Stakeholder Group Meeting #1 – Meeting Notes

Downtown Boise Implementation Plan – Boise Bicycle Lanes

June 25, 2014 12:00 – 2:00 PM
Ada County Highway District, Auditorium

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW (BRUCE WONG AND DAVE WALLACE)

- Director Wong welcomed the stakeholder group
- Dave Wallace provided an overview of the process
- The group is not looking to produce a definitive detailed plan by August, but a general way forward
- The schedule is a target, but it is ambitious may slip a bit

INTRODUCTIONS (ALL)

- See sign-in sheet for list of attendees

EXISTING AND PLANNED NETWORK (MATT EDMOND)

- Matt Edmond provided an overview of the existing and planned bicycle networks in downtown
- Existing:
  - Bannock is primary east-west route, but does not provide a complete connection to and across Avenue B
  - Grove Street is a secondary east-west route, but the 9th Street crossing is not ideal and leads to undesirable crossing actions, it crosses through the Grove Plaza and ends on the west end at 3rd Street
  - 8th Street is the primary north-south route, but gets crowded, motor vehicle traffic changes directionality through the corridor, and it routes people through the Grove Plaza (making it the "gateway drug" to sidewalk riding in the downtown core)
- Planned:
  - Jefferson is planned to have bike lanes in the current adopted DBIP; however, it will cost several parking spaces and the connection to Avenue B may be eliminated by the St. Luke’s expansion
  - 5th and 6th Streets are planned for bike lanes, but it has been determined that they will not be feasible in locations and will eliminate parking in other parts
  - Capitol Boulevard is planned in the current adopted DBIP for a conventional, but not protected, bike lane
  - Many streets are designated as shared streets
  - Not ideal on busier streets, such as Main Street, Idaho Street, and Capitol Boulevard
  - Does not hit the goal of convenient and visible routes through the core
COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH ACHD “TELL US” E-MAIL ADDRESS (MATT EDMOND)

- Matt summarized the comments ACHD received during the pilot project through its general comment e-mail address
- Categories included: Protected bike lanes, floating parking, deliveries, bike boxes, queuing/driveway exits, and maintenance (see slides for more details)

GROUP DISCUSSION (ALL)

- Change is hard
- Were there any surprises in the comments?
  - That not being able to use the third lane on Main for deliveries was an issue. There are loading zones around downtown and did not realize that they were just using the extra space on Main instead
- Was the issue with difficulty exiting the Eastman garage different by time of day?
  - It was most difficult in the p.m. peak period
  - It is hard to exit the garage even without the bike lanes
- A solution to the delivery issue could involve allowing use during different times/zones
- Boise Police Department comments:
  - Confusion among citizens and even BPD staff was the biggest issue (especially regarding the two-stage turn boxes)
  - Understanding the rules of the road was an issue, but it’s also an issue everywhere in the city
- Education and enforcement needs to be considered
- There was a lack of education in the pilot project
  - Needs to be more than just flyers
- The two-way conversions in downtown may reduce sidewalk riding in places
- There were some locations where there were key impacts to parking and those areas will dominate any future conversation about protected bike lanes in those areas
- ACHD believes the pilot was successful
  - City of Boise staff says it was “wildly successful”
    - All of the issues presented can be solved with engineering, education, and enforcement
- Boise Fire noted a there were a couple spots where floating parking may have impacted access, but minor modifications may have helped or completely solved any issue

PROTECTED BIKE LANE AND LESSONS LEARNED (TERRY LITTLE)

- Terry Little presented a hierarchy of bike facilities, lessons learned from the pilot project, and major issues to consider moving forward
- ACHD did not use much paint during the pilot project because it was to be temporary and removing it would be difficult and would be a lot to wash away into the storm drains
- Any type of buffer striping needs to allow for vehicles to cross it to access parking (when on the travel lane side of parking)
- Sharrows are ideal on collectors
- The business response to the pilot was generally negative on the side the lanes were on and positive on the opposite side of the street
- An engineer with Vancouver, B.C. (where they have a number of protected bike lanes) looked at the pilot design and said a future installation would need to remove more parking to improve sight distance
- The number of bicyclists on the sidewalk may not have changed, but the proportion of total bicyclists that were on the sidewalk decreased after the pilot lanes were installed
• 9th Street was not in the pilot project because of heavy turning volumes onto Front Street and Myrtle Street
• The pilot did not address connecting to the system beyond the project limits, especially into Warm Springs to the east and past 15th/16th Streets to the west
• A component of the measured decrease in traffic volumes on Capitol was likely due to BSU letting out
• The 20% increase in travel time on Main and Idaho only equates to about 45 seconds of travel time, or one signal cycle
• Any future protected bike lane installation would need to look closer at intersection treatments
• There would be fewer issues with the green bike boxes after the two-way conversions take place
• By existing City of Boise code, parked cars technically need to be no more than 18 inches from the curb, so this code would need to be modified if parking is moved again to be outside of the bike lanes
• ACHD needs permission to experiment from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to install the two-stage turn green boxes again
• One assumption of this study is that the curbs are fixed in place (i.e. the curb to curb roadway width will not be widened or narrowed)
• Incremental improvements may be an option
• Context of each street needs to be considered (e.g. what works on Capitol may be different than what works on Idaho)
• Parking needs are relative
  o If it is typically difficult to find on-street parking in an area, then people are less likely to notice if it is reduced
• Terry presented some of the findings of the Portland State University study on protected bike lanes

GROUP DISCUSSION (ALL)
• Was compliance with the new turn boxes affected by the Idaho Stop Law?
  o Compliance issues probably existed because they were a new treatment and not understood yet
• What is the biggest maintenance issue?
  o Sweeping – ACHD’s sweepers need 20 feet of space
    ▪ Not being able to sweep can lead to drainage issues
    ▪ Other cities have purchased smaller sweepers for these types of lanes
• Accessible parking was an issue
  o There is a webinar next week on the issue – July 2nd at 1 p.m. – ACHD will host interested attendees
• Are movable planters typically moved around a lot?
  o No, they can be moved, but usually stay in place, unless they are hit or need to be moved for some reason
• We need to clearly identify what the issues are that need to be addressed moving forward
• Was there a different between left and right-side installations?
  o Left vs. right-side was determined based on avoiding heavy turning movements at intersections (e.g. the left-turn from Idaho onto 9th was avoided by a right-side installation on Idaho)
  o The driveways from parking garages on Main Street ended up being an issue and a future installation would likely occur on the right-side, instead of the left
• There is a lot of opportunity to consider a variety of options for how to allocate the space between the existing curbs. Future projects do not have to be just a modification of the pilot project (i.e. parking buffer)
• A consensus may not emerge from the group
  o Priority will be given to the City of Boise's input from its various departments

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED (DAVE WALLACE)
• Dave Wallace presented a list of issues that need to be addressed, based on input from the general public, stakeholders, and ACHD staff (see presentation for list)
• Sequencing with other projects from DBIP and the Five-Year Work Plan will be important

ASSIGNMENT FOR THE NEXT MEETING (DAVE WALLACE)
• Dave Wallace presented a list of suggested assignments to be completed before the next meeting
• Each group will have about 10 minutes to present on their topic at the next meeting
• The assignments are:
  o Education: A Framework – Boise Bicycle Project with Safe Routes to School
  o Parking: Frame a Solution – City of Boise
  o Congestion – ACHD with City of Boise
  o Loading Zones: Time/Location – Idaho Trucking Association, City of Boise, Downtown Business Association and CCDC
    ▪ Input from private sector distributors will be important
  o Target Audience – City of Boise with ACHD
  o Maintenance – ACHD
  o Laws: Existing, what to change – Boise Police and City of Boise
    ▪ To include sidewalk ordinance
  o Pedestrian Experience and Safety – ACHD
  o Sequencing improvements – ACHD
  o Affordability – ACHD
  o Downtown signal timing – ACHD

GROUP DISCUSSION (ALL)
• Need to define an overall purpose for what we are doing
• Dave Wallace covered the mission statement again
  o Pilot project was to test drive some ideas before fitting them into the Five-Year Work Plan
• Do we want speeds to go up or down in downtown?
  o No judgment so far on what’s good
  o Conversation needs to be had at these meetings
  o Speeds are governed downtown by signal timing, not traffic calming elements or speed signs
• Suggestion to add an element to the mission statement that covers creating a livable area with bike and car parking, calm traffic, and is a safe place to walk
• Want parents to be able to ride bikes with their kids downtown
• Will we look at other north-south connections besides Capitol?
  o Yes
• City of Boise sees this project fulfilling goals besides just transportation
  o Those should be considered, too
NEXT STEPS (DAVE WALLACE)

- Dave Wallace will send out the assignment list (*done*) and where to find a PDF of the presentation
- Prepare presentations
- **Next Meeting is July 15\(^{th}\) from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the ACHD auditorium**
  - Topics:
    - Presentations from the various groups
    - Process for the rest of the project