

# Open House #1 Summary

Date: Tuesday, May 16, 2023

Project: Cottage Grove Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan

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Subject: **Cottage Grove Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan Open House #1 Public Comments Summary**

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## Overview

The City of Cottage Grove and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) hosted an open house for the Cottage Grove Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan project on May 2 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Cottage Grove Armory. The purpose of the open house was to introduce the members of public to the project and receive public input on the project's goals, objectives and community needs.

The project team developed informational displays and stations as summarized below.

- **Project Background & Overview:** Outlined the project need and purpose, timeline and opportunities for community engagement.
- **Goals, Objectives and Criteria:** Presented the draft goals, objectives and criteria for input on community priorities. Explained the relationship between the project criteria and the improvement evaluation process later in the project.
- **Existing Conditions:** Reviewed existing conditions for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, utilizing maps and photo collages to identify network gaps, current conditions, activity nodes and priority areas, and safety for non-motorized traffic.

## Community Comments

Members of the public could provide feedback in a variety of ways at the open house. During the open house, the project team recorded feedback from conversations with members of the public and collected additional comments through written forms and a criteria ranking activity.

The following section outlines feedback received during the open house, noting both overall themes and location-specific feedback.

### Community Feedback Themes

- Strong desire for **improved connectivity** and access to **recreational trails and parks**, including the Row River Trail.

- Widespread concerns about **safety** for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially at key intersections of concern. Some community members described using less direct local streets to avoid traffic but cited the difficult pavement conditions.
- Support for **improving transit connections** for people who walk and bike, including bike rack capacity and secure storage to allow for car-free trips from start to finish. The PeaceHealth bike share program in Eugene was highlighted as an example that works well.
- Community members highlighted the need for improved sidewalk **conditions** and transit access to better serve **people with disabilities**.
- **E-bikes and e-scooters** were mentioned, with some community members expressing interest in potential financial incentives to lower the cost of purchase.
- **Parking availability** for both vehicles and bicycles, especially near downtown, was mentioned as an issue.
- **Improved signage and curb markings** were mentioned as a strategy to alert motorists that bicyclists may be in the roadway. Enforcement of traffic safety laws was mentioned as a possible way to improve how motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists share the road.

### Location-Specific Feedback

- Several people discussed opportunities to create a **loop trail** by stringing together existing trails (Row River Trail and trails in the North Regional Park and Row River Nature Park). Community members discussed opportunities for a **new trail connection** along the back fence of the airport. This option could have feasibility issues and some people felt that the route might have to utilize Row River Road for a segment, while others expressed the desire to avoid that scenario.
- Multiple people commented on the **Hillside Drive** ODOT facility's lack of shoulders and frequent event-related traffic that create a dangerous environment for people walking and bicycling who use the road more often than it would seem.
- An unsuccessful **mobility hub feasibility study** application in partnership with the **Lane Transit District (LTD)** was mentioned as LTD looks to add a midday route. ADA requirements presented challenges to the application's success, but the mobility hub concept should be revisited.
- One person expressed safety concerns about the intersection of **Gowdyville Road** and **Cottage Grove Lorane Road/Main St**, noting the lack of shoulder and limited sight distance due to the road's curves. Logging trucks often come into conflict with pedestrians. Bicyclists frequently use this location to access transit and Bohemia Elementary School. This area is expected to see housing growth in the future. The intersection and bridge are located outside of the urban growth boundary. A **multi-use path** from **Bohemia Park** to **Lincoln Middle School** was suggested. Cottage Grove Public Works Director Faye Stewart indicated the City is acquiring right-of-way for the path and mentioned several planned and potential connections to the southern end of Cottage Grove near future development and vacant land south of Lincoln Middle School.

- There is interest in a **connection** between the **Row River Trail** and **Douglas Road** north of **Main Street**. The exact location and alignment would need to be determined, as there is a storage facility and several residential properties between Douglas Road and the trail.
- An area with new housing is accessed primarily via **M Street**, which could benefit from improved street connectivity to provide additional routes to the new development to reduce and slow traffic.
- The intersection of **Main Street** and **R Street** offers poor conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, including a lack of sidewalks west of the intersection. The roadway jog on Main Street limits sight distance and forces cars on R Street to pull out into the crossing in order to see oncoming traffic. Pavement markings, including stop bars and lane marking, have faded and should be restriped.
- Accessing **Trailhead Park** from **Main Street** is dangerous for bicyclists approaching traveling **east**.
- The narrowing of **W Main Street** when crossing the **bridge near River Road** presents a hazard for bicyclists when exiting the bike lane.
- There is interest in a **bike and pedestrian path parallel to I-5** between Row River Trail and Row River Road/Exit 174 to **avoid Gateway Blvd.**, which is unfriendly to people who walk and bike due to high traffic speed and curves. The suggested path could continue south to **Whiteaker Ave** or **Main Street**. The speed limit on **Gateway Blvd.** is currently 35 mph. Potential solutions to slow traffic, particularly at the Row River Trail crossing, include reducing the speed limit to 25 mph, adding rumble strips, installing advance flashing light warning signs and correcting the placement of the pedestrian-activated button to correspond with the correct side of the crossing.
- One person said the **activity nodes** correspond with their experience as a pedestrian and bicyclist and emphasized the need for improvements to the **downtown area**.
- Multi-use paths in south Eugene were cited as strong examples from which to review, with an emphasis on a multidirectional, multi-use path on a single side of a street.
- There is interest in a bike lane on **Highway 99** north of **Main Street**.
- **Douglas Avenue** is a low-volume, low-speed road frequently used by pedestrians and bicyclists to reach **North Regional Park** to the north end, and to access downtown on the south end via the railroad crossing at Villard Street. A better connection to the **Row River Trail** via **Villard Street** was suggested.

## Project Criteria Ranking Results

As part of the goals, objectives and criteria station, community members placed stickers next to the project criteria they value most. **Safety** and **Gap Closure** received the most votes (7 each), followed by **Land Use and Transit Linkages** (6) and **User Level of Comfort** (5). Fewer votes were received for **Access** (3), **Community Support** (2), and **Equity** and **Cost and Complexity** (1 each).