



STAFF REPORT

TRANSPORTATION DIVISION
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To: Planning Commission

Cc: Robin Hutcheson, Nora Shepherd, Cheri Coffey

From: Becka Roof

Date: January 7, 2014

Re: Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan Update

The purpose of this staff report is to present the draft Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan Update with the Planning Commission. This report is in preparation for a briefing on the Plan at Commission's January 14 meeting as part of the adoption process.

REQUEST:

Mayor Ralph Becker requests that the Planning Commission review the draft Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan, in preparation for adoption.

BACKGROUND & KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN:

The Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan is an update to the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan adopted in 2004. The plan is a citywide network approach, with recommendations on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, education, encouragement, and enforcement. A key focus of the plan is to incorporate the City's Complete Streets policy, adopted since the prior plan, and to incorporate recent innovations in pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The plan also provides guidance, including a recommended phasing, for pedestrian, bicycle, and motorist education and enforcement around safe interaction. Encouragement programs to promote walking and bicycling are also recommended in the 5-year timeline.

The Plan's Executive Summary at the start of the plan document provides a high-level overview of the key recommendations.

The plan will be used by several of City's agencies to provide guidance in implementing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements, both standalone and in conjunction with street reconstruction and resurfacing projects. The plan also guides the City's involvement, partnerships, and implementation of pedestrian and bicycle programs.

The new proposed plan will replace the existing Bicycle & Pedestrian Master plan, adopted in 2004.

PROCESS:

The Planning Commission and Council have been briefed three times prior during the plan process, with accompanying transmittals and presentations. These have included summaries of public engagement at each step.

The Salt Lake City Transportation Division now presents the draft master plan, along with a summary of the public and staff comments.

Revisions to the master plan based on the public and internal comment summarized below will be incorporated for a formal hearing with the Planning Commission, which is anticipated for the January 28 or February 12.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS:

The Pedestrian & Bicycle Master Plan is complementary to the Downtown In Motion Master Plan, adopted in 2008, and Sugar House Circulation Plan, adopted in 2013. The master plan draft is highly compatible with the public comment and city direction in Plan Salt Lake (in progress), as discussed in a prior transmittal. The plan is also compatible with the city's area master plans, which recommend bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in neighborhoods and business districts throughout the City. Those plans were consulted for compatibility in drafting this plan – including drafts of the West Salt Lake and Downtown Community master plans. Staff is also coordinating for the in-progress East Bench Master Plan.

Some of the transit-focused recommendations of this plan will be furthered in the upcoming Transit Master Plan. These two modal plans provide detail in support of the City's Transportation Master Plan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE PLAN:

A summary of the public process is the focus of Chapter Three beginning on page 29 of the draft.

Throughout the planning process, the public has opportunity to shape the direction of the plan. Public engagement included two open houses, a public preference survey (nearly 1000 responses), a virtual open house for the preliminary recommendations (191 responses), and a presence at nearly 30 events over the summer, with hundreds of constituents actively engaged with the plan materials. In total we received about 2,500 comments, survey responses, map mark-ups, and preference “sticky dots.”

The plan also received input from a Stakeholder committee including representatives of both walking and bicycling community members, Utah Department of Transportation, Utah Transit Authority, the University of Utah, Downtown Alliance, Visit Salt Lake, and others. A focus group including community members, business representatives, University of Utah, community council, and Downtown Alliance assisted with input on a University to Downtown bikeway. The internal Steering Committee included representatives from Streets, Engineering, Planning, Economic Development, Sustainability, Parks, Police, and RDA – in addition to the City's ADA coordinator.

The Transportation Advisory Board and Bicycle Advisory Committee (a standing committee of TAB) have both received regular briefings to give input throughout the process, and the Transportation Advisory Board has weighed in with a positive recommendation on the plan at their meeting of January 5, 2015.

Further summary of the public input at each of these stages was included in the three prior transmittals related to this plan, as sent to the Planning Commission and City Council in February 2013, August 2013 and February 2014.

The draft plan itself was publicized and available for public comment from Nov. 26, 2014 to Dec. 28. The comment deadline was extended by public request from Dec. 17 to Dec. 28.

Availability of the draft for comment was advertised to

- Approximately 200 people who had previously requested communications on the plan throughout the public process; this list has grown slightly since the draft was released.
- Community councils through the Mayors' Office Liaisons

- City Council Members for inclusion in their newsletters
- Media outlets in Salt Lake City resulting in coverage including the Deseret News, KSL, and the City Weekly.
- The City's Transportation Advisory Board and Bicycle Advisory Committee – with a request to distribute to organizational and personal networks.
- The Steering and Stakeholder Committees and U to Downtown Focus Group for the plan – also with a request to distribute to organizational and personal networks.
- Through social media including Facebook and Twitter.

In addition to those who viewed the plan directly through the project's website www.walkbikeslc.com, the topic on Open City Hall received over 230 unique views. We received about 155 individual comments, with 92% of respondents supporting the plan. We also received comment from city staff, including members of the project steering committee, and from outside partner agencies such as UDOT and the Utah Transit Authority.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS:

Each comment received is being considered independently in a comment resolution matrix. This matrix will show how the City will accept, accept with modifications, or decline each comment. This work is still in progress but will be completed prior to the Planning Commission briefing on January 14, and a tabular format will be available prior to the hearing.

The summary below highlights the significant and common themes from the public comment and internal comments on the draft plan.

- **Several people wrote with simple support for the plan** – citing improved transportation for themselves and their kids. There were some requests that the plan be implemented faster, and/or concern that corridors designated for further study should be higher priority. Several people asked that facilities near their own residences be prioritized for earlier implementation. *“Sooner” or “now” was a common theme.*
 - Incorporation of comments – We appreciate the support for the plan. Corridors designated for further study are a priority, and several have already been funded for those additional studies. The plan suggests timelines that we believe are doable in terms of overall resources and community support for change.
- **Education and enforcement programs were supported, but only lightly**, in about 8% of comments. This was less common than we had anticipated, as we receive many requests for education and enforcement. UDOT commented that programs need to address integrated motorist, bicyclist, and pedestrian education rather than focusing solely on one mode. Some did request to implement specific programs sooner.
 - Incorporation of comments – We plan to include better language about the fact that education is multi-modal, a balance between all road users, and will take another look at the timing of a few programs. The intention is to recommend a doable, 5-year phasing.
- **A few people (8%) wrote to express general opposition to the plan.**

Opposition was a minority opinion. The general support for the plan is mirrored by strong support for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the City's biennial Dan Jones polling. For example, in the most recent edition of the poll, the city asked about a tax increase:

- 66% would be very willing or somewhat willing to support a tax increase to improve pedestrian and bicycle trails.
- 63% would be very willing or somewhat willing to support a tax increase to improve commuter bike lanes.
- **Additional consideration of pedestrian facilities & recommendations** was a common theme in comments received from the Planning Division as well as several members of the public. Concern about pedestrian crossings and signal timing / buttons was a common theme. The Planning Division requested that the plan recommend that traffic signals give a pedestrian phase without the use of buttons, narrow motor vehicle turn radii and consider locations to eliminate motor vehicle turn lanes.
 - The plan will be changed to specifically reference the Mid-Block Walkways Design Guidelines, pedestrian elements of the Downtown Community Plan, and clarify the pedestrian priorities of the City at every intersection and on every street. As referenced above, the plan will recommend an update to local design guides or further endorsement of national urban design guides relating to the public way.
 - While pedestrians receive priority downtown, the plan will not recommend the removal of pedestrian buttons. The use of these buttons during off-peak hours provides a reasonable balance between pedestrian safety and decreased air-pollution. Outside of the master plan process, a planned maintenance tune-up of the City's traffic signals will consider improvements to pedestrian signal timing / phasing.
- **Protected bike lanes were selected as a topic** by several members of the public. 24% of the individuals commenting on the plan called out support for protected bike lanes. 8% wrote in opposition, sometimes as the only comment on the plan, and 67% were silent.
 - No change to the plan recommendations. Most of the concerns about protected bike lanes can be addressed at the project design level.
- **A few comments related to locations outside the City**, or to connections between walking, bicycling and transit in the southern part of the Salt Lake valley.
 - While these are outside our scope, these comments reinforce the value of collaborations with our neighboring municipalities, the Utah Transit Authority, and UDOT – all of which are important components of the plan.
- **Several detailed suggestions for pedestrian designs**, and comments on specific intersection design were submitted. The Planning Division suggested an update to the City's Urban Design Element from the 1980s.
 - Pedestrian recommendations are very fine grained. Every intersection in the city should be designed for pedestrians, and every street is a walking environment. While the plan makes recommendations for some key locations to be addressed sooner, pedestrian design should be incorporated and funded as a key element in every project. The plan will be modified to further reflect this recommendation.
 - The plan will also recommend that, outside this master plan process, the City should consider updating the Urban Design Element and/or more strongly incorporating the designs from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)'s recent Urban Street Design Guide, Urban Bikeway Design Guide, and forthcoming Transit Design Guide.

- The City’s ADA coordinator, Engineering Division and two members of the public suggested **additional Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) emphasis** within the plan.
 - Revise the draft to incorporate input and language provided by ADA and Engineering staff explaining the City’s ADA efforts to date, and providing guidance for the future.
- Several public responses addressed the need for **maintenance** of both pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
 - This is already emphasized in the plan.
- **Comments requested another look at east-west side connections**, including train crossings particularly at corridors where trains routinely stop across an intersection.
 - This is a valuable addition to highlight and is relevant to both bicycle and pedestrian access. While the plan draft provides strong corridor connections east and west, it will be modified to clarify that these corridor improvements should address the crossings of the train and freeway (I-15) interchanges. The approach may include ped/bike overpasses or significant changes to train operations.
- **The historical timeline included in the plan** skips from the early 1900s to the 1970s, and is too bicycle focused, according to the Planning Division and a couple members of the public. Outside of the written comment process, several staff and members of city boards expressed interest and support for including this historical perspective.
 - The Planning Division’s helpful additions filling in the timeline will be incorporated, and a few key additional items added.
- The Planning Division suggested **stronger ties between the facilities and land-use**.
 - This is primarily a network plan to balance multi-modal access on the public roadways of the City. While walking and bicycling are integrated as transportation modes, they can also be used for recreation and fitness – the latter suggests facilities independent of land use. At same time, we agree that this connection can be strengthened. The plan will be changed to add reference to the relationship between land use, form-based code, and streetscape; the City’s increasing densities; and the desirability of neighborhood business areas and mixed use development to enable shorter trips that people are more likely to make by walking and biking.