

1333 N.W. Eastman Parkway | Gresham, OR 97030

To: Chair Butler and Planning Commissioners
From: Brian Martin, Senior Comprehensive Planner, 503-618-2266
Memo Date: July 27, 2016
Meeting Date: Aug. 8, 2016
Subject: Active Transportation Plan

This work session's purpose is to:

- Provide an update to the [Active Transportation Plan](#) and an overview of findings so far.
- Give Planning Commissioners an opportunity to provide input on key destinations and walking and biking challenges in Gresham.
- Describe next steps and where the project is headed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Active transportation is any human-powered way to move through the city, such as walking or bicycling. (Active transportation supports transit.)

This citywide project will provide a detailed plan for active transportation to guide future improvements, such as adding sidewalks, more safe crosswalks, bike lanes, trails and paths. These improvements can make safer, more comfortable places to ride a bicycle and walk.

This is important because it provides people more choices about how to get around. It also makes a safer, more enjoyable trip for people who cannot drive or choose not to drive, including children, some older people and those who do not have access to cars.

Improved pedestrian and bicycle routes will help people get to places that are important to them, such as jobs, schools, parks, places of worship and places that offer healthful food. In addition, routes will provide recreational opportunities.

This project will:

- Inventory the City's active transportation network, including bike lanes, shared streets, trails, paths and amenities such as wayfinding and safety signs.
- Update the existing bike network (from the Transportation System Plan) and create a draft pedestrian network that are comfortable and encourage people to choose active transportation to get to important destinations, including healthful food options, recreational opportunities, jobs and schools.
- Identify gaps in those networks and a list of projects to address those gaps and complete the active transportation network.
- Establish criteria for how the City prioritizes bicycle and pedestrian projects to improve active transportation networks.

- Update the vision and goals for City programs related to Active Transportation, such as Safe Routes to Schools and bike safety programs.
- Create a toolbox of feasible design options, including new design and engineering ideas.
- Feature inclusive public engagement to ensure a wide variety of people are involved in its creation, including people of color, people with low incomes and people of different ages and abilities.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

1. Look at what we have

The City has completed an initial inventory and condition of walking and bicycling routes in Gresham. Now we want to ask people who spend time in Gresham to tell us:

- What are important places you need to go (jobs, stores, places of worship, locations where fresh, healthful food is available)?
- What makes it hard to get there on foot or on a bicycle (wide streets with fast traffic; lack of sidewalks, other reasons)?
- How should we choose the most important projects to improve walking and bicycling?

Conversations about this plan will include a variety of ages, cultures, ethnicities and races. This project is partially funded by a Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant, which was awarded to Multnomah County by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The REACH grant will support integration of health and equity into the plan as well as culturally relevant community engagement and development of culturally specific maps and educational materials.

2. Imagine better walking and biking

The project then will develop:

- An updated network of bicycle routes and walking routes for Gresham.
- A list of projects that would improve those walking and bicycling routes.
- A priority list of projects (based on criteria used to prioritize them).

People in Gresham will be able to influence the results during upcoming events, meetings and conversations.

3. Complete a plan

The project then will:

- Develop a plan that includes those future networks and prioritized projects.
- Provide ideas about how to implement the plan and pay for the improvements over time (including new bike and walking maps).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Gresham completed a Transportation System Plan update in 2013 with a vision that "Gresham's Transportation System Plan will support the growth and development of the city of Gresham as an

economically vital and livable community by providing its residents and all transportation system users' safe, pleasant and convenient access and travel within, to and through the city."

Guiding principles from that document are that Gresham should:

- Ensure the transportation system provides a safe, secure and attractive travel experience that supports livability and community interaction.
- Ensure access and mobility by increasing multimodal travel options and providing a continuous, interconnected transportation system.
- Facilitate development of a transportation system that aligns with adopted local and regional land use plans, is responsive to the surrounding community and is cost effective to develop and maintain.

Policies included in the Transportation System Plan include:

Bicycle system

1. Develop a continuous and convenient bicycle network.
2. Support programs and projects to improve bicycle safety and reduce the rate of bicycle-related crashes.

Pedestrian system

1. Provide pedestrian facilities that are continuous, accessible and adaptable to all users.
2. Improve pedestrian access to transit from residential, commercial, industrial and institutional developments.
3. Develop and promote safe pedestrian environments.

This Active Transportation Plan, which was requested by Gresham residents and stakeholders as a follow up to the Transportation System Plan, will help meet the City's transportation vision and implement the policies to improve walking and biking in Gresham. It will allow the City to look more closely at policy and facility gaps; outreach and education needs; and benefits to the broader community of investing in transportation improvements that allow more people to choose walking and bicycling for recreation and transportation.

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Using the REACH grant funding, Gresham hired Alta Planning & Design to:

- Evaluate existing conditions and plans. (See report at www.greshamoregon.gov/ATP.)
- Identify network and policy gaps and opportunities. (See report at www.greshamoregon.gov/ATP.)
- Create a draft low-stress bicycling network and identify projects that would help build that network.
- Create a draft walking network and identify projects that would help build that network.
- Develop draft walking and bicycling project prioritization criteria.
- Develop final walking and bicycling networks.
- Develop draft prioritized projects.
- Develop final prioritized projects.

Work also is ongoing on active transportation-specific goals and policies.

Future technical work (also largely funded by the REACH grant) is expected to include:

- Updated policies.
- Performance targets to evaluate whether the Active Transportation Plan and its projects are succeeding in meeting community goals.
- Evaluation and recommendations for City walking and bicycling programs, such as Safe Routes to Schools and bicycling safety efforts.
- Design toolbox that describes options for improving walking and bicycling.
- A funding strategy.
- Updated bike maps, including maps specifically for other cultures.
- Draft and final Active Transportation Plan documents.

The technical work and products described above will be completed in conjunction with staff and stakeholders. Extensive, inclusive and meaningful public engagement will inform the Active Transportation Plan.

To that end, staff will be conducting engagement work through the project. In addition, the REACH funding also was used to hire Design + Culture Lab, a Portland-based firm that is helping the City connect with underrepresented community members. The firm has hired community liaisons to conduct engagement with the African American/Black community; other communities of color; people with limited English proficiency; low-income communities; renters and others.

Design + Culture Lab also will train the community liaisons about city government, outreach methods, transportation planning and how to report engagement findings. The community liaison efforts are being conducted in conjunction with the [Rockwood Rising](#) project to [develop](#) the catalyst site.

For the Active Transportation Plan, the initial engagement focus is understanding what destinations are important to people and what obstacles they experience when they walk and bike in Gresham. That will inform work on the draft networks and initial lists of improvement projects. Later, engagement will focus on walking and bicycling networks and projects.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue with public engagement, including the following events:

- Gresham Saturday Market at Mt. Hood Community College: Aug. 6.
- Rockwood Farmers' Market: Date to be determined.
- Transportation Subcommittee: Early September
- Other events to be determined

An online survey is available in English and Spanish at www.GreshamOregon.gov/ATP. Staff invites Planning Commission members to take the survey in advance of the meeting.

The City also will spread the word on its social media channels and by connecting with community partners. Design + Culture Lab also will conduct engagement activities. Staff likely will return to the Planning Commission in the fall to discuss the draft walking and biking networks.