



MEMORANDUM

June 12, 2018 Neighborhood Meeting Summary St. Helens Riverfront Connector Plan

DATE 6/13/2018
TO Project Management Team
FROM Matt Hastie and Andrew Parish, Angelo Planning Group
CC

Meeting Date: June 12, 2018

Meeting Time: 5:00 PM, St. Helens City Hall

INTRODUCTION

Jacob Graichen introduced the Riverfront Connector Project, discussing the grant from ODOT and the origins of the project.

Matt Hastie introduced the project team and roles. The purpose of this meeting is to walk through the options identified so far for potential improvements along the study corridor. The project team has early conceptual thoughts on intersection design, cross sections, and wayfinding.

We want to get questions and comments tonight but need to have a fairly structured discussion to use time efficiently. The team will discuss options and ask for comments on each individual segment or intersection.

The next step for this project is to evaluate these options and arrive at some recommendations. We will be evaluating the options for consistency with a wide variety of criteria as part of the next step – balancing local and city-wide benefits, impacts to all travel modes, and costs. After that, we will get into implementation and adoption of the preferred options. Please keep in mind that this is a long-term plan for a pretty long corridor, spanning many different kinds of areas.

Initial questions/comments included:

- What's happening with the waterfront?
 - Jacob Graichen stated that the city is in negotiations with a potential developer on the waterfront, looking at a possible hotel and mix of other uses.
- Where are you from?

- Matt Hastie described his experience in planning throughout Oregon, and in St. Helens specifically. He noted that all of the consulting team members are based in Portland.
- Who makes the final call in this project?
 - Matt Hastie briefly described the adoption process for plans such as this. Typically, the City Council votes to adopt land use and transportation plans.
- You need to be focusing on traffic from Portland along US30.

Segment 1: South 1st Street (existing)

- The recommended option is very similar to today's cross section. The goal is to keep on-street parking that is there already.
- Added "sharrows" are recommended for bicycle facilities here. Low speeds downtown allow this.
- The design includes a sidewalk and landscaping strip, which is expected to be a combination of tree wells and street furniture.
- Questions/Discussion:
 - Are you moving buildings to create sidewalks? *Response: No, all of our cross-section designs stay within current Right of Way (ROW). There are some intersections concepts that could impact properties in other segments, which we will talk about as we get to them.*

Segment 2.1: South 1st Street (Future) / Plymouth Street (Future)

- A gateway feature is proposed somewhere in Segment 2.1, depending on future development. A likely location would be at the intersection (location to be determined) where 1st St. transitions to Plymouth St.
- The recommended road cross section is the design proposed in the waterfront framework plan. This is similar to TSP collector standard which includes bike lanes, and differs by including parallel parking and wider landscape strips/stormwater treatment and sidewalks.
- This area will likely have street furnishings and pedestrian-oriented lighting.
- Questions/Discussion:
 - Without angle parking, you won't have enough parking for the waterfront. Why not have angled parking here? *Response: Consistent with the Waterfront Framework Plan, we are assuming angled parking on the Strand and parallel parking on 1st Street.*

Segment 2.2: Plymouth Street (Existing)

- There are significant constraints in the width along this corridor, where existing Plymouth street passes the treatment plant.
- The options shown are minimum and maximum width. The difference is the landscape strip.
- To save space, these designs show a downhill "sharrow", and an uphill shared-use path.
- Questions/Discussion:

- Will you have to take any property from landowners? *Response: Some intersection options that do have significant property impacts – we will get to those shortly. However, all of the street cross-sections have been designed to fit within the existing ROW.*
- Why not just take Columbia to get to the Downtown and Waterfront area? *Response: We expect lots of people to take Columbia, and the City conducted a very similar process examining improvements to that corridor. This project is a companion piece, looking at the idea of a “business loop” and alternate access. The business loop concept has been discussed and identified as a city goal for a very long time.*
- Safety is a big concern here – this road should be wider.
- Is there wildlife in the caves? Are there bats there? *Response: I have never seen or heard of any evidence of bats in these caves.*
- It is hard to bike uphill, and dangerous when wet to bicycle downhill.

Intersection: Old Portland Rd and South 6th

- The two options shown will help better define the intersection and roadway. Option A provides is full access, while option B would just allow right-in and right-out turns to and from 6th Avenue.

Segment 3: Plymouth Street to Old Portland Road

- This segment also has topographic constraints shown on the map.
- Option A is very similar to standard TSP collector section. However, landscape strips are removed. There is only room for sidewalks on the south side of the street between 8th and 10th.
- Option B shows sharrows, similar to the proposed section in 2.2. A sidewalk is shown on the south side of the street only between 8th and 10th; there is not enough room elsewhere.
- Questions/Discussion:
 - What do you mean by gateway feature? *Response: A gateway is a piece of art or wayfinding that signals that you have arrived somewhere.*
 - Sidewalks on the south side don't seem necessary.
 - I would like to have sidewalks in front of my house, and I would use them a lot.
 - There may be wetlands or a creek near here.
 - Who pays for sidewalks? *Response: Three ways typically – new development or redevelopment, a local improvement district, or a city-wide project for a specific street. In this area, urban renewal funds also could help pay for some improvements.*
 - Trails plan – these connect through the area. A designated trail on the north side would make more sense. This would help facilitate kids going to schools, pool, etc.
 - Will you hide derelict houses with landscaping?

Intersection: Old Portland Road & Plymouth Street

- Option A: Right now, spacing standards are not met. This option doesn't meet mobility standards but might be an interim solution.
- Option B: Realigns Old Portland and makes Plymouth the primary route.
- Option C: Large roundabout that provides equal emphasis on Plymouth and Old Portland.
- Option D: Smaller four-legged roundabout emphasizes Old Portland.
- With all of these options, there are property impacts. Some options impact more properties than others. We will be taking a closer look at those and other impacts as part of our next steps.
- Questions/Discussion:
 - What about trucks? *Response: Roundabouts generally have large enough diameters and truck aprons to allow them to negotiate turns.*
 - Expect truck traffic.
 - This is a choke point.
 - We don't need more ways to get to downtown.

Segment 4.1 – Old Portland to Gable Road

- Option A is the existing minor arterial section from the TSP, which includes bike lanes, landscape strips, and sidewalks. Having bicyclists adjacent to moving traffic at high speeds leads to a high level of traffic stress.
- Option B takes both bike lanes and one sidewalk from the roadway and puts them in a 12' multi-use path. There is plenty of space in this segment for the wider path.
- Option C includes a two-way cycletrack on the north side of the road, meaning that bicycles don't mix with pedestrians.

Segment 4.2 – Gable Road to Hwy 30

- This segment has more ROW than in segment 4.1. The three potential options are similar to the options of 4.1, but include an additional landscaped median or center turn lane or turn lane pockets.
- Option A is standard TSP section with an additional median.
- Option B includes the shared-use path on one side.
- Option C has a cycletrack on one side.
- There are recently constructed half-street improvements along this section.
- Questions/Discussion:
 - This is ridiculous. We don't want to look like California. The median is unnecessary, planted or not.
 - Upkeep of planted areas is a concern.
 - If you bike around here, you take your chances.

Intersection: Old Portland and Kaster

- There is a basic intersection there today that will not support future traffic volumes. No pedestrian actuation and lots of pavement.
- Option A: Standard intersection with turn lanes
- Option B: Roundabout

Intersection: Old Portland and Railroad

- This area has closely-spaced intersections, resulting in heavy delays and poor operations in the future.
- Option A provides a three-lane cross section allowing left turns, but this is problematic due to the railroad.
- Option B relocates Railroad Avenue to align with Port Ave, with a signalized intersection
- Option C is the same as Option B, with stop-control. This necessitates a three-lane cross section. (This is generally true for all intersections in this segment – they either require a signal or a two-stage left turn pocket).

Intersection: Old Portland and Gable Road

- Option A: Gable Road T's into Old Portland, resulting in lots of left turns onto Old Portland.
- Option B Stop control on Old Portland; Gable continues through like today. Two-stage left turn onto Gable.

Intersection: Gable and McNulty

- The primary improvement here is the addition of left turn pockets.

Intersection: US30 and Gable

- This intersection is different from today in that it includes a right turn lane on the westbound approach on Gable Road, resulting in increased capacity and better bicycle safety.

Segment 5 – Secondary Study Area

- This is the “alternate route” to the riverfront using the Millard Rd intersection. This secondary study area was not studied in as much detail as the others in terms of road cross-section alternatives.
- The potential to realign Millard to create a more direct connection is included in the Transportation System Plan (TSP), but not in great detail.
- The Old Portland Road proposed cross section is same as in 4.1 (multi use path on north side). The TSP suggested multi use path on the South side; we recommend shifting this to the north side to connect with other segments.
- Questions/Discussion:
 - The re-alignment of Millard impacts my property.
 - Look to the south as well, down to Bennet.
 - Traffic is already bad here.

Intersection: Millard and Old Portland

- This improvement involves a slight realignment of the intersection to support truck movements as a potential near-term improvement.

Intersection: Millard and US30

- This is similar to the proposed signalized intersection that ODOT is planning currently. We have added turn lanes on Millard to decrease delay given future traffic volumes.

NEXT STEPS

Matt reviewed upcoming schedule items. We will be evaluating these options in detail and providing recommendations. Following that will be a detailed implementation step, and then adoption.