

February 14, 2012 Galveston Avenue Task Force and Stakeholder Meeting Comments

The Task Force held an additional meeting with Galveston Avenue corridor business and property owners.

1. Introductions

Task Force chair, Al Tozer called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He provided a brief introduction and summary of the Task Force's activity over the last few months. He asked for a round of introductions:

Visitors:

- Tim Jewsbury & Dennis Snyder – representing the 7-Eleven Store
- Jeff Monson – representing Commute Options for Central Oregon
- John Kelly – from the Old Bend Neighborhood Association
- Jerry Mitchell & David Ditz – representing True Adams Co.
- Brian Harrington – area resident
- Aaron Henson – area resident
- Cheryl Howard – representing the Deschutes County – Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- Erik Huffman – representing the Bend Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC)

Galveston Avenue Task Force:

- Jason Adams
- Joanne Richter
- Stacey Stemach
- Al Tozer
- Sally Russell
- Rick Root (also City of Bend staff member)

Staff:

- Nick Arnis, Transportation Engineering Manager
- Robin Lewis, Project Engineer

Consultant:

Tom Atkins, J.T. Atkins & Company PC

Discussion and Comments

Revised Concept Plan – (i.e., the current Concept Plan)

Last meeting feedback and discussion of the Concept Plan revisions:

Volunteer meeting facilitator and planning consultant Tom Atkins led the discussion and guided the audience and Task Force through a verbal summary of the changes that had been made to the original plan (both the old and new plans were mounted side-by-side on the wall to help to easily illustrate the modifications). Rick Root also noted that the questions and issues that were made at the last meeting (January 18th) had been included in the meeting handout materials.

Tom highlighted the revised plan design that now includes: Two 11-foot wide travel lanes (one in each direction), buffered bike lanes (i.e., a 2-foot buffer on the travel lane side, a 5-foot bike lane, then another 2-foot buffer on the parking/curb side) to be located on each side of the street, a planter/landscape strip and or parallel parking bays and 6-foot wide sidewalks on each

side of the street. The entire described street section would fall within Galveston Avenue's existing 80-foot wide rights-of-way.

He also pointed out that the landscaped strip could be used for variable design elements, including; storm water treatment areas (e.g., "rain gardens"), café seating, bike parking, new street luminaires, street trees, etc. The landscape zone of the street section would also continue to be the location of traffic control signs, utility poles, fire hydrants, transit stops, etc. Some limited parking bays might also be introduced on the north side, if businesses were willing to close existing driveways.

Tom noted the three varieties of street trees in the street section; two different varieties within the landscape strip – one shorter, to not conflict with the overhead utility lines (on the south side of the street), and a third, medium height variety to be located possibly within the proposed one-block median. (The overhead utilities could be relocated but typically this has a high cost associated with it so the presumption is the existing utilities would remain in place.) The tree varieties could also be a source of different seasonal colors and textures.

It is also envisioned that the new parking bays could be constructed with *permeable pavement* to support supplemental storm water run-off collection and provide added water treatment and retention.

The revised plan still includes the proposed new mini-urban-roundabout, at Harmon Street and the one-way street system on Columbia (southbound) and Harmon (northbound) streets located to the south of Galveston Avenue. Diagonal, back-in parking is also still proposed on the inside curb section (i.e., the business side) of the "triangle" block created by the described streets on both Columbia and Harmon. No parking is proposed on that section of the south side of Galveston Avenue (i.e., there are conflicting gas station driveways and a bus stop on that block).

The revised plan reflects a number of changes that have been made in response to concerns that had been raised at the Galveston Avenue Open House (that was held on November 17, 2011) and concerns that were raised in the feedback questionnaire.* The biggest concern, voiced by many Galveston Avenue business owners with respect to the original Concept Plan, was focused on the raised median that prevented all left turns (except at street intersections). There was general audience preference for the revised plan (the same plan was presented today as it was at the January Task Force meeting).

* <http://www.bendoregon.gov/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=7204>

Tom facilitated input from the audience. Tom, staff and the Task Force provided answers to questions or provided further clarification on design elements including the rationale behind many features of the plan.

Questions and issues raised by the audience:

- Provide clarity on the parking changes. Response: Tom identified the locations of the proposed parking of the Concept Plan.

- Are the 11-foot travel lanes a sufficient width for truck traffic? Response: The bike lanes have an additional two-foot wide 'buffer' strip between the bike lane and travel lane. This buffer is planned to be marked either with paint or (preferably) different colored pavement. So effectively, they are 13-foot motor vehicle travel lanes that, by virtue of their design, encourage motorists to drive in the center of the 11-foot delineated travel lane.
- Concern about wrong-way drivers on the new one-way streets (the example of Union Street at Jacksonville was cited where this is a common problem). Response: This likely can be addressed by new curb design and adequate traffic control signing. The Union Street intersection at Newport Avenue was also cited as an example of how wrong-way traffic can be managed with restrictive curb design.
- Will a mid-block crossing be facilitated through the one-block section with the median? Response: No – pedestrians would be encouraged to walk a half block to cross Galveston Avenue at the nearest intersection.
- Will new street lighting be provided? If new lighting was provided that is similar to the Old Mill area fixtures, then the poles could also hold event banners and/or planter boxes. Response: Yes – that is the vision. But the issue of maintenance and monthly cost could limit the current availability of approved pole/fixture styles (City experience was cited with the recent Metolius project). Supplemental lighting is a project element proposed in the Riverside Boulevard (grant funded) Project – at pedestrian intersection crossings that access Drake Park. It would be strategic for any Galveston Avenue Lighting improvements to match the same fixture style so that there is lighting uniformity along the corridor. *Comment from the Task Force:* This is a great example of an opportunity to form partnerships with businesses that may have a financial role in supporting special lighting costs, event banner placement, flower basket installation and maintenance, etc., to help identify this unique business area.
- Have land use issues been considered? Response: This has been an on-going topic of discussion. It has always been considered a follow-up issue to discuss as it relates to possibly establishing a zoning overlay district to address parking requirements, other possible special land use provisions, etc. The desire has always been to promote business vitality while at the same time protecting neighborhoods.
- The observation was made that they like everything in the Concept Plan – but would like to see marked crosswalks (one key difference between the previous and current plan was the former design had illustrated full (4-side) crosswalks at each intersection while the new plan doesn't show any). Response: The desire is to make the corridor more pedestrian-friendly while judiciously placing any special markings where they provide the most safety value to pedestrians. This is a difficult issue; it is expected that the eventual design team would figure-out this issue. *Audience suggestion:* At least retain any of the existing crosswalks.
- What about crosswalks on only one side of an intersection vs. both sides (at intersecting streets with Galveston Avenue)? Response: The problem with that type of design is that (i.e., with only one marked crosswalk) – in roughly half of the desired crossings - it forces

pedestrians out of direction across three quadrants of the intersection just to get to their desired destination.

- The Concept Plan needs a legend to provide better clarity of the project elements. Response: Yes – agree. Also, adding either specific plan “call-outs” or other supplemental labeling would improve the understanding of the plan. Additional plan changes may need to be limited as this entire Concept Plan was generated by volunteer labor.
- Sign visibility due to impact of trees. Response: New trees would be sufficient size to be trimmed to City Code ground clearance requirements and be located such that they do not obscure sight-vision areas. The observation was also made, that by encouraging slower speed traffic on Galveston Avenue, it should also improve driver reaction time to businesses so the presence of additional trees may, in that respect, be more beneficial to businesses.

Recommendation of the Task Force – “Guiding Principles”:

[City staff editorial comment: It was understood that the Concept Plan, as detailed as it might appear, still falls short of a finished, construction bid-ready plan. The intent of the Task Force’s one-page plan is to illustrate the concept in as much detail as citizen resources permit. While much more detail could be added by the citizen’s group, it was deemed beyond the time and, in some cases, beyond the technical expertise of the committee.]

Therefore, it is the objective of the Task Force to provide the City with important Guiding Principles that might help inform the next level of design effort. The City would, in turn, prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to enlist the aid of a capable multi-disciplined consultant team. The principles, in this respect, would then help provide City staff with details needed to help craft a RFQ that has a clearly defined project scope that is consistent with the Task Force’s recommendations, as much as practical.

The City would further engage the Task Force, as necessary, to clarify, support or provide other assistance that would help advance the Concept Plan toward a more substantial end-product. The objective is to have a final plan that is capable of being used to guide Capital Improvement Program (CIP) planning/ construction, coordination of other maintenance activities/resources, provide support of grant applications, or act as a guide to private development and/or redevelopment activity and any other process that would help advance the Task Force’s vision forward to becoming a reality.]

General statement of the Task Force: The proposed Concept Plan: The biggest concern voiced by many Galveston Avenue Street business owners concerned the raised median that prevented all mid-block left turns (i.e., lefts turns only being permitted at street intersections). The revised plan honors that concern with a new proposed street section that has eliminated all but a one-block section (between 12th & Federal streets) of the raised median. For the remaining blocks, between 14th Street and the Deschutes River (except at the roundabouts at each end) there is an absence of a dedicated left-turn pocket.

The Task Force desires that the next level of design review should account for the following important concepts and/or resolution of issues:

- Crosswalks at Intersections:

Discussion: Pedestrian movement on, along and across Galveston Avenue was a key part of the issues that were identified as important issues at the beginning of this Task Force concept planning effort. The project should honor that vision (intent). Crosswalks should be identified by either painted parallel lines, or more preferably, different pavement color should be used in the design. There was some mixed opinion (between staff and the Task Force) about whether it is better to mark both sides of all of the street crossings or limit the markings to only higher crossing demand intersections. Also, the general consensus was; that all intersections ought to be treated the same. In this respect, another idea was to delineate entire intersections in a different material and/or color. The next level of design consideration should take a careful look at the pedestrian crossing component design - particularly the north-south crossings of Galveston Avenue.

Recommendation (Motion): "Take pedestrian crossings that were marked on the old plan and transfer them to the new plan" (motion passed unanimously 6-0*). The next level of design would consider elements of the crosswalk discussion.

[* Note: Due to the lack of remaining meeting time, only the first item had a formal vote by the Task Force and the subsequent items represented a consensus agreement by the Task Force with no vote taken.]

- Storm Water Run-off Management:

Discussion: Consider possible coordination with the Mirror Pond Project

Recommendation: Storm water run-off management was also one of the key issues of the Task Force. It is imperative that the next design phase fully evaluate how to incorporate storm water treatment in the design. A full-range of options is anticipated from rain gardens to permeable pavement. Consider effective low-impact options.

- Power Line Removal/Relocation:

Recommendation: Explore options of relocating the existing overhead utility lines, if financially feasible.

- (Galveston Avenue) Driveway Removal:

Recommendation: Clearly communicate to business owners the value and benefit to their business of driveway removal (and replacement with curb-side parking).

- Alleys:

Discussion: The River West Neighborhood Association (RWNA) has tried to raise awareness of the alleys with a specific emphasis on recognizing pride of ownership to clean them up and maintain them in an attractive fashion (with Association sponsored awards given to deserving property owners). Some property owners have taken this to heart others have been less interested. As the alleys are typically only 15-feet wide (some alleys appear wider due to

adjacent property paving along the edges), probably the biggest issue with the narrow alley condition is maintaining an unobstructed passageway, as much as possible. Specifically, the desire is to prevent encroachment of this area with parked vehicles, trash receptacles, or other misc. obstacles. If there are fewer driveways on Galveston, alleys become increasingly important to help support business circulation needs. Thus, unobstructed alleys, if paved, can better serve some business functions, such as access to/from rear parking areas, trash collection, or in some cases, can accommodate some delivery activity (an excellent example is the alley between 14th and 12th streets, south of Galveston Avenue – that seems to serve these purposes well).

Recommendation: Recommend providing delineation (survey) of the alleys to define and mark the rights-of-way so it is evident to all what area to keep clear. Alleys should be as functional as possible for all modes of travel.

- Traffic Analysis

Discussion: Another one of the biggest concerns is traffic analysis of the proposed Concept Plan; both the existing conditions and future forecast Traffic. By far, one of the biggest concerns with the Concept Plan is the loss of the dedicated left-turn pocket on Galveston Avenue and the resultant impact on traffic. Will turning traffic unreasonably delay through traffic? Will frustrated drivers then pull around the turning vehicle into the buffered bike lane and endanger bicyclists? Where will any potentially diverted traffic go and what other negative impacts might it cause (e.g., any additional traffic diverted onto other local streets some that don't have complete sidewalk systems might contribute to the erosion of safety within the adjacent neighborhood or simply be detrimental to the quality of life)?

Recommendation: The traffic analysis needs to maintain a balance for all modes of travel – not simply recommend motor-vehicle improvements that just cancel-out any benefits of the Concept Plan. Consider possibly special criteria for arterial streets that support similar design efforts – this may require Transportation System Plan (TSP) amendments [*Staff comments: However, there is currently some TSP language that gets at these specific concerns. See: the Bend TSP***, Chapter 6, Section 6.5.1.4: Central City – Minor Arterial Street Widening Limitation, pages 125 -126, and Section 6.9.6, Policy 21, pages 165 – 166.]

** <http://www.ci.bend.or.us/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=4091>

- Traffic-Calming

Recommendation: The final design should place a priority on calming-traffic, not necessarily on improvements that move traffic as fast and as free-flow as possible.

- Build Community and Promote Energy Conservation

Recommendation: A fundamental theme of the concept plan was to help make the Galveston Avenue business area a “people place” with improvements that set a standard of quality that will ensure it is a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly destination. With this design parameter in mind, any improvements should promote energy conservation to the extent possible.

- Revisit development codes

Recommendation: Reconvene the Task Force - if it is useful - but a next step in completing a plan for Galveston Avenue is to reevaluate the City Code or plans to determine if changes could be made to this area that would improve the economic potential of this narrow strip of

commercially zoned properties along Galveston Avenue. Examples might include: adding flexibility for parking requirement calculation, permitting expanded parking into other properties, mixing of uses, modest changes in building heights/setbacks or even limited changes in land use designations. Foremost, this should not be done in a vacuum but again provide an open process - that ALL that want to - can have a say in any final recommendations to the decision bodies. As stated before, it is the desire to create measures that are both positive for businesses and the affected neighborhoods.

- Define a timeline

Recommendation: Develop a timeline for an implementation strategy, as much as possible.

3. Other Task Force business/announcements

Visitor Brian Harrington invited the Task Force to attend a "Walking Tour" that is being planned as a part of the American Planning Association (APA) – Oregon Chapter Conference to be held on May 10, 2012, that is anticipated to showcase this 'grassroots' planning effort. The Concept Plan is also consistent with the conference theme: *Planning for Real Sustainability*. Brian encouraged Task Force members to attend and help provide feedback on the process to better inform interested tour participants.

Conference information: <http://www.oregonapa.org/BendConference>

Adjournment:

The final Task Force meeting ended with chair, Al Tozer, providing some closing remarks including thanking everyone; the Task Force, staff and the audience for dedicating their time and support in helping to develop this Galveston Avenue Concept Plan. The meeting adjourned with a Valentine's Day "cupcake" toast to I-Heart-"G" (Galveston Avenue).