

SE/NE 50s Bikeway Project

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting #4

February 22, 2011

Providence Cancer Center, Social Room
6:00 – 8:00 PM

CAC Members Attending:

Chase Ballew, Central Northeast Neighbors District Neighborhood Coalition
Dave Crout, Rose City Park Neighborhood Association
Matt Glynn, Woodstock Comm. Business Association
Sandra Hay Magdaleno, South Tabor Neighborhood Association
Kenny Heggem, Woodstock Neighborhood Association
Joe Recker, North Tabor Neighborhood Association
Seth Richardson, Foster Area Business Association
Bruce Treat, Mt Tabor Neighborhood Association
Chris Yake, 'at large' citizen representative
John Mulvey, 'at large' citizen representative

City of Portland staff

Rich Newlands, PBOT Project Management
Sarah Figliozi, PBOT Transportation Planning
Lewis Wardrip, PBOT Traffic Operations
Roger Geller, PBOT Bicycle Coordinator

Note: All materials sent to the CAC members and distributed during the meeting are available on the project website. <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/50sbikeway>

Meeting Summary

I Overview of Process to Date

Project Manager, Rich Newlands, reviewed the project's process to date highlighting the recent public Open House held on the evening of January 26th.

Current funding estimates indicate that the project may need to be broken into two phases for implementation. A funding source for the 2nd phase has not been identified yet and project staff will report back on this by email or at the next meeting.

Project team hopes to reach a final project recommendation by early summer so that staff can begin design engineering by later summer, and construction could begin in early 2012.

II Open House debrief / Discussion

The project's first public open house was held during the evening of January 26th at the Lady of Sorrow's Catholic Church at the corner of SE 52nd Ave and SE Woodstock Blvd; the southern end of the project alignment.

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The open house had a very good attendance rate with over 150 people signing in. Further, it appears that the geography of the attendees' residence was well distributed along the project alignment.

The open house also elicited a large number of comments; these have been summarized and distributed to CAC members. This report is also available on the project website here:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=53345&a=338140>

The format of the open house was set up so that attendees could read background project information prior to making comments on the existing conditions and design option maps. Attendees could make comments by either posting the comments on sticky notes on specific locations on the map, by posting general comments on comment boards, or making private comments via the form and dropping them in the comment boxes.

Discussion

CAC members provided the following suggestions for future public open house formats:

- Improve signage and clarity so that attendees can distinguish between Existing Conditions information and Design Options information.
- Format was good. It provided a non-confrontational environment that gave attendees ample opportunity to provide comments
- A presentation at the start of the event to attendees may have been beneficial.
- Recommendation to hold the second open house in the northern section of the project

Themes from Open House comments

The project received 309 comments, highlighting 579 specific issues. The project staff have pulled the following generalizations from the summary of comments:

- Very generally overall, it appears that 2/3rds of the comments generally support the project, albeit with specific design concerns.
- Appears that CAC has done a good job of identifying the key issues and potential solutions
- On-street parking removal: while a majority of comments were from the southern segment, overall, parking removal as a topic category represented 15% of all comments. Of that 15%, 2/3rds were against parking removal.
- Majority of comments were focused on safety, primarily traffic speeds and their effect on all modes and neighborhood livability (bike project as traffic calming project)
- Diversion: surprisingly few comments overall received specific to diversion. Majority indicate support for proceeding with areas identified.

Discussion

CAC members shared their own impressions from conversations and comments at the open house:

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KH: Heard the following themes: high speeds on 52nd Ave; a need for traffic calming and safety improvements; safe pedestrian crossings. Recommends that staff look at a crossing between Steele and Holgate. Also the neighborhood route will need directional signage.

SHM: Heard from many people who felt that the best compromise, in terms of parking impact, would be to leave auto parking on one side of the street.

MG: Heard many concerns about speed and safety in the southern section. Feels that if parking on one side of the street is removed then project should try to incorporate safer crossings of 52nd Ave. Heard from many people who were supportive of vehicle diversion at SE Division and 52nd Ave. Surprised by the amount of push back from neighbors about the bicycle lanes on NE 57th Ave, particular in regards to the impacts on operations needed by the school. This issue was something that the CAC had not discussed previously.

CB: Heard from some people who were against the diversion at SE Division and 52nd Ave.

CY: Observed many families at the event. Suggests that staff reach out to the schools and PTAs.

Specific issues identified by staff for further discussion

The following issues were identified by staff from the open house comments.

- NE 57th Ave and Alternate Alignment 'A-1'
- Pedestrian Improvements south of SE Division St
- Speed bumps
- Application to reduce posted speed along southern segment

NE 57th Ave and Alternate Alignment 'A-1'

Many comments were received in opposition to striping bicycle lanes on NE 57th Ave. The CAC has previously discussed shifting the original alignment to the alternative 'A-1' alignment. Virtually no support for the current route alignment along NE 57th was received. Bicycle lanes on NE 57th Ave would require parking removal from BOTH sides of the street. Concerns that have been raised by both CAC members and the public include:

- potential negative impacts to school operations
- concern regarding an overly invasive impact on adjacent residents due to removal of parking on BOTH sides of the street
- questionable why project routes cyclists onto a neighborhood collector when local streets provide a direct route to northern destinations

Discussion

SHM: Wondered whether both original alignment and the alternate 'A-1' could be used by using sharrows on NE 57th rather than bicycle lanes, thus not requiring parking removal.

MG: Could be an opportunity to save money because modification to the curb extensions at NE Hancock would no longer be needed. Also noted that this was the only segment of the project where no or little support was heard for a proposed design.

CB: Does not support the general concept that the bike lanes end on NE 57th. Ideally project should fund their continuation south to NE Halsey. Staff noted that this outside of the scope of the project.

It was noted that a signal and marked pedestrian crossing does currently exist mid-block near NE Tillamook that could assist cyclists crossing NE 57th auto traffic to reach existing bicycle lanes to the north. Staff will evaluate and return with design options that could take advantage of the existing signal.

Pedestrian improvements south of SE Division

In order to respond to requests for safety improvements in the southern section of the alignment, project staff are currently investigating pedestrian crossing options for SE 52nd Ave south of SE Division St. While staff are evaluating different crossing options and locations, we want to update CAC members with a few of the challenges arising.

- Median crossings will require removal of a significant number of additional parking spaces at each location.
- Crossing treatments will need additional data collection. Project staff need to understand problem prior to designing solution so we will be looking at gap analysis results. Gap analysis shows the number of gaps in auto traffic that allow for safe pedestrian crossings.
- Many intersections along the southern route are T intersections. This means that a crossing will go from corner across SE 52nd Ave to a mid-block location which makes building curb extensions difficult.
- Curb extensions and medians will add significant cost to the project.

Speed bumps

Comments from the open house show equal number of comments supporting and not supporting the installation of speed bumps along various segments of the project alignment. Some CAC members have raised the suggestion that speed bumps should be applied to the entire route versus the current project approach, which is: 1) installation of speed bumps in areas where stop signs are being flipped [in order to provide direct and uninterrupted route for cyclists] and to discourage segment from being used by vehicles as a cut-through; and 2) installation of speed bumps in specific segments where speed data has shown speed problems (i.e. 4-5 mph above posted speed limit).

Project staff would like to hear CAC members' comments on this issue.

Application to reduce posted speed along southern segment

In response to the concern about high speeds in the southern segment of the project, project staff have begun to inquire into various solutions. SE 52nd Ave is an emergency response route (ERR) and posted 35mph (recorded actual speed data shows 85 percentile speeds at 36-37mph); both of these issues create challenges to achieving any significant speed reductions.

The project can look into submitting an application to ODOT to reduce the posted speed limit. Previous bikeway projects, such as the 40s Bikeway Project, have used this option to reduce

speeds by 5 mph. Project staff will find out criteria and timeline and report back to CAC members.

III Status of technical issues still pending

Parking removal on SE 52nd Ave: Staff are developing criteria for deciding which side parking would be removed if 6 ft bike lanes were to be striped on SE 52nd Ave south of SE Division St. Thus far the criteria includes: total capacity, occupancy rates, and number of houses which do not have access to off-street parking. At this point it appears that it makes most sense to retain parking on the west side of SE 52nd Ave, as the west side has the lowest average occupancy and the greatest number of potential spaces. There are a total of three properties that appear to have no off-street parking availability on the east side where parking is proposed to be removed.

Discussion

JM: Retaining parking on west side also supports demand created by Franklin HS.

SE Powell & 54th: Neighborhood route: ODOT has indicated that they do not support the installation of a full signal at this location. They do support the installation of a rapid flash beacon (RFB).

Discussion

KM: Very angry and frustrated with this development.

JM: Appalled. Opposes this decision. Would be like leading the herds to the slaughter.

Lewis Wardrip, PBOT traffic engineer, explained that a signal in this location does not meet the needed warrants. A RFB does not require warrants.

CAC discussion regarding next steps:

- CAC could invite ODOT to next meeting to discuss rationale and options.
- Some members offered to evaluate option of route connecting to SE 52nd Ave near SE Central.
- Concern that sight-lines due to the median at 54th/Powell could also contribute to poor auto stopping compliance.
- Staff to forward RFP report to CAC members

Bike boxes: Draft bike box placement criteria currently showing that none of the proposed project bike box locations meet the criteria, except SE Powell. Any bike boxes installed would need to be incorporated into second phase of project due to the fact that they are not federally recognized as an approved device.

General disappointment raised by many CAC members.

Cross bikes: Design guidelines being developed by PBOT staff. Similar to bike boxes, cross bike installation will need to be a second phase element due to the fact that they are not federally recognized.

Colored bike lanes - Foster-Powell: Staff are looking at a design that removes center turn lanes in this stretch. This means that project can accommodate 6.5 ft bike lane widths. No decision yet on use of green in this section given that PBOT needs to be careful in how the city defines use of green for conflict zones.

Process for diversion components: Rich explained that project staff will be scheduling separate meeting with affected neighbors (meetings are always open to any interested community members) do discuss options to reduce cut-through traffic between NE Glisan - E Burnside and SE Lincoln- SE Division. Meeting dates will be forwarded to CAC members as they are confirmed.

IV Revisit Draft CAC Recommendation

Discussion

Comments from CAC members:

CY: Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment. Supports adding more traffic calming on southern segment, specifically physical improvements. If signal is not feasible at SE Powell/54th then supports pulling alignment back to SE 52nd at Central. Wants to ensure that project staff are incorporating aspirational bike mode levels into bike box criteria calculations.

KH: Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment. Wants staff to 'push further' on bike boxes as they are a good tool for alerting motorists of the presence of bicycles. Wants staff to push harder on ODOT to get signal approval at SE Powell/54th Ave. Also wants staff to consider asking for 25 mph posted speed limit on SE 52nd Ave.

JM: Frustrated with reports from staff tonight. Frustrated that project is now suggesting no signal at Powell/54th and no bike boxes. Asks group why we aren't doing more at the Division, Powell, and Foster intersections. Does support adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment.

SR: Also believes CAC should push harder on ODOT rejection of signal at Powell/54th. If neighborhood route is rerouted to SE 52nd at Center then it will mean that those intersections: Foster, Powell, and Division, will need even more work to make them safer for those needing a family-friendly route. Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment.

BT: Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment. Believes that bike boxes are educational for drivers and improves safety for all users. Wants bike boxes on Foster and SE 52nd.

DC: Also wants project staff to reconsider bike box criteria. Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment.

JR: Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment, however with signage to ensure that we don't encourage cyclists to go out of direction unnecessarily. Also supports requesting ODOT for reduction in speed limit on SE 52nd Ave.

CB: Supportive of adding median islands on SE 52nd. Not supportive of bike lanes simply ending along NE 57th.

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MG: Supportive of requesting ODOT to reduce posted speed limit. Supportive of encouraging more diversion versus overall installation of speed bumps along alignments. Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment. Willing to give on bike box/cross bike treatments as a second phase installation. Supportive of removing turning lanes between Foster-Powell, especially if neighborhood route joins SE 52nd at Center St.

SHM: Supports adopting alternate 'A-1' alignment. Supports compromise of removing only one side of parking on southern section of project. Wants project staff to email RFB research to expand conversation about options for SE Powell/54th.

In conclusion the CAC Draft Proposal Map has been modified to represent the A-1 alignment [bikeway continues north along NE 53rd Ave, turns east on NE Thompson or Sacramento to join existing bicycle lanes on NE 57th].

The CAC Draft Proposal is also modified in regards to including the proposed speed reduction request to ODOT for the southern segment of SE 52nd Ave between SE Division and SE Woodstock to ODOT. Staff will report back to CAC in regards to process and feasibility. Additional posted speed reductions may also be an option for northern sections of the route if the House Bill 3150 passes. HB 3150 would give cities in Oregon the authority to reduce speed limits on neighborhood greenways to 20 mph, as long as average daily motor vehicle volumes are less than 2,000 and more than 85% of motor vehicles are travelling less than 30 mph. More information about HB3150 can be found here: <http://gov.oregonlive.com/bill/2011/hb3150/>

V Next Steps

Project staff will be reviewing proposal with Technical Advisory Committee during third week of March.

Project staff will schedule second presentations to neighborhood and business associations over the next few weeks. Diversion conversation meetings will also be scheduled shortly.

Date and venue for second open house will be scheduled. Please send any recommendations to staff ASAP.