State Street Corridor Plan

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #3 Summary Notes

Date: June 28, 2017
Time: 4 - 6 p.m.
Location: Center 50+, Classrooms A and B

ATTENDEES

Stakeholder Advisory Committee
Mayor Chuck Bennett, Chair
Tom Andersen, Councilor
David Fridenmaker
Cara Kaser, Councilor
Gary Obery
Jeff Leach
Jim Bauer
Nancy McDaniel
Rich Fry

Consultant Team:
Bridget Wieghart, WSP
Marcy McInelly, Urbswork
Hermanus Steyn, Kittleson and Associates

Staff:
Eunice Kim, City of Salem Community Development Department
Lisa Anderson-Ogilvie, City of Salem Community Development Department
Kevin Hottman, City of Salem Public Works Department
Julie Warncke, City of Salem Public Works Department
Naomi Zwerdling, Oregon Department of Transportation

Public
Joan Lloyd, NEN chair

MEETING OVERVIEW

Eunice Kim began the meeting by welcoming everyone to the third Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting for the State Street Corridor Plan project. She gave a brief overview of the project's purpose, goals, and background. The project aims to revitalize State Street from 12th to 25th street into a vibrant, attractive, walkable mixed-use corridor by recommending land use and transportation improvements.

Eunice then provided an overview of the work that has been occurring since the SAC met last year. She focused on the street design work, explaining that the consultant team, working with the City, analyzed the Road Diet alternative – converting State Street into two travel lanes in each direction with a center-turn lane – and found that it could work if roughly a third of the projected traffic in the future diverted to other streets. She stated that the City was not confident this amount of diversion would happen, so State Street under a road diet could experience significant congestion. The City therefore applied for and received additional State funding to further design and analyze two additional street designs.

Bridget Wieghart then presented the three street design alternatives for the State Street corridor and how they performed against the project's goals and objectives. The alternatives are: Alternative 1 – Improved Four Lane, which retains four travel lanes and widens the sidewalk; Alternative 2 – Road Diet, which reconfigures the street into two travel lanes and a center-turn lane and provides bike lanes and wider sidewalks; and Alternative 3 – Hybrid, which combines the Road Diet alternative west of 17th Street with the Improved Four Lane alternative east of 17th Street. Bridget stated that the alternatives have been revised since they were presented last year. Specifically, they each extend beyond the current right-of-way to provide improved pedestrian facilities. The Road Diet and Hybrid alternatives also include bike lanes in line with City policy.

Bridget's presentation gave a high level overview of the material in the technical memorandum *Tier 2 Evaluation of the Street Design Alternatives*, which can be found online on the project website under "Project documents": www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/state-street-corridor-plan-to-revitalize-the-street.aspx.

After Bridget's presentation, Eunice stated that City staff's recommendation for a street design alternative was the Hybrid alternative. She explained that the Hybrid provides improved pedestrian facilities, wider sidewalks, throughout the corridor, and pedestrian safety was clearly a priority based on public input. The alternative also provides bike lanes that would at least connect to the bike lanes on 17th street as well as the bike routes on Chemeketa and Mill streets via 14th Street. In addition, the Hybrid aligns well with the economic analysis that found greater redevelopment potential on the west end of State Street, responds moderately well to public input, and could be phased in implementation. Eunice stated that the Hybrid alternative was essentially a compromise between the Road Diet and Improved Four Lane alternatives.

Marcy then explained the preferred land use alternative, which includes two proposed new zones, Mixed-Use 1 (MU1) and Mixed-Use 2 (MU2). MU1 is a higher-density zone that promotes mixed-use development with the opportunity to provide ground-floor retail, and MU2 is a median-density zone that encourages mixed-use and multifamily development. MU1 is generally proposed to be located along State Street between 12th and 17th street, and MU2 is proposed to be located between 17th and 25th street. The two zones allow the same uses, but MU1 has a maximum height of 65 feet, while MU2 has a maximum height of 50 feet. Both zones include pedestrian-oriented development standards.

Marcy's presentation gave a high level overview of the material in the technical memorandum *Preferred Land Use Option and Tier 2 Evaluation,* which can be found online on the project website under "Project documents."

During the discussion, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee members asked questions and provided input. Their comments and questions are summarized below. Related comments or questions and related answers have been grouped together. At the end of the meeting, Eunice thanked everyone for coming and mentioned that there will be a public meeting on Tuesday, July 25 at the Court Street Christian Church. It will be in the evening, but the exact time has not yet been determined.

STREET DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

- Willamette University sees north-south pedestrian and bicycle connectivity as part of the success of the project. Students often go to Safeway north of State Street, for example. Do any of the alternatives provide for more pedestrian-friendly north-south activity?
    - The alternatives do not generally focus on north-south improvements, but the crossing distance for pedestrians on State Street would be less in the Road Diet and Hybrid alternatives. Those two alternatives also have wider sidewalks between 13th and 14th street.
    - Students are not likely to go out of their way to 14th street, but they might go to destinations between 12th and 13th street.
    - No significant changes are proposed to the pedestrian crossing at 12th Street.
- It seems like the City's policy to include bike lanes on major arterials could create problems on State Street. The City could change that policy.
    - It is the City's policy to prioritize bike lanes over on-street parking. If the City does not put bike lanes on State Street as part of the Road Diet or Hybrid alternatives, there could be implications in terms of trying to add bike lanes on other streets in the future.
    - State Street is a unique thoroughfare where buildings are built right up to the right-of-way. The main concern from the public has been pedestrian safety, but now we are trying to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and cars on State Street between 13th and 17th street. The City's policy could be in conflict with the goal of increasing pedestrian safety while still allowing cars to get through.
    - Any policy could have an exemption. If you have bikes whizzing by, you have the same safety issues as if you have cars whizzing by you.
    - Having bike lanes instead of on-street parking affects the redevelopment potential of properties. You need parking for retail uses.

    - The City could acquire right-of-way on the north side of State Street between 21st and 24th Street to get bicycles to at east 21st Street from the east. That way, bicycles coming from the east could get to Court Street.
- Bikes can use any local street. They do not have to use the alternative bike routes on Chemeketa and Mill streets.
    - The Salem Transportation System Plan (TSP) designates Chemeketa and Mill streets as family-friendly bikeways. That is why these streets are included as alternative bike routes in the State Street project. The major change is that a new bicycle-pedestrian bridge is included at 24th Street across Mill Creek.
    - Family-friendly bikeways generally serve bicyclists that may not be comfortable on other streets. Other bicyclists will ride on State Street or take other neighborhood streets.
- This corridor is the only section of State Street that is not planned for bike lanes.
    - State Street downtown is planned to be converted into a two-way street with bike lanes.
    - The plan is to convert State Street and Court Street downtown into two-way streets at the same time. The actual timing will depend on funding. The sections of Court and State streets between 12th and 13th street would remain one-way blocks.
    - The Hybrid alternative only adds three blocks of bike lanes. The City should figure out how to connect those bike lanes to 12th Street.

<u>Traffic Impacts</u>

- Why would the Hybrid alternative result in less cut-through traffic than the Road Diet alternative? Does it have to do with a third of the traffic diverting to other streets in the Road Diet alternative? How was the diversion estimated?
    - Yes, there would be less diversion of traffic between 17th and 25th street in the Hybrid alternative.
    - The consultant team used the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments' regional traffic model. The Road Diet alternative has less capacity, so the traffic model diverts traffic to other routes.
- Would the Road Diet alternative impact Chemeketa, Court, Center, D, and other streets?
    - The model shows impacts on major streets, not residential local streets. Diversion was shown on parallel routes.
    - The model looks at the quickest path for vehicles. It is questionable as to whether people would actually divert to Mission Street SE given its already congested.
    - There is concern that the Road Diet alternative would put pressure to open up Court and Chemeketa streets to through traffic. We do not want to have negative impacts on neighborhood streets.
    - There will be diversion through the neighborhoods.
    - That is a concern that needs to be addressed. Cut-through traffic needs to be limited. One way could be to install mini traffic roundabouts.
- Under a road diet, State Street would be like Center Street, which has roughly 16,000 cars a day. State Street has more traffic than that.
    - Center Street does not have a center-turn lane, so it is not exactly like State Street under a road diet.
    - The State Street project envisions more uses along the street but reduced traffic capacity.
    - We want people to come to State Street, not drive through State Street. We want to make State Street slower.
    - How could travel time through the corridor be better under the road diet and yet traffic would be calmed?
        - Traffic would move more slowly but steadily under the road diet, whereas under a four lane alternative, traffic tends to move more quickly between intersections and then bunch (or queue) at intersections.
    - Based on the TSP, we want to keep traffic on arterials. State Street is a major arterial. It connects long distances.
- The Road Diet alternative creates diversion, which is noted as a problem, or it does not let people move through State Street very fast, but then, it also leverages private investment. Which one do we want? Do we want people to move quickly through State Street, or do we want to leverage private investment? A SAC member is not interested in moving cars quickly from 12th to 25th street.
    - State Street is a major arterial that connects to the county.

    - It seems like people can tolerate congestion between 12th and 17th street, and then they go faster as they head east.
- Is there any data on left turns? Left turns back up traffic on State Street today.
    - It happens all of the time. People travel so fast that when the car in front of them stops, they swerve around. There's been a lot of accidents that way.
    - If you eliminate left turns, would that impact traffic flows?
        - It could have impacts. You can really only stop left turns with medians. People ignore signs.
    - The Road Diet alternative facilitates left turns.

Property and Redevelopment Impacts

- Are the impacts to structures included in the estimated costs of each street design alternative?
    - No, and the acquisition of property is not included.
- Currently, the TSP calls for State Street to be 96-feet wide. All of the street design alternatives reduce that right-of-way width, which means properties along State Street will have greater redevelopment potential.
- If sidewalks east of 17th Street are not widened until redevelopment occurs, it could be a very long time until those wider sidewalks are built.
- What impacts on structures does the current 96-feet right-of-way in the TSP have?
    - That information can be provided at the public meeting.

Other Comments and Questions

- A SAC member expressed a preference for the Road Diet alternative but preferred adding on-street parking instead of bike lanes on State Street.
- Another SAC member expressed a preference for the Road Diet alternative and suggested that medians or other features be used to "terminate the vista," so drivers cannot see all the way down State Street.
- Speeding is a major problem on State Street. Is there any data on roughly how much the street design alternatives could reduce speeding?
    - The project did not look at that detailed level of analysis.
    - East of 17th Street, it looks like there is no change to the speeding issue in the Hybrid alternative.
    - We should look at how to calm traffic east of 17th Street. The idea of making State Street a gateway near 25th Street has been discussed in the past.
    - The City is proposing to install a median island on State Street at 25th Street.
- What are the peak times on State Street?
    - Anecdotally, peak times are about 7 to 8 a.m. and 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.
    - Do we want to design State Street to the peak hours or for the rest of the day?
- Is on-street parking provided in the Hybrid alternative?
    - Yes, there is on-street parking between 12th and 17th street, and there is the potential for parking to be an option for developers between 17th and 25th street.

PREFERRED LAND USE ALTERNATIVE

Development Standards

- What does retail ready mean?
    - It has to do with the form of development. You do not need to create retail on the ground floor in the MU1, but the proposed zone requires that the ground-floor space be able to accommodate retail in the future. For example, the MU1 zone requires taller ground-floor spaces.
    - You could still do an all residential building in the MU1 zone.
- What do the requirements for building frontage mean?
    - It means 50 or 75 percent of your front setback line must be occupied by a building. It is one way to get parking to be located to the side or rear of buildings.

Layout of Zones

- Why not have the higher-density zone throughout the corridor? The MU1 zone should at least be applied on the south side of State Street near Mill Creek. The creek provides a buffer from the residential neighborhoods to the south.

    - Those properties on the south side are very shallow, so they might need the extra height in the MU1 zone to redevelopment.
    - There could be a node of MU1 near 21st Street because there are large vacant lots there, and they are near the creek, which provides the buffer from residential neighborhoods.
- The public wanted to see nodes of MU1 along State Street, but the preferred land use alternative does not have nodes.
    - The MU1 and MU2 both allow retail, so nodes of retail development could still occur in the MU2 zone.
    - The flood zone is located along the creek, so by not requiring ground-floor retail-ready space, the MU2 zone is not going to overly burden those properties.

Parking

- What is commercial parking, which is not allowed in the new zones?
    - You can still have parking for your use on State Street, but you cannot just create a new parking lot that you rent anyone.
- Redevelopment will be more viable if less parking is required.
    - The project will likely recommend reducing parking requirements for multifamily development from 1.5 spaces per unit to 1 space per unit.
    - The project will also recommend allowing off-street parking spaces to be located 800 feet away from the use it serves. A property owner could lease space in an existing parking lot on or near State Street. There are a lot of parking lots in the area now. By leasing space, a developer can use more of his or her property for development.

Other Comments and Questions

- Are the new MU zones overlays?
    - No, they would be new base zones. There are a lot of overlay zones in Salem, and with this project, the City wants to simplify the zoning by having base zones.
- It would be helpful to show what development in the MU1 zone could look like abutting residential properties and abutting an alley.
    - That can be done at the public meeting.

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

Consultant Team

- Determine the number of properties and structures that are impacted today under the 96-foot right-of-way called for in the TSP, and compare it to the impacts of the three street design alternatives
- Create or find visuals that illustrate what a development in the MU1 zone would look like abutting a residential zone and abutting an alley next to a residential zone (e.g., show setbacks based on height)