could be used to make a connection through Walker Middle School grounds. A new development in the area may also provide a place for a connection.
- Lighting is poor for cyclists south and west of Eola Drive.
- Bicycling in West Salem is a challenge due to the very steep hills. Even for experienced cyclists, the climb up-hill can be extremely challenging and the speeds one reaches going downhill can be very fast. Can some type of ride and bike option with transit be explored? People could use transit within the steep areas of West Salem, but then bike once they are on the east side of the river or downtown. Not sure if there would be enough demand for this type of service.

Additionally, members of the ADA small group meeting were asked to identify the top ten most critical destinations for the ADA population in Salem. The destinations that were commonly mentioned by several attendees are listed first and marked with an asterisk (*).

- Amtrak station*
- Salem Hospital*

- Transit stations*
- Grocery Stores*
- Kroc Center*
- Lancaster Drive*
- Lancaster Mall*
- The 50+ Center*
- Library/City Hall*
- Fitness places (YMCA/YWCA, 24 Hour Fitness)
- Salem Airport
- Red Lion Hotel (Airport Shuttle)
- Medical facilities
- Parks and recreational areas
- Downtown
- Bus mall
- State Fairgrounds
- Armory
- Chemeketa Community College
- Veterans Outpatient Clinic at Mission & 17th
- West Salem Clinic
- Salem Hospital Rehabilitation on Center Street
- Mission Mill Museum
- Market & Hawthorne
- D Street & Hawthorne
- Post Offices
- Vocational Rehabilitation Center
- Wallace Road in West Salem –many business destinations and medical offices
- Capitol/Capitol Mall State Park
- Fisher Road between Silverton and Sunnyview –bus stops are here, but no sidewalks.
- Schools

Questionnaire

Feedback on bicycling and walking in Salem was also collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed with Survey Monkey and was open for 11 weeks from late October 2010 to early January 2011. A paper version and a Spanish version of the questionnaire were also developed. The paper version of the questionnaire was available during the listening station events. The Spanish version of the questionnaire was developed in response to feedback received at the M&S Sales Listening Station event. The Spanish questionnaire was translated with the assistance from the Proyecto de Educación Arte y Cultura Latina (PEACL) and the ENLACE Community Project. The Spanish questionnaire was available both online and in hard copy form. The online Spanish questionnaire was open for four weeks in December. Additionally, PEACL and ENLACE Community Project volunteers helped distribute and collect hard copies of the questionnaire to ensure feedback was also collected from members of the Spanish speaking community without access to the internet.

A total of 812¹ questionnaires were received. In English, 763 were received online and five in paper form. In Spanish, six were received online and 38 in paper form. While the questionnaire responses cannot be considered “scientific” findings, due to reasons of self-selection bias and other factors, the findings can be used as a general indicator of the “pulse of the community” on topics related to bicycle and pedestrian needs in Salem. The feedback received on the questionnaires is summarized below.

¹ Note, as of January 14, 2011, 38 Spanish paper copy survey results have not been included and data are being entered by hand. Memo summary statistics will be updated with Spanish paper copy results for the final version of the Memo.

Summary of Questionnaire Feedback

Demographics

Overall, the majority of questionnaire respondents were female (54 percent) and between the ages of 46-65 (43 percent). Forty eight percent of respondents reported that they have school-age children, while 5 percent of respondents reported that they have a disability that limits their mobility. Notably, 96 percent of respondents reported that they have access to a private vehicle.

Eighty five percent of respondents said that they live in the City of Salem and 80 percent reported that they work or go to school in Salem. Respondents represented all 19 neighborhood associations; however the greatest number of respondents came from the West Salem (17%), South Central (13 percent), Northeast Neighbors (11 percent), South Salem (10 percent), and South Gateway (7 percent) neighborhoods. Overwhelmingly, the majority of respondents reported working or going to school in the Central Area (CAN-DO) neighborhood (41 percent), which is in the Downtown core. This reflects the hub and spoke layout of the City of Salem, with the majority of jobs located in the downtown core, and residents commuting into and out of Downtown from the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Feedback

Overwhelmingly, respondents reported that they want to bike and walk more to get places in Salem. Specifically, 82 percent of respondents reported that they want to bike more and 81 percent of respondents reported that they want to walk more. This is despite the fact that the majority of respondents reported having access to a private vehicle.

Current Travel Behavior

Currently, the majority of respondents are driving alone for commuting trips to work/school (47 percent), biking for recreational trips (27 percent), and driving alone for errand/shopping trips (67 percent). The reported bike/walk mode share for commute trips to work/school was 22 percent for bike trips and 11 percent for walk trips. Table 1 shows the commute to work/school mode share for the top 5 reporting neighborhoods².

TABLE 1
Usual Commute Mode by Neighborhood of Residence

What is your usual way of getting around in Salem to commute to work/school?	West Salem (n=100)	South Central (n=72)	NE Neighbors (n=66)	South Salem (n=57)	South Gateway (n=41)	Central Area (n=30)
Drive alone	60%	39%	18%	56%	63%	10%
Bike	18%	28%	41%	19%	10%	27%
Walk	8%	22%	24%	2%	2%	57%
Car-pool	7%	4%	2%	9%	5%	7%
Bus/Walk	2%	0%	5%	4%	5%	0%
Bus/Bike	1%	0%	2%	2%	2%	0%

² Neighborhood specific response are based on the 763 online questionnaire responses and do not include paper copy or Spanish questionnaire results.

Other	4%	7%	9%	9%	12%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1 shows that in four of the top six reporting neighborhoods, driving alone was reported as the most common mode used to access work/school. Biking was the most common mode reported in the Northeast Neighbors Neighborhood Association and walking was the most common mode reported in the and Central Area (downtown core) Neighborhood Association.

On average, the majority of respondents reported walking as their main mode of transportation a few days a week (26 percent) and using a bicycle as their main mode of transportation never (32 percent). However, 18 percent of respondents reported walking as their main mode of transportation every day and 17 percent reported biking as their main mode of transportation every day. Regarding the usefulness of the current Bicycle Map, 49 percent of respondents reported that it is “somewhat useful”, 21 percent said it is “very useful”, and 22 percent said they did not know.

When asked why they bike in Salem, the majority of respondents reported that they bike for enjoyment/recreation (79 percent) and to get exercise (78 percent). When asked why they walk in Salem, the majority of respondents reported that they walk to get exercise (80 percent) and they walk for enjoyment/recreation (75 percent). Approximately 50 percent of respondents indicated that they bike and walk in Salem due to environmental concerns, and 10 percent said they bike and walk because other modes are too expensive.

Travel Preferences

The majority of respondents (35 percent) indicated that they prefer to ride a bicycle on lower traffic volume streets when possible (i.e. signed bicycle routes and local streets). Another 25 percent of respondents said they prefer to ride a bicycle on routes *completely* separated from cars when possible (i.e. paths or trails). In comparison, 14 percent of respondents said they don’t mind riding a bicycle in a bike lane on streets with heavy car traffic. Bicycle facility preferences are broken down by the top 5 reporting neighborhoods in Table 2³.

TABLE 2
Bicycle Facility Preference by Neighborhood of Residence

Which Statement Below <i>Best</i> Describes You?	West Salem (n=100)	South Central (n=72)	NE Neighbors (n=66)	South Salem (n=57)	South Gateway (n=41)	Central Area (n=30)
I don't mind riding a bicycle in a bike lane on streets with heavy car traffic	17%	13%	9%	18%	15%	13%
I don't mind riding a bicycle on a street with heavy car traffic	5%	10%	3%	2%	7%	7%

³ Neighborhood specific response are based on the 763 online questionnaire responses and do not include paper copy or Spanish questionnaire results.

I prefer to ride a bicycle on lower traffic volume streets when possible (e.g. signed bicycle routes, local streets)	23%	33%	62%	44%	37%	40%
I prefer to ride a bicycle on routes completely separated from cars when possible (e.g. paths or trails)	23%	31%	14%	23%	17%	10%
I will only ride my bicycle on routes completely separated from cars (e.g. paths or trails)	9%	3%	5%	4%	7%	0%
I have never tried riding a bicycle in Salem	12%	7%	3%	4%	10%	10%
I would never ride a bicycle in Salem	3%	1%	3%	4%	5%	7%
Riding a bicycle is not an option for me because: (please specify)	8%	3%	2%	4%	2%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The findings in Table 2 show that bicycle facility preference type does not seem to vary much by neighborhood of residence. Interestingly, the Northeast Neighbors neighborhood, where the majority of respondents reported that they commute to work/school by bicycle expressed the strongest preference (percentage-wise) for lower-traffic volume bikeways.

For pedestrians, the majority of respondents (41 percent) indicated that they prefer to walk⁴ along streets that have lower traffic volumes and sidewalks, when possible. The next highest majority (37 percent) said that they don't mind walking along streets with heavy traffic *if* sidewalks are present. Only 4 percent of respondents said they don't mind walking along streets with heavy traffic and no sidewalks. Pedestrian facility preferences are broken down by the top 5 reporting neighborhoods in Table 3⁵.

⁴ Note that for the purposes of this question, walking was defined to include using a mobility device

⁵ Neighborhood specific response are based on the 763 online questionnaire responses and do not include paper copy or Spanish questionnaire results.

TABLE 3
Pedestrian Facility Preference by Neighborhood of Residence

Which Statement Below <i>Best</i> Describes You?	West Salem (n=100)	South Central (n=72)	NE Neighbors (n=66)	South Salem (n=57)	South Gateway (n=41)	Central Area (n=30)
I don't mind walking along streets with heavy traffic and no sidewalks	3%	3%	2%	4%	7%	7%
I don't mind walking along streets with heavy traffic if sidewalks are present	49%	33%	32%	39%	37%	47%
I prefer to walk along streets that have lower traffic volumes and sidewalks, when possible	29%	49%	58%	42%	39%	37%
I prefer to walk on routes completely separated from cars (e.g. paths or trails)	10%	13%	6%	7%	10%	7%
I only walk between my car and my destination	3%	0%	2%	2%	2%	0%
I only walk when I have no other option	1%	3%	2%	5%	2%	3%
Other	5%	0%	0%	2%	2%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The findings in Table 3 show that pedestrian facility preferences do not vary substantially by neighborhood of residence. However, Central Area (downtown) residents and West Salem residents both show an increased tolerance for walking along higher traffic volume roadways *if* sidewalks are present, whereas their neighbors in the South Central, Northeast Neighbors, South Salem, and South Gateway neighborhoods all prefer to walk along roadways that are both low traffic volume and have sidewalks.

Obstacles to Biking in Salem

When asked what prevents them from bicycling more in Salem, the majority of respondents indicated that inadequate/missing bike lanes or off-street paths (40 percent) and the number of cars/auto travel speeds (40 percent) are both significant obstacles. Weather conditions were noted as a moderate obstacle (46 percent), as was a lack of bike parking (36 percent). Access to a working bicycle and concerns regarding personal safety from crime were both considered not to be obstacles by the majority of respondents (53 percent and 54 percent, respectively). The significant and moderate obstacles to biking more in Salem are discussed below, broken down by the top 5 reporting neighborhoods.

West Salem: For residents of the West Salem Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their biking. Moderate obstacles to biking more for the residents of West Salem included weather (47 percent),

inadequate/missing bike lanes or off-street paths (39 percent), too many cars/cars drive too fast (36 percent), steep terrain (36 percent), and traveling with too much stuff (33 percent). All other categories asked about⁶ were not noted as obstacles by West Salem residents.

South Central: For residents of the South Central Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their biking. Moderate obstacles to biking more for the residents of the South Central Neighborhood included weather (55 percent), too many cars/cars drive too fast (46 percent), and inadequate/missing bike lanes or off-street paths (43 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by South Central residents.

Northeast Neighbors: For residents of the Northeast Neighbors Neighborhood, respondents cited inadequate/missing bike lanes or off-street paths as a significant obstacle to biking more (39 percent). Moderate obstacles to biking more for the residents of the Northeast Neighbors Neighborhood included weather (48 percent), a lack of bike parking (45 percent), too many cars/cars drive too fast (41 percent), poor bikeway maintenance (40 percent and inadequate or missing bike lanes or off-street paths (39 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by Northeast Neighbors residents.

South Gateway: For residents of the South Gateway Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their biking. Moderate obstacles to biking more for the residents of the South Gateway Neighborhood included the time it takes to bike compared to other modes (48 percent), weather (48 percent), steep terrain (45 percent), inadequate/missing bike lanes or off-street paths (44 percent), too many cars/cars drive too fast (43 percent), and traveling with too much stuff (39 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by South Gateway residents.

South Salem: For residents of the South Salem Neighborhood, respondents cited inadequate/missing bike lanes or off-street paths as both a significant obstacle to biking more (41 percent) and a moderate obstacle to biking more (41 percent). Additional moderate obstacles to biking more for the residents of the South Salem Neighborhood included the weather (45 percent), and too many cars/cars drive too fast (44 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by South Salem residents.

Central Area: For residents of the Central Area Neighborhood (downtown Salem), the significant obstacles to biking more included "too many cars/cars drive too fast" (56 percent) and inadequate/missing bike lanes or off-street paths (44 percent). Moderate obstacles to biking more for these residents included weather (52 percent), lack of bike parking (48 percent), and

⁶ Option choices included: destinations are too far away for me to feel comfortable biking; inadequate or missing bike lanes or off-street paths; bikeway maintenance is poor; I'm concerned for my personal security (e.g. from crime); I have a physical disability that prevents me from biking; I don't know which routes to take; lack of bike parking; obstacles block my way (e.g. freeways, trails end, path blocked); too many cars/cars drive too fast; there are too many hills (terrain is too steep); I don't have access to a working bicycle; I don't enjoy biking; lack of lockers, showers, or dressing rooms at destinations; insufficient lighting; biking takes too much time compared to other options; I travel with children; I travel with too much stuff; weather (too hot, too rainy, too cold); other.

traveling with too much stuff (41 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles for the Central Area neighborhood residents.

Obstacles to Walking in Salem

When asked what prevents them from walking more in Salem, the majority of respondents indicated that the distance to their destination is a significant obstacle (25 percent), as well as inadequate or missing sidewalks/trails (24 percent). Weather conditions were noted as a moderate obstacle (44 percent), as was the time it takes to walk compared to other travel options (43 percent). Concerns regarding personal safety from crime and insufficient lighting were both considered not to be obstacles by the majority of respondents (50 percent and 44 percent, respectively). The significant and moderate obstacles to walking more in Salem are discussed below, broken down by the top 5 reporting neighborhoods.

West Salem: For residents of the West Salem Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their walking. Moderate obstacles to walking more for the residents of West Salem included weather (57 percent), destination being too far to walk (44 percent), too many cars/cars drive too fast (39 percent), walking taking too much time compared to other options (38 percent), traveling with too much stuff (38 percent), and inadequate or missing sidewalks or trails (35 percent). All other categories asked about⁷ were not noted as obstacles by West Salem residents.

South Central: For residents of the South Central Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their walking. Moderate obstacles to walking more for the residents of the South Central Neighborhood included walking taking too much time compared to other options (47 percent), destinations being too far away to walk (41 percent), and inadequate or missing sidewalks or trails (41 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by South Central residents.

Northeast Neighbors: For residents of the Northeast Neighbors Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their walking. Moderate obstacles to walking more for the residents of the Northeast Neighbors Neighborhood included inadequate or missing sidewalks or trails (47 percent), walking taking too much time compared to other options (47 percent), and destinations being too far away to walk (36 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by Northeast Neighbors residents.

South Gateway: For residents of the South Gateway Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their walking. Moderate obstacles to walking more for the residents of the South Gateway Neighborhood included weather (55 percent), destinations being too far away to walk (43

⁷ Option choices included: destinations are too far away for me to feel comfortable walking; inadequate or missing sidewalks or trails; sidewalk/trail maintenance is poor; wide roads that are difficult to cross; I am concerned for my personal security (e.g. from crime); poor accommodations for those with disabilities or in a wheelchair; I don't know which routes to take; too many cars/cars drive too fast; insufficient lighting; walking takes too much time compared to other options; I travel with small children; I travel with too much stuff; weather (e.g. it is too hot, too rainy, too cold); other.

percent), walking taking too much time compared to other options (39 percent), inadequate or missing sidewalks or trails (39 percent), and wide roads that are difficult to cross (38 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by South Gateway residents.

South Salem: For residents of the South Salem Neighborhood, the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their walking. Moderate obstacles to walking more for the residents of the South Gateway Neighborhood included destination being too far away to walk (53 percent), walking taking too much time compared to other options (53 percent), weather (53 percent), inadequate or missing sidewalks or trails (48 percent), too many cars/cars drive too fast (44 percent), and wide roads that are difficult to cross (42 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles by South Salem residents.

Central Area: For residents of the Central Area Neighborhood (downtown Salem) the majority of respondents didn't cite any of the offered categories as significant obstacles to increasing their walking. Moderate obstacles to walking more for the residents of the Central Area Neighborhood included weather (64 percent), insufficient lighting (54 percent), walking taking too much time compared to other options (48 percent), destinations being too far away to walk (48 percent), and wide roads that are difficult to cross (37 percent). All other categories asked about were not noted as obstacles for the Central Area neighborhood residents.

Location Specific Feedback

Bicycling

When asked if they would like to tell us about any specific locations in Salem that are difficult for bicyclists, 56 percent of respondents said yes and provided one or more location-specific comments. In total, 540 bicycle location-specific comments were provided. A complete list of comments is available upon request. The majority of bicycle location-specific comments were noted to be problematic due to needed bikeways (26 percent) and conflicts with other vehicles (25 percent).

Pedestrian

When asked if they would like to tell us about any specific locations in Salem that are difficult for pedestrians, 30 percent of respondents said yes and provided one or more location-specific comments. In total, 302 pedestrian location-specific comments were provided. A list of comments is available upon request. The majority of pedestrian location-specific comments were noted to be problems due to conflicts with other vehicles (21 percent), needed crossing improvements (19 percent), and sidewalk gaps (14 percent). A large portion of respondents also noted that missing sidewalks are a problem in the "other" category.

People with Disabilities

When asked if they would like to tell us about any specific locations in Salem that are difficult for people with disabilities, 5 percent of respondents said yes and

provided one or more location-specific comments. In total, 34 location-specific comments were provided regarding locations that are difficult for people with disabilities. A complete list of comments is available upon request. The majority of the

location-specific comments were noted to be problems due to difficult crossings (19 percent) and narrow sidewalks (16 percent).

Additionally, many respondents noted that sidewalk maintenance is an issue in the “other” category.

Safe Routes to School

When asked if they would like to tell us about any specific locations in Salem that are difficult for school children who walk or bike to school, 19 percent of respondents said yes and provided one or more location-specific comments. In total, 142 location-specific comments were provided regarding locations that are difficult for school children who walk or bike to school. A complete list of comments is available upon request. The majority of the location-specific comments were noted to be problems due to needed sidewalks (24 percent) and needed crossing improvements (17 percent). Additionally, many respondents noted that driver behavior, such as speeding and not paying attention to pedestrians near schools is a common problem. Several people commented on the areas surrounding Chapman Hill Elementary, Swegle Elementary, Walker Middle School, and Morningside School.

“Hot Spot” Areas

Based on the location-specific comments received in the questionnaire, certain areas, or “hot spots”, were repeated several times by bicyclists, pedestrians, people with disabilities, and parents of school-aged children alike. These areas are described below:

Lancaster Drive: Lancaster Drive, which functions as a parallel route to I-5, received multiple comments regarding the difficulties experienced by pedestrians and cyclists all along this corridor. Parents of school aged children commented on Lancaster serving as a barrier for children walking and biking to Swegle Elementary School. People with disabilities commented on the difficulties accessing the Lancaster Mall and other shopping destinations in the corridor due to narrow sidewalks, difficult crossings, and poor sidewalk maintenance. Pedestrians and bicyclists commented on the dangerous feel the high traffic volumes and speeds give the corridor, and how the wide cross-section and spread out shopping destinations are designed to serve cars rather than people.

Commercial and Liberty: From the intersection of Commercial and Liberty and the Salem Parkway in North Salem, to the “triangle” area in South Salem where Commercial and Liberty intersect with Fairview Avenue, Commercial and Liberty Streets were cited as problematic several times by respondents. Several bicyclists noted that traveling on Commercial/Liberty is dangerous during rush hour traffic due to high auto speeds and turning vehicles, and that there are no easy side street alternatives. Also noted was that large sections of Liberty are missing bike lanes (Liberty Road S from Commercial Street to Browning Avenue). Pedestrians noted that the narrow sidewalks and sidewalk maintenance (vegetation overgrowth) are issues on Liberty Road from Commercial Street to Browning Ave. Crosswalks were noted as being needed on Commercial and Liberty south of Mission (Kearney and Bush). Several people with disabilities cited the Liberty and Vista intersection as a difficult place to cross, with poor visibility and narrow sidewalks. Parents of school aged children noted that fast auto speeds on Liberty keep them from taking their children downtown and that Liberty Road between

Commercial Street and Madrona Avenue has a narrow sidewalk. These are just a sample of some of the site-specific comments made about these streets.

Downtown Core/State Street: Many questionnaire respondents cited “anywhere downtown” as problematic for bicyclists and pedestrians. Bicyclists noted the lack of marked bike lanes, heavy traffic, and numerous cross streets as obstacles downtown. Many pedestrians noted that even though it is against the law downtown, many bikes still ride on the sidewalk, which is hazardous for pedestrians and people with disabilities. One way streets were also noted as challenging because drivers will often forget to look both ways for crossing bicyclists and pedestrians. Many streets downtown were cited with specific problems, however, State Street stood out as being particularly problematic. Bicyclists noted that entering and exiting downtown on State Street is difficult due to discontinuous bike lanes, widening and narrowing lane widths, and debris in the bicycle lanes (east of downtown). Difficult crossings were called out at Center Street and 14th Street, State Street and 14th Street, and State Street and Winter Street. Additionally, the sidewalk on State Street between 12th and 25th Streets was noted as cracked, difficult to traverse in a wheelchair, narrow, and too close to high speed traffic.

Salem Parkway / River Road: The Salem Parkway/River Road area was also cited numerous times by questionnaire respondents. Bicyclists noted that crossing the Parkway northbound is difficult due to bike lanes that end suddenly (Liberty Street) and narrow bike lanes (Cherry Avenue). Cyclists also noted that the Salem Parkway is an obstacle for southbound bike traffic as well, commenting that merging from the Salem Parkway southbound onto Commercial Street is very dangerous. Pedestrians and people with disabilities noted that the intersection of Broadway and the Salem Parkway is a dangerous and difficult crossing, but is necessary to access the Fred Meyers. Pedestrians also noted that crossing River Road to access River Road Park feels dangerous and unsafe.

Union Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge: The recently constructed Union Street Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge has attracted numerous bicyclists and pedestrians to the bridge on a daily basis. However, pedestrian and bicycle crossings on both the east and west side of the bridge were cited as dangerous and difficult. Several people commented that an improved bicycle and pedestrian connection is needed at the bridge and Wallace Road. Connections into the Edgewater District as well as to Wallace Road (both north and southbound) were requested. Additionally, crossing improvements on Union and Front Streets, Union and Commercial Streets, and Union and Liberty Streets were also requested by numerous respondents. While numerous respondents noted this area as a need, bicyclists were particularly vocal because improvements at this location are seen as a critical link for improving bicycle commute access between West Salem and downtown.

Interactive Comment Map

The interactive Google input map was available to the general public between October 20, 2010 and January 2, 2011. During that time the link to the map was posted to the City of Salem’s website and emailed to various email distribution lists with a list of instructions for posting comments. Approximately 160 comments were received on the map (shown in the screen shot

in Figure 2). The page was viewed over 2,500 times, although these were not unique individuals but represent multiple visits to the site by the same people. Of the 160 comments received through December 20, 2010 the overall themes are noted below. A complete list of the comments are available upon request and can be seen online⁸.

Missing Connections

Overall issues noted on the map included missing connections to parks and other destinations or lack of signage to inform the public about the existing connections, including to the Kroc Center, River Road Park, Battle Creek Golf Course, Nelson Park, Fairmont Park, Minto-Brown Island Park, Bush Park, and the Public Library. Respondents listed improving signage of existing connections, installing better or new sidewalks and bike lanes, or altering bike lanes to provide easy access to the destination.

Missing connections or possible improvements to existing connections were called out for areas in Salem, including through the Pioneer Cemetery, from Winter Street to Pringle Hall and Park, from Union Street to 12th Street, and from Bliler Ave NE to Broadway Street NE. An improvement to the connection to the Pringle community via a gate at Corina Drive was requested, as was a possible crossing of 17th Street NE on Nebraska to the Englewood Elementary School, to avoid busy crossings at D and Market streets.

⁸ <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&ll=44.962004,-123.025074&spn=0.082959,0.153637&z=13&msid=117831497948330633269.000491f6e270de59c41ae>

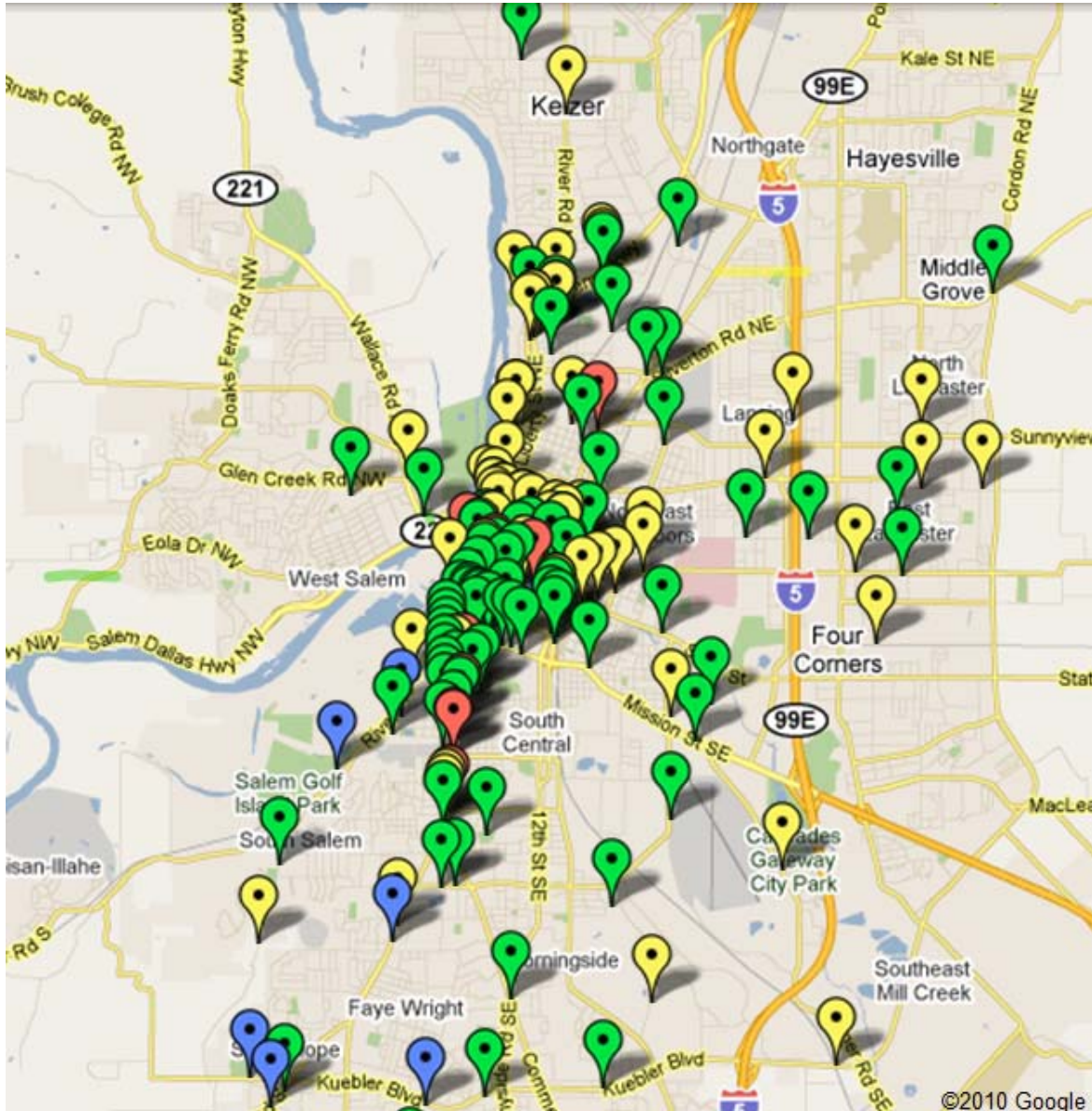


Figure 2: Interactive Salem Pedestrian and Bicycle Google Map Tool

Rails

Railroads were noted as concerns; particularly with the railroad lines embedded in Front Street which causes bike riders to make sharp turns to avoid being stuck in the tracks. This was a particular concern at railroad crossing locations that are curved (such as Front and Norway streets). Interest in rails to trails conversion was expressed.

Infrastructure Improvements and Needs

Several people reported a need for more bike lanes (State Street, South River Road, Reed Road, Skyline Road, 25th Street, Turner Road, Brown Road, and Marion Street). Better maintained or

new sidewalks were suggested at South River Road, Liberty Street, through Ollinger Pool Park, and along Airport Road (particularly over the bridge). Painted sharrows, rumble stripes, and barriers were suggested as a reminder to cars to stay out of the bike area. However, curb extensions were noted as causing problems to bikers due to a reduction of the bike lane (when narrowing the road in general).

Reducing speed limits on roadways used heavily by pedestrians and bicyclists, including Liberty Street, Reed Road, River Road, and Skyline Road, was recommended, particularly around schools and those streets that have signs for “residential traffic only”. However, some speed bumps that have been installed have a steep pitch which causes dismounts for bicyclists.

Respondents recommended installing yield or stop signs that facilitate bike and pedestrian movements on bike boulevards (in the direction of travel, to minimize bike stops) and at intersections that are dangerous to cross. A cross walk was suggested at Sunnyside Road and Creekside, at Skyline Road and Summercrest, and at Skyline Road and Croisan Scenic Way.

Connections to parking were noted as dangerous in general and there was a request for more covered bike parking in the downtown area. There were also several intersection crossings that were not activated by bikes but required riders to use the pedestrian crossing button. Many intersections did not provide any pedestrian or bike activated signal.

Specific Area Problems

Some areas were called out as particular areas of concern.

- The timing of the traffic lights along **Chemeketa** is too quick for average bicycle speeds and some of the stop signs could be converted from 4-way stops to 2-way stops to help bicyclists minimize stops. Congestion and maintenance issues were also listed as concerns.
- **West Salem** issues were limited, but concentrated on connections over Wallace Road, particularly from the new pedestrian bridge. Dual turn lanes and widening Wallace Road were a concern for bikers and pedestrians, particularly for students walking to Walker Middle School from Glen Creek.
- Along **Broadway**, there were concerns about the street’s compatibility with the neighborhood and serving the local traffic needs by reducing the road size. Additionally, an existing bike lane on the road abruptly ends and the road narrows, making it difficult for bicyclists.
- I-5 and east of I-5 were listed as areas of concern. Hawthorne Road was noted as being particularly dangerous, with loose gravel and little space for bikes. There is also a dislike of bikes by the larger community. There are few or inadequate biking or walking facilities east of I-5, despite high student traffic to Swegle Elementary and McKay High schools.

There were five areas that were noted as “hot spot” areas for problems in Salem. These included the Salem Parkway, Portland/Fairground/Silverton roads, Kuebler, Commercial and Liberty South of downtown and in downtown, and Mission Street.

Salem Parkway

While there is a bike lane along the parkway, it strands riders on the right of the road without adequate means to cross to the left to travel north. This also puts bikes in the way of cars turning right. When traveling south, the bike lane ends with the cyclist trapped between two lanes of traffic, which is very dangerous. There are opportunities to create a road diet on Broadway, which would make an alternate north-south route between Keizer and Salem that was friendly to bikes and pedestrians. The issue of curb bulb outs impeding the right of way for bike lanes was noted along the parkway; often leaving the bike lane with less than 2 feet.

Portland/Fairground/Silverton roads

There is a problem in this area with traffic signals that don't detect bikes and few crosswalk locations that provide the opportunity to use pedestrian facilities. A colored bike lane was suggested to assist cars to know where the bike lanes are located. There was a desire for bike lanes along these three streets and possibly creating a bike lane separated from car lanes turning right (particularly at Silverton and Cordon roads).

Kuebler Boulevard

There were maintenance concerns with debris in the roadway and safety for crossing bridges (with the connection from bridge to roadway). Additionally, this road was listed as having a high speed, well above the posted limit which also corresponds with drivers crossing into the bike lanes. A barrier between the bike and car lanes was suggested if the speeds for cars are not reduced. There is a need for sidewalks along Kuebler, particularly for children walking to school. There are also a number of pedestrians that cross at Skyline to get to Sprague school, despite the high car speed. Also a speed sign is posted on a hill which causes sight problems right before school crosswalks and residential/commercial facilities.

Commercial and Liberty - south of downtown

Many people stated the need for sidewalks along these streets, since this is such a high speed roadway with many destinations located along these roads. The Y shaped intersections (such as Commercial and Sunnyside) cause problems for bicyclists, since cars are often unaware of bikes and make it difficult for bikers to cross. There are also instances of cars turning directly into bikes at intersections along these two roads. Suggestions included barriers between the lanes or not allowing cars to turn right. An alternate route for bikes was listed as High Street to Rural Avenue, then a connection to Commercial. The respondent noted that Rural would need to be marked with sharrows to remind cars to share the road (since Rural Avenue narrows at the intersection with Commercial). Signal timing was listed as a problem for bikes and pedestrians, since there were long delays in waiting. Additionally, there were maintenance issues with the roadway and uneven storm drains that cause problems for bicyclists and often forces them onto the sidewalks.

Commercial and Liberty – downtown

The alternative bike routes to avoid Commercial and Liberty are often in poor condition and the stop signs require bikes to stop every block. There are also continued problems with cars turning right (as mentioned in the southern section of these roads). Driveway entrances also cause potential crash points for bikers as cars enter a business without looking for bikes. Again, curb extensions were listed as an impediment to bikers, since they narrow the bike lane. There are also concerns with the visibility of the bike lanes, as paint has worn off. The double turn at the convention center causes problems for pedestrians, as drivers are distracted by the turn. There is a need to improve the crossing of Commercial Street to access the Union Street bridge.

Mission Street

There are several areas that force bikes close to cars, since there are few curb cuts allowing bikes to access the bike path in the Bush Park. Another common concern was the lack of bike lanes and bike activated signals. Many bikes are forced onto the sidewalk, which is poorly maintained and does not provide aligned curb cuts. There is also a difficult transition for bicyclists in the bike lane when crossing 25th, which causes riders to cross traffic that doesn't stop or slow. There is a need for safety measures at this area, particularly signage to alert cars to the bikes in the crossing lane.

Lessons Learned

Generally outreach efforts provided informative results that helped define needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, disabled persons, and children walking and bicycling and will inform the overall planning process. Outreach meetings allowed the team to talk in person with approximately fifty people and 812 responses were received to the online and paper questionnaires. This level of participation is considered excellent. This section focuses briefly on key success factors and primarily on specific aspects that should be undertaken differently if the opportunity came up again.

Online and Paper Questionnaire

The majority of responses were received immediately following the questionnaire launch when press-releases were sent and when emails were sent to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Internet searches for references to the online questionnaire showed that people posted the link on their blogs. People forwarded the email to distribution lists as well. Following the initial launch of the questionnaire, subsequent online references to the questionnaire and forwarded emails to distribution lists were correlated with the highest response rates..

Some respondents reported that pedestrian related questions should precede bicycle related questions since all people are pedestrians at some point and are not necessarily bicyclists. Some respondents seemed to report missing sidewalk conditions as "other" instead of "sidewalk gap" – the project team concluded that "sidewalk gap" may have not been as easily understood as "no sidewalk" or "missing sidewalk," which were terms respondents used when specifying why they chose "other."

An advocate for the blind offered to review the online questionnaire for legibility using a computer-based reader for the blind. His input was used to revise the questionnaire, namely to avoid the use of pull-down menus, the lines of which are difficult for a computer-based reader to read. Answers with “radial button” responses, spaced apart from one another were easier to read.

Through outreach within the Hispanic community, the project team learned that short-cut key strokes (using the “ALT” key) could be used to type Spanish specific characters and punctuation. The team also learned that “Survey Monkey,” the questionnaire online tool used, also supported Spanish text. Consequently, the project team, with help from Proyecto de Educación Arte y Cultura Latina (PEACL), developed Spanish online and paper questionnaires. In the future, Spanish questionnaires would be developed concurrently with English questionnaires, however the project team was nonetheless appreciative of the ability to develop the Spanish questionnaires.

Outreach Meetings

Outreach meetings had many unanticipated and very helpful results, such as learning how to develop a Spanish questionnaire and that blind computer users have computer-based readers that help them read documents.

For small group meetings, generally asking others to invite on our behalf was more effective than a project team member, unknown to the invitee, relaying the invitation. Generally, inviting participants two-to-three weeks in advance yielded a higher level of participation. Outreach to partner agencies helped define the list of invitees. For example, Salem Keizer Mass Transit District provided a list of disabled person advocates and Marion County provided a list of youth advocates.

For blind participants, the project team provided all meeting materials in advance in Word format so that participants could use their computer-based readers to review the materials before the meeting. For disabled individuals, the project team learned that larger meeting spaces may be needed to allow for people with mobility aids to bring additional people or guide animals. The project team also learned to ensure that meeting times are coordinated with transit schedules to accommodate those who primarily rely on transit.

During “Listening Stations,” some people stopped to provide input directly. The project team also distributed flyers that referenced the online questionnaire. Following the series of “Listening Stations” the project team hoped to see a spike in questionnaire responses; however, the increase in questionnaire responses was modest, which revealed that general outreach was not effective in motivating people to take an online questionnaire. Nonetheless, direct input to the project team via maps and verbal comments resulted in helpful input.

Title VI Populations

As a recipient of Federal financial assistance, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) instituted a Title VI Program to address nondiscrimination laws that impact transportation investment decision making. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, related statutes and policies

prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, and disability in the Agency's programs, activities and services. The purpose of the Title VI and related statutes and policies is to ensure that public funds are not spent in a way that encourages, subsidizes or results in discrimination.

ODOT cannot fully meet community needs without the active participation of well-informed, empowered individuals, community groups, and other nongovernmental organizations such as businesses and academic institutions. These individuals and groups advance the letter, spirit, and intent of Title VI and Environmental Justice in transportation when they participate in public involvement activities (meetings, hearings, advisory groups, and task forces) to help ODOT and local agencies understand community needs, perceptions, and goals.

To fulfill Title VI Program requirements and to have a planning process well informed by the broad public, small group meetings were used to target typically under-represented populations, such as the disabled, transit dependent or low-income populations, and the Hispanic community. Listening stations were held during community events or at community facilities to reach a broad representation from organized community groups, nongovernmental organizations, and the broader public. Flyers, online and paper questionnaires were distributed in Spanish and the online questionnaire was reviewed in advance of public distribution by a blind individual who provided feedback on the legibility of the questionnaire using a computer-based reader. These efforts have helped ensure broad public participation, including from Title VI populations.

Next Steps

Needs identified through the outreach efforts will help inform the development of conceptual project solutions in addition to technical analysis. Needs identified through the outreach process will also be presented during four geographically dispersed open houses in late January for further input and validation by the public.