Stakeholder Group Meeting #2 – Meeting Notes

Downtown Boise Implementation Plan – Boise Bicycle Lanes

July 15, 2014 12:00 – 2:00 PM
Ada County Highway District, Auditorium

OVERVIEW (DAVE WALLACE - ACHD)
- Dave Wallace provided an overview of the meeting’s agenda and purpose
- See sign-in sheet for list of attendees

MISSION STATEMENT, ISSUES TO SOLVE, CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS, AND SCHEDULE (DAVE WALLACE - ACHD)
- Dave Wallace solicited feedback on the mission statement
  o “Path” will be removed from the statement – “Bicycle network” is more appropriate
- Accessibility has been added as an issue that needs to be addressed
- Dave Wallace has had a number of conversations with members of the stakeholder group and others since the last meeting
  o Is the purpose of this project to get people “to” places in downtown or “through” downtown?
    ▪ Both commuters and shoppers/downtown visitors need to be served
  o More bike parking is needed
  o Floating parking may not be the best solution
  o ACHD will officially survey Main, Idaho, and Capitol soon
  o The first round of DBIP projects are going to bid this month
- The schedule has been adjusted so that the public involvement meeting (PIM) will occur on September 4th, a First Thursday, instead of August 7th
  o The turnaround between the next stakeholder group meeting and the PIM was too tight as originally scheduled (two days)

EDUCATION (JIMMY HALLYBURTON-BOISE BICYCLE PROJECT AND DAVE FOTSCH-BOISE BIKE SHARE)
- Jimmy and Dave Fotsch presented the education framework they developed with assistance from Treasure Valley YMCA Safe Routes to School, Idaho Walk Bike Alliance, Treasure Valley Cycling Association, and Boise State University
- To prepare the plan, they reviewed comments from the pilot project and efforts that have been undertaken by other cities
- The plan is geared toward educating all road users, not just to benefit bicyclists
- The top 4 negative comments from the pilot project:
  o Lanes and boxes are confusing
    ▪ Not surprising given the level of outreach in advance of the project
    ▪ A future effort needs to have a multimedia approach
  o Not enough users
    ▪ Unrealistic to expect significant changes in behavior in 30 days
• Other cities are seeing increases in people on bicycles after building more infrastructure for bicycles
  o Congestion
    ▪ The actual amount of time (18-45 seconds) is not significant. The change in percentage (20%) makes the issue seem worse than it was
    ▪ Need to balance the needs of all users (people walking, biking, and driving)
      • Front and Myrtle seem like more appropriate routes for people driving through downtown
  o Bicyclists do not follow rules
    ▪ Neither do drivers (e.g. bicycle box infringement, not following right-turn on red restriction during the pilot project)
    ▪ Neither user group fully understands all the laws
• The framework focuses on three areas
  o Why bike lanes are good for all users and businesses
  o How to use them and drive around them
  o What all users should expect from each other
• They have identified goals for people driving, biking, and walking, as well as the City of Boise
• Lessons learned from other cities
  o Start early
  o Use a multimedia approach
  o Electronic methods are generally the most effective
  o Surveys need to solicit specific, constructive feedback and include demographics
  o Public involvement is important
• Proposed strategies
  o A central, standalone website
  o Community outreach
  o Listening sessions
• Timeframe
  o Outreach should begin as soon as possible (i.e. when a final plan is approved)
  o It should last for one year after construction
• Education needs to be a public and private (both non-profit and downtown businesses) sector effort

GROUP DISCUSSION (ALL)
• The group assumed bike lanes would be the focus of educational efforts, but the framework can work for any type of improvement
• Information at hotels and other tourist locations and websites could be good for tourists
  o Bend, Oregon provides a good example of this
  o The ACHD Ada County Bike Pathways Map provides a good starting point
  o ACHD is working on adding more wayfinding signs for bicyclists
• Education will be central to all topics within this discussion (congestion, parking, deliveries, etc.)

CONGESTION (TERRY LITTLE – ACHD AND KAREN GALLAGHER – CITY OF BOISE)
• Terry Little discussed the pilot project’s impacts on motor vehicle congestion and considerations for future efforts and Karen Gallagher presented the City of Boise’s perspective
• Idaho Street is the most critical of the three pilot project streets for reviewing congestion impacts since it is the busiest during the weekday p.m. peak period
  o Volumes have not changed in the last several years on Idaho
The travel time on Idaho from Broadway to 16th increased by about 18 seconds during the pilot project
  - More restrictive intersection treatments that might come from a refined design could increase this
- Growth is expected along the Front/Myrtle corridor
  - This could possibly cause traffic to divert to Idaho Street
- Front Street volumes have also been flat over the last several years
  - It may be at capacity during the p.m. peak hour
  - 25% of traffic entering Front Street at Broadway comes from the north and could divert to Idaho Street if congestion worsens on Front Street
- The City of Boise supports exchanging a travel lane on Main, Idaho, and Capitol for a bike lane
  - A slight increase in delay is an acceptable trade-off
  - Emergency services have plenty of possible routes in downtown
- City would prefer that a bike lane on Main Street be on the right side (fewer conflicts)
- Capitol is an important connection to Boise State and this connection is becoming more important as Boise State expands to the City Center Plaza, currently under construction
- City wants to make downtown a safer place for all
- City sees bike lanes as an economic development tool
- Two alternatives to consider:
  1. Floating parking
  2. Buffered bike lane
    - What are the impacts to parking in both situations?
    - Can lanes be narrowed in places to reduce parking impacts?
    - There is an opportunity to add bike parking in the floating parking option where parking is disallowed to preserve sight triangles

PARKING (CITY OF BOISE)
- The City discussed parking impacts from the pilot project, issues to consider, and how to address them
- After a week or so into the pilot project, complaints to the City's parking staff went down
  - City also received positive feedback
- Issues that came up during the pilot project
  - Providing accessible spaces
  - Meter access
  - People understanding when they are parking in timed zone (e.g. 2-hour maximum stay)
- There are case-by-case solutions to these three issues

DELIVERIES (KÅREN SANDER - DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION AND JULIE PIPAL - IDAHO TRUCKING ASSOCIATION)
- Kåren and Julie discussed delivery issues and possible solutions
- Deliveries and loading zones in downtown need to be looked at in general, not just with respect to bike lanes
  - There is not an existing comprehensive plan
- A map with alleys and time zones would be a start
  - Adding other time zones would be helpful, too – 8th Street is a good example of a successful time zone
- Need consistent messaging to all users about time zones
- Alleys don’t always work due to obstructions or the condition of the alley (e.g. uneven surface)
  - Improvements could spur more use of them: need to designate alleys to improve
- The Downtown Business Association (DBA) would be a good communication portal for delivery and business communication
- Safety is the primary goal for delivery drivers
  - Potential projects should keep in mind their need for safe access for them

GROUP DISCUSSION (ALL)
- There is not a single number that is a breaking point for too much parking to lose
  - The pros and cons of parking removal needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis
    - Some areas are more critical for parking (e.g. some businesses are more dependent on nearby auto parking)
- A study of how far people walk in downtown Boise has not been conducted
  - The national average is three blocks
    - Spaces closest to businesses are often occupied by owners and/or employees
    - Electronic meters that cannot be repeatedly plugged would help curb this
- The City of Boise has a map of existing loading zones
- Loading needs to be figured out before anything goes to ground on Main or Idaho
- ACHD should communicate with the DBA when loading zones are moved for construction projects
- Some trucks cannot fit in certain alleys due to either building constraints or poles/other obstructions preventing access
  - City of Boise is looking into where these constraints exist
    - ACHD can help address these issues
- Idaho Street can be an alternative to Front Street for commuters since there is a connection to the Connector via Main Street near Garden City
- It needs to be kept in mind that VRT buses will no longer use Main and Idaho as they do today in two years when the multimodal center is constructed

MAINTENANCE (BRENDA MORRIS - ACHD)
- Brenda provided an overview of maintenance considerations
- ACHD is required to sweep downtown streets twice per month by its EPA permit
  - This needs to be kept in mind with any possible solution
  - Debris needs to be picked up and not just swept to meet permit requirements
- ACHD has three small (8-feet wide) sweepers, but they don’t clean the curb, which is required by the EPA permit
- The cost of additional or specialized equipment needs to be factored in if bike facilities cannot be maintained by existing equipment
  - May need to co-permit with the City

TRAFFIC LAW (SGT. KYLE CHRISTENSEN – BOISE POLICE)
- Sgt. Kyle Christensen of the Boise Police Department reviewed bicycle-related traffic laws
- With exceptions, bicycles follow the same laws as motor vehicles when riding in the roadway
  - Notable exceptions include the stopping laws
    - These are subjective
    - Sometimes lead to confusion and differing opinions
- Officers present bike safety to local children and stress that they should ride with traffic
• People on bikes are required to use a bike lane if one is provided, with a few exceptions
• People riding bikes on sidewalks are treated as pedestrians (and can therefore not use the “Idaho Stop” rules) if they are on sidewalks

GROUP DISCUSSION (ALL)
• Could you have a City code that would prohibit the riding of bikes on a sidewalk if bike lanes are provided?
  o There are issues with implementing a “wheels down” zone for bicyclists in downtown
    ▪ Don’t want to require that children ride in the street – what’s the appropriate age limit?
    ▪ Difficult to enforce
• Public service announcements would go a long way in helping Boise Police with education
  o Many violations stem from a lack of understanding, not willful disobedience
• City code would need to be changed for floating parking – currently required to be 18” from curb

STAGING AND AFFORDABILITY (MATT EDMOND – ACHD)
• Matt summarized the currently planned staging process for DBIP projects and the relative costs and other considerations of different levels of bike treatments
• Two-way conversions
  o 2014 – 3rd, 4th, 11th, 12th, and Jefferson (1st-4th only)
  o 2015 – 13th and 14th
  o 2016 – Jefferson (4th – 16th) and 8th (Bannock – Jefferson)
    ▪ 8th may not happen if the section from Bannock to Main is converted as planned by CCDC to northbound only (would only have one block of southbound travel, which doesn’t make much sense)
  o 5th and 6th are not planned for conversion, but are still under consideration for conversion, depending in part on how the other conversions go
• Bicycle projects
  o 2014 – Capitol (Front to Jefferson is being overlaid, could also add bike lanes south of Front)
  o 2015 – Idaho (10th - 16th and Capitol - Broadway)
  o 2016 – Main (Capitol - Broadway), Jefferson, and Broadway/Avenue B
  o 2017 – 11th, the remainder of Main and Idaho
• 9th Street is too complex and congested for bike facilities
  o This project will discuss alternative routes for the southbound connection
• Estimated costs of different bike treatments
  o Paint only treatments (sharrows to buffered bike lanes) - $500-$1200/block
    ▪ Varying levels of comfort
    ▪ Easiest to maintain
  o “Light” protected bike lanes (posts, parked cars, low concrete bumps) - $1000-$2500/block
    ▪ Increased comfort from paint only, especially with higher motor vehicle speeds and volumes
    ▪ Some maintenance considerations
  o “Hard” protected bike lanes (planters, hard bollards, concrete curbs) - $5500 - $22,500/block
    ▪ Increased buffering from “light” options
    ▪ Increased maintenance considerations
  o Raised protected bike lanes - very expensive
Cost estimates do not include ongoing maintenance

DOWNTOWN SIGNAL TIMING (NICK FOSTER – KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES)
- Nick discussed signal timing considerations and strategies to improve pedestrian access and comfort
- Downtown is a complicated environment
  - Set goals (e.g. priority modes, access vs. mobility) and implement plans to achieve them
- Boise already had short cycle lengths (less delay to cross the street) in downtown and uses leading pedestrian intervals in some locations
- Exclusive pedestrian phases are typically used in unique situations (e.g. 8th/Bannock) or in dense areas with high pedestrian volumes
- Signal timing controls speeds in downtown
  - Main and Idaho are timed for progression at 25-30 MPH
  - 20-25 MPH is typically the high-end target for pedestrian focused timing
    - Reduces risk of severe injury or fatality in the event of a collision with a motor vehicle compared to higher speeds
  - Timing can also progress bicycles (13-16 MPH progression speed)
  - Signing can be used to inform people driving and biking of what the progression speed is

ADA COUNTY EMPLOYEE SURVEY (LARRY MANEELY – ADA COUNTY)
- Larry provided an overview of the results of a survey of Ada County employees, focused on the 400-500 in the courthouse in downtown Boise
- 15% of employees in the courthouse bike commute
  - Interested in a collaborative program to improve biking conditions in downtown
- Courthouse is looking at improving its Bicycle Friendly Business designation (working with Boise Bicycle Project)

POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES AND NEXT STEPS (DAVE WALLACE – ACHD)
- Dave Wallace outlined three different alternatives in general categories
  - DBIP Today (as planned)
  - DBIP Plus...Boise suggested calling this “DBIP amended”
    - Conventional bike lanes or similar treatments on roads not currently planned for
    - Possibly 5th/6th as two-way streets
  - DBIP Plus Amended to include Buffer/Protect
    - DBIP Plus amended with the addition of protected and/or buffered bike lanes in locations
    - Goal is to find something workable in this category
- We have the opportunity to act soon on Capitol (October-November 2014 timeframe)
- City of Boise, ACHD, and Kittelson staff will develop the three alternatives
  - Meet sometime in next week
  - Stakeholders will go through them at the next meeting on the 5th of August
  - The alternatives will consider the entire network, not just Main, Idaho, and Capitol
- All briefings from today will be uploaded to the ACHD website
- **Next Meeting is August 5th from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the ACHD auditorium**
  - Topic: Review alternatives and recommend one to be carried forward to ACHD Commission and Boise City Council