



Memorandum

Date: June 18, 2009
To: Rex Holloway, ODOT
From: Andrew Spreadborough, COIC
Project: US 97 Bend North Corridor Solutions
Subject: Summary of comments from Bicycle/Pedestrian Focus Group

Overview

This memorandum summarizes the Bicycle/Pedestrian Focus Group meeting. The meeting was held from noon to 2:00 PM on June 18, 2009, at the ODOT Region 4 Construction Conference Room, 63030 N. Highway 97, Bend.

Participants:

Sami Fournier, BPAC
Kevin Tanski, BPAC
Kim Curley, Commute Options
Ray Thwaites, ODOT
Dan Serpico, ODOT Region 4 Traffic
Robin Lewis, City of Bend
Rick Root, City of Bend
Carolyn Perry, Tumalo Community Association

ODOT/COIC Staff:

Rex Holloway, ODOT
Andrew Spreadborough, COIC

Focus group meeting goals:

- Identify pedestrian/bike movements in project area.
- Identify bike/pedestrian concerns//impacts for the East and West alternatives.

Meeting Discussion Points

- Review of the June 12 project field. Dan Serpico said the participants looked at how the project area is being used today by bicyclists/pedestrians.
- Reviewed existing corridors for bike/pedestrian routes; identified routes on maps.
- Robal Road as a possible route for bike/pedestrians moving east to west in the project area.
- Difficulty for bike/pedestrian movements between Empire Avenue and Robal Road, and the presence of bike and pedestrian crossing in unauthorized areas. These areas, referred to as "goat paths" are unsafe, but illustrate the need for a designated crossing area over Highway 97 between Robal and Empire.
- An increase in traffic on Cooley Road between Juniper Ridge and Highway 20, and impacts of this increased traffic on bike and pedestrian users. Increased congestion will decrease safety and bicyclist comfort with the use of the corridor.
- Empire Avenue, Robal Road and Cooley Road serving as important east-west connectors.
- Review of north-south movements in the project area.
- Discussed combining bike paths with sidewalks; rather than having a 6 foot bike lane along with a 6 foot sidewalk, create a 4 foot buffer and 8 foot wide combined bike/pedestrian lane.
- Cooley Road overpass bridge over Highway 97 – and the height of the bridge; access to the mall area from Cooley Road.

- The presence of an old crossing at Fred Meyer Road that was closed. It appears the right-of-way still exists.
- Process for adding bike/pedestrian projects to the City Transportation System Plan (TSP).
- Rex said that CAC members from Hunnell, BANA neighborhood associations want to attend the bicycle/pedestrian focus group, and he will ensure they are invited to the next meeting.

Summary of Focus Group Participant Feedback and Comments

Focus group participants made comments throughout the meeting:

- An east-west bike/pedestrian route is needed at a location approximately mid-way between Robal Road and Empire Avenue. This is a corridor where there is an existing demand for bike/pedestrian travel.
- The Robal corridor not conducive to east-west travel due to lack of access into/out of the Nels Anderson area. Need for alternate bike/pedestrian crossing in the Robal Road/Cooley Road area.
- Need for improved bike/pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Robal Road and Highway 20, to facilitate travel to/from neighborhoods to the west of Highway 20.
- The West alternative appears to be a better alignment for bike and pedestrian movements. Aligning the highway west of the mall area removes a large barrier along the existing 97/3rd street Corridor.
- The West alternative interchange area at Empire Avenue appears to be better for bike and pedestrian movement than the East.
- The new segment of 3rd Street within the project area (former Highway 97) is the best option for north-south route. It is a city street, so sidewalks and bike paths must be provided.
- Cooley Road will be a choke point for bike/pedestrian travel as Juniper Ridge builds out. Too much automobile congestion will decrease the suitability of Cooley Road for bicycle travel due to increased conflict points.
- Need to add proposed bike/pedestrian routes within the project area to the City of Bend Transportation System Plan (TSP), to provide opportunity for funding.
- Requested ODOT provide examples of other similar projects of this scale, and summarize how they handled the bike/pedestrian issue.
- Consider design options for pedestrian over-crossings that use longer ramp areas, as opposed to shorter, spiral ramps. Consider using the Sisters loop ramp and/or property to accommodate bike/pedestrian movements.
- Interest in including representatives from the neighborhood associations in this discussion (Boyd Acres, Hunnell).
- For next meeting, create maps that overlay bicycle routes on the alternative maps, to facilitate more detailed review.

Next Meeting

The focus group will meet next on June 25, noon to 2:00, at the ODOT Construction Conference Room, OB Riley Road.