

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: South Willamette Street Improvement Plan

Meeting Date: June 19, 2013
Department: Public Works
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: A
Staff Contact: Chris Henry
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ISSUE STATEMENT

The Eugene City Council will receive a progress update from staff and consultants about the South Willamette Street Improvement Plan. The South Willamette Street Improvement Plan will develop a complete street design plan for an active transportation corridor (providing for walking, biking, transit access, motoring and business access) that can be adopted and advanced as a capital improvement project for construction. The project team will share details of community involvement, what has been learned so far, a range of street design concepts resulting from that engagement, and the schedule for developing the plan. Councilors will have an opportunity to ask questions about street design elements, discuss community issues, provide feedback, and discuss their role in the process.

BACKGROUND

The South Willamette Street Improvement Plan is exploring options for people to safely walk, bike, take the bus, or drive in an eight-block study area of Willamette Street from 24th Avenue to 32nd Avenue. The City and ODOT have contracted with a consultant team of transportation engineers and urban design planners led by DKS Associates (with assistance from OTAK), which includes Cogito, locally based specialists to coordinate public involvement.

The goal of this study is to help South Willamette Street become a vibrant urban corridor accessible by bicycle, foot, car, and bus. Today, Willamette Street is heavily used to reach many popular destinations, yet it is uninviting to pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists alike. For years, many residents and business owners have shared complaints about the poor conditions on Willamette Street for walking and biking and the need to do something about it.

The plan aims to support existing businesses and the commercial district's vitality; create a balanced multi-modal transportation system; further City planning efforts to identify compact growth and redevelopment opportunities; and foster a well-informed and involved community supportive of the plan.

The results of this project will serve as the street design portion of the South Willamette Concept Plan. The South Willamette Concept Plan is a pilot of the area planning process, an important

strategy to accommodate growth through Envision Eugene. The Concept Plan creates a long-term vision and identifies tools realizing that vision in the South Willamette area. One important goal of the Concept Plan is to create a neighborhood where services for residents are available in a “20-minute” walk, and the street functions for a variety of users. The timing of the South Willamette Street Improvement Plan is good because it melds with the South Willamette Concept Plan, and needed pavement preservation work recently identified in the 2012 Bond Measure to Fix Streets and Fund Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects.

In August 2012, the project team began by talking with stakeholders in small groups, including property and business owners, bicycle, pedestrian and transit advocates, and neighborhood leaders from Friendly, Crest, South Eugene and Amazon neighborhood associations. Based on knowledge gained, in September two robust focus groups were organized (one based on business; and another based on users of cars, walking, bus, and bike) to hear more about people’s concerns, preferences and flexibilities towards identified corridor issues. In October, traffic count data was collected (when UO and LCC campuses were active) and an Existing Conditions Report was prepared. In November, over 150 participants attended the first Community Forum where they heard the results of recent traffic studies, explored alternatives, and the project team listened to community priorities for future improvements.

A second Community Forum was held in February 2013 to evaluate the alternatives that were prepared in response to earlier community conversations. Following the February Community Forum, the project team narrowed the number of alternatives down to three and performed more detailed transportation analysis.

The third, and final, Community Forum was held on June 11, 2013. Participants were asked to help rank and refine the street design alternatives following a presentation of transportation analysis and group discussion. An online survey was also available between June 12 and June 18 to hear the preferences of those that were not able to attend the Community Forum.

In the fall, a draft plan will be presented to the Eugene Planning Commission and a recommendation made to the Eugene City Council for consideration.

The South Willamette Street Improvement Plan is being managed by the City of Eugene and is funded with a grant from the Transportation and Growth Management program of the Oregon Department of Transportation.

More details of the project and public involvement process are available at: <http://www.eugene-or.gov/SWillametteStreet>

RELATED CITY POLICIES

Later in the fall, as the South Willamette Street Improvement Plan develops a preferred alternative, the Eugene City Council will have an opportunity to consider the policy context surrounding the South Willamette Street Improvement Plan. The council may choose to affirm existing policies, balance potential conflicts between policies, approve potential changes to existing policies or enact new policies.

TransPlan (2002)

System-Wide Policy #4: Neighborhood Livability

Support transportation strategies that enhance neighborhood livability.

Roadway Policy #1: Mobility and Safety for all Modes

Address the mobility and safety needs of motorists, transit users, bicyclists, pedestrians, and the needs of emergency vehicles when planning and constructing roadway system improvements.

Roadway Policy #2: Motor Vehicle Level of Service

- 1. Use motor vehicle level of service standards to maintain acceptable and reliable performance on the roadway system.*
- 2. Acceptable and reliable performance is defined by the following levels of service under peak hour traffic conditions: Level of Service E within Eugene's Central Area Transportation Study (CATS) area, and Level of Service D elsewhere.*

Roadway Policy #4: Access Management

Manage the roadway system to preserve safety and operational efficiency by adopting regulations to manage access to roadways and applying these regulations to decisions related to approving new or modified access to the roadway system.

Bicycle Policy #1: Bikeway System and Support Facilities

Construct and improve the region's bikeway system and provide bicycle system support facilities for both new development and redevelopment/expansion.

Bicycle Policy #2: Bikeways on Arterials and Collectors

Require bikeways along new and reconstructed arterial and major collector streets.

Bicycle Policy #4: Implementation of Priority Bikeway Miles

Give funding priority (ideally within the first 3 to 5 years after adoption of TransPlan subject to available funding) to stand-alone bikeway projects that are included in the definition of "Priority Bikeway Miles" and that increase the use of alternative modes.

Pedestrian Policy #1: Pedestrian Environment

Provide for a pedestrian environment that is well integrated with adjacent land uses and is designed to enhance the safety, comfort, and convenience of walking.

Goods Movement Policy #1: Freight Efficiency

Support reasonable and reliable travel times for freight/goods movement in the Eugene-Springfield region.

Finance Policy #5: Short-Term Project Priorities

Consider and include among short-term project priorities, those facilities and improvements that support mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly nodal development and increased use of alternative modes.

Priority Bikeway System Project #296 – Striped bike lanes, Willamette Street from 18th Avenue to 32nd Avenue (unprogrammed).

Eugene Pedestrian Bicycle Master Plan (2012)

Policy 1.1: *Make bicycling and walking more attractive than driving for trips of two miles or less.*

Policy 1.2: *Increase pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between existing residential neighborhoods and nearby commercial areas, parks, and schools.*

Policy 1.5: *Construct high-quality pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to provide safer, more appealing and well-connected facilities.*

Policy 1.6: *Build pedestrian and bicycle facilities on new roadways, and retrofit older roadways to complete the pedestrian and bicycle system, using routes and facility designs identified in this plan.*

Policy 1.7: *Construct bikeways along new and reconstructed arterial and major collector streets.*

Policy 2.1: *Continually improve bicycling and walking comfort and safety through design, operations and maintenance including development of “low stress” bikeways to attract new cyclists.*

Policy 3.6: *Improve the quality of the pedestrian environment by including facilities such as planter strips and street trees in the design or reconstruction of streets and consider preservation of existing trees whenever practicable.*

20-Minute Neighborhoods Program: *Development of a 20-Minute Neighborhoods Program is considered a key implementation step of the Climate and Energy Action Plan. 20 minute neighborhoods are places where people can easily walk or bike to key destinations such as grocery stores, other retail establishments, parks and schools. Coordination between implementation of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan and the 20 Minute Neighborhoods Program will be critical to the success of both. The 20 Minute Neighborhoods Program should be one factor that is considered when determining project funding priorities.*

Bike Lane Project #31 – Willamette Street from 17th Avenue to 32nd Avenue.

Bike Boulevard Project #397 – Portland Alley from W24th Avenue to W27th Avenue.

Bike Boulevard Project #458 – E 29th Place/Pearl Street/E 28th Avenue/High Street/E 27th Avenue from Amazon Parkway to Willamette Street.

Envision Eugene (2012)

7 Pillars of Envision Eugene (partial list)

- *Provide ample economic opportunities for all community members*
- *Plan for climate change and energy uncertainty*
- *Promote compact urban development and efficient transportation options*
- *Protect, repair, and enhance neighborhood livability*
- *Provide for adaptable, flexible, and collaborative implementation*

COUNCIL OPTIONS

Receive information and provide feedback to staff about the South Willamette Street Improvement Plan.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

None; information only.

SUGGESTED MOTION

None.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. South Willamette Street Public Involvement Process Diagram
- B. Community Forum #2 Summary – February 27, 2013
- C. Community Forum #2 Appendix – February 27, 2013
- D. Graphic View of Design Alternatives

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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