

NE/SE 20s Bikeway Project
Stakeholders Advisory Committee Meeting #1
September 24, 2013

Project staff in attendance included Project Manager Rich Newlands, and traffic engineers Jamie Jeffrey and Andrew Sullivan. The Stakeholders Advisory Committee (SAC) is made up of representatives from neighborhood and business associations, as well as other groups such as the Bicycle Transportation Alliance.

The main goals of the meeting were to define the project objectives, and the primary focus issues along the route.

Project Overview

This project, funded by a \$2.5 M federal grant, aims to improve bicycling conditions along the “20’s” route, from Lombard to the Springwater Corridor. Much of the route is arguably already in place, and this will fill in some of the gaps. Currently, this is just a line on the map; the process will define the exact route and what it looks like each segment.

Bicycle design generally has three categories. Bike boulevards (aka Neighborhood Greenways) are shared bicycle/auto environments on streets with low traffic volumes and low speeds. Separated in-road facilities are usually improved with a bike lane (separation from auto travel lanes) facility- of which there are several types. These are often on higher volume (generally greater than 3,000 cars a day) and speed streets. The third category is off street paths, which are unlikely to be discussed as part of this project.

Process

Rich explained that the SAC is a main component of the public involvement process. The City will give them lots of information and requests a lot of input. Members are expected to not only review information and provide feedback, but to communicate the information and project progress to their respective groups as well. One important caveat is that it is an advisory group, who will vote and presents their recommendations to PBOT. Ultimately, the Bureau of Transportation Director will make the decision. The project may or may not go before City Council, depending on the potential policy issues raised by the final recommendation.

Q: What happens if the group is divided? What does a vote mean?

A: It is less of a vote, and more of a straw poll to gauge what sort of consensus there is on key design issues. If there is strong division at end of the day, then that would be reported back to the PBOT Management. The goal is to be able to present a formal recommendation that has majority support. However, there may be strong minority and they are welcome to prepare “minority report”.

The SAC confirmed that weeknight evenings are good meeting times. Committee members preferred to meet on the east side, rather than downtown.

Rich shared the proposed schedule and process for this project. If things go smoothly, there will be about five to six SAC meetings, spread over the next five to six months. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 9.

Once objectives, issues, and designs are defined by SAC, the proposal is to break into geographical subgroups. Open house events would happen at that level.

Q: Would the work groups operate at same time?

A: We would never have two work group meetings on the same night, but maybe two in the same week.

Q: How will you communicate with residents?

A: At minimum, we will send a mass mailing in the area. Take advantage of every mail list that various organizations have. Could also be advertisement in neighborhood papers.

Q: Why not take longer than six months?

A: The process will take as much time as we need to work through this. If more time is needed, we will allot it. The sub-area work groups could end up going at different paces.

The committee confirmed that they are comfortable with Rich leading the meetings and setting the agendas. The role of committee chairperson may be discussed at the subgroup level.

Project Goals/Objectives/Design Criteria

Existing City policy sets a foundation for the objectives to project is to achieve. Some are conflicting. The project needs to establish a refined set of objectives to serve two general purposes, A) to help define the issues (scope) the project will address, and B) to serve as criteria for elevation of potential solutions and the overall final recommendation. When determining objectives, measurable criteria are best, so that comparisons can be made. Measurable criteria also helps tell the broader community "why/how" decisions were ultimately made. The list is a draft that can be modified over the course of the project.

The idea of a 'design rider' was introduced as a criteria. This would be the type of rider the design needs to pay special attention to in terms of serving its needs- based on policies established in the bicycle master plan. The design rider is also known as the 'interested but concerned' sub-set of bicyclists, who represent a very large portion of all potential cyclists in the City. Their needs are often focused on safety (or family friendly features).

Rich shared the draft project objectives. The design principles of safety, comfort, attractiveness, direct routes, and a cohesive system come directly from the Portland Bicycle Master for 2030. He also shared a more refined list of design criteria, based on the design principals, related to physical geography, traffic environment, and route crossings. Some of these already have measures built in, such as average daily traffic volume (ADT) for certain types of streets. In addition to the bicycle related objectives, Rich added an on-street parking supply objective.

Feedback on objectives:

- Add pavement quality
- Visibility at crossings
- Type of traffic (trucks vs. cars, etc)

- Existing traffic control (e.g. stop signs for bicycles)
- Impact of Milwaukie Light Rail – increase traffic, crossings, pedestrian access, parking, etc.

Existing Conditions Evaluation/ Issue Identification

The group went through the master plan route alignment to identify at the high level what issues really need attention, using the criteria discussed earlier as a guide for identification. The primary intent of the discussion was create a scope of work for the project- to focus on the key design issues the project needs to address and our priorities for attention.

Beginning at the north, **NE 27th Ave** have slightly high traffic volumes for a local street. However, it is likely due to Concordia College, so it is not flagged as an issue to address (via traffic calming or diversion). The route jogs, using Ainsworth to shift to 29th Ave. Several members suggested using NE Holman (an existing neighborhood greenway) instead.

Questions:

Q: Are there bike counts?

A: We can collect data, but is there is no existing bicycle facility then value of existing use data may be limited.

Q: 29th @ Holman – can the route connect to Faubian School.

A: That is a private road, but we can talk to the college about the using it.

Going south, the alignment follows **NE 29th**, to NE Broadway. The street segments under existing conditions tend to be well suited to bikeway use with low speed/volumes and narrow road width.

Comments

- Think about where Going and 29th cross – consider something fun, bike counter
- The pavement quality really bad between Prescott and Alberta on 29th. At ridge, continue up Regents, pavement quality on 31st way better.
- Avoid transit routes.

Alameda Ridge presents a topography obstacle for the route. There are very few road connections near the route alignment. The Master Plan route also uses a very steep connection to NE Regents that alternatives should be considered. There could be switchbacks and cross Fremont at 27th, which leads to the question of using 27th Avenue all the way to Broadway.

In the next section, the route uses 29th and 28th Ave south to Broadway. This section also is largely well suited to bikeway use.

The route gets much trickier south of **NE Broadway** and leading over **I-84**. NE 28th Ave has high traffic volumes, a tight right-of-way (Broadway to Halsey) and a blind corner at Halsey.

There were discussions of using NE 26th Avenue (rather than 28th) to cross Broadway, and then connect back to 28th to cross the freeway. If 26th was used, it may make sense to use that alignment farther north as well.

28th Avenue south of the freeway, all the way to **SE Stark Street** changes to a more busy commercial environment. Because traffic volumes are so high a facility that would serve a broad range of cyclists would most likely needed to be separated (with bike lanes). It was noted that if bicycle lanes are recommended they would come with a significant tradeoff in terms of on-street parking supply. Further, even if parking was removed from one side, the resulting bicycle lanes would still be sub-standard in width (4 ft).

Because of the potential parking impacts alternative alignments to 28th Ave were discussed. These include 24th, 26th and 30th Ave.

Questions & Comments:

- Traffic speeds of cars currently, cannot get from one end to another going much faster than a bike
- Between Glisan and stark, comfortable being in traffic
- There are key strong identity points along the route, maybe we should look at it in another way, mixed use, advocate for keeping on 28th
- Using 26th cutoff reasonable, immediate cut off at Pacific – large trucks
- There is no way a “interested but concerned” cyclist would be comfortable on 28th
- Cut though traffic on 24th
- There is no really good parallel street to 28th.
- Be more open minded about use of 28th. We have a lot of options to explore through the business district there.

Q: There is a pedestrian crossing on 24th. Could this committee ask for something similar on 26th?

A: Yes. We could do something even better.

Between Stark and Division, there are some topography issues and a few traffic volume considerations.

South of Stark, the route transitions back to lower volume residential streets until it reaches **SE 26th Avenue** south of Division is similar to NE/SE 28th to the north. Parking issues, shared environment.

Comments:

- 28th at Clinton is a steep hill.
- Northbound when bike lane ends, it is actually a good situation because it positions you better at the four way stop.
- Creative solution as it is a big wide intersection, a lot of roadway to work with. Could make it better for pedestrians too.
- move bike lane curb tight on 26th (shift parking)
- that area has substandard bike lane widths.

There are no bike lanes on 28th between Gladstone & Holgate and it is narrow, with parking on one side.

Comment:

- SE 26th is great route, occasional large truck, could run it all the way to the park, if the multiuse path was improved.

Could also use 28th all the way and create a new crossing at Powell – trick is to get ODOT to do new crossing

There is a bike lane on **28th** Avenue next to Reed College.

The route transitions to **Crystal Springs**, which has high traffic volumes and speeds for a local service street.

Comments

- It is a cut through route
- Look carefully at the Bybee crossing. Near transit station, parking
- Connection to Springwater at 37th; should be emphasized or enhanced
- Potential to use Woodstock and Reed College Place
- Improvement to 27th & Bybee

Next Meeting

- October 9 is a tentative; Rich will notify the committee when the date is confirmed
- Next meeting agenda will focus on potential design alternatives to address the issue list.