

# PLANNING FOR PEOPLE STREETS

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the State of Oregon introduced new regulations, called the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) rules, aiming to reduce climate pollution, provide more transportation and housing choices, and promote more equitable land use planning outcomes. These new rules require cities to allow for “low-car districts” that prioritize safer walking and biking routes. As part of this, Bend needs to develop policies that allow areas with fewer cars in all residential and mixed-use zones. The City received a grant to study best practices for low-car and no-car streets. The city generally refers to these new street types as “People Streets”.

### Goals of this Planning Study

1. Meet state land use and transportation planning requirements and support upcoming planning efforts, such as a Transportation System Plan (TSP) update.
2. Enable vibrant, people-first streets and spaces in Bend that would:
  - Support people safely walking, biking, rolling, using transit, and driving.
  - Enhance the character and vitality of mixed-use and residential areas.
  - Create public places that are inviting and activated.
  - Advance climate goals by reducing vehicle miles traveled.

During the study, the City engaged with community stakeholders to help identify potential People Street types and policies, codes, and street standard changes to be considered in the future. No immediate changes are proposed, but the results of this study are intended to help inform the City as it updates its land use regulations to comply with the CFEC rules in the future, anticipated to begin in 2026.

With community input, including a steering committee, stakeholder meetings, and open houses, the following Guiding Principles were developed for the design of People Streets. The Guiding Principles are intended to provide the vision and intent for these new street types.

### Deliverables in this planning study included:

- TASK 1: Multimodal Inventory Memo
- TASK 2: Low Car District Best Practices
- TASK 3: Juniper to Drake Case Study
- TASK 4: Community Engagement
- TASK 5: Policy Implementation Memo

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PEOPLE STREETS

People streets are designed for people to walk, bike, and roll. To support this, car traffic can be slowed down, reduced, or restricted. People Streets can help improve health and quality of life, foster a sense of community, and reduce carbon emissions.



### Safe & Comfortable

The design of these spaces will prioritize safety and comfort for people walking, biking, and rolling. They may include vehicle limitations and restrictions where appropriate.



### Activated & Liveable

These spaces will support social activity in all seasons and at all times of the day and provide attractive space for businesses and people to utilize the street for both commerce and gathering.



### Welcoming to All

These vibrant people-first spaces will be welcoming to all ages, abilities, cultures, identities, and income levels. The design, messaging, and materials in these spaces will be thoughtfully inviting to all.



### Inclusive of Nature & Art

These spaces will be living, vibrant, and attractive by integrating trees and native, pollinator-friendly, and fruiting landscaping as well as vibrant, multi-cultural art.



### Connected & Accessible

These spaces will be thoughtfully integrated into the community and existing street networks; they will be easily accessible via low-cost transportation options nearby; and they will provide opportunities for both community gathering and through-movement while accommodating necessary emergency, service, and delivery access.

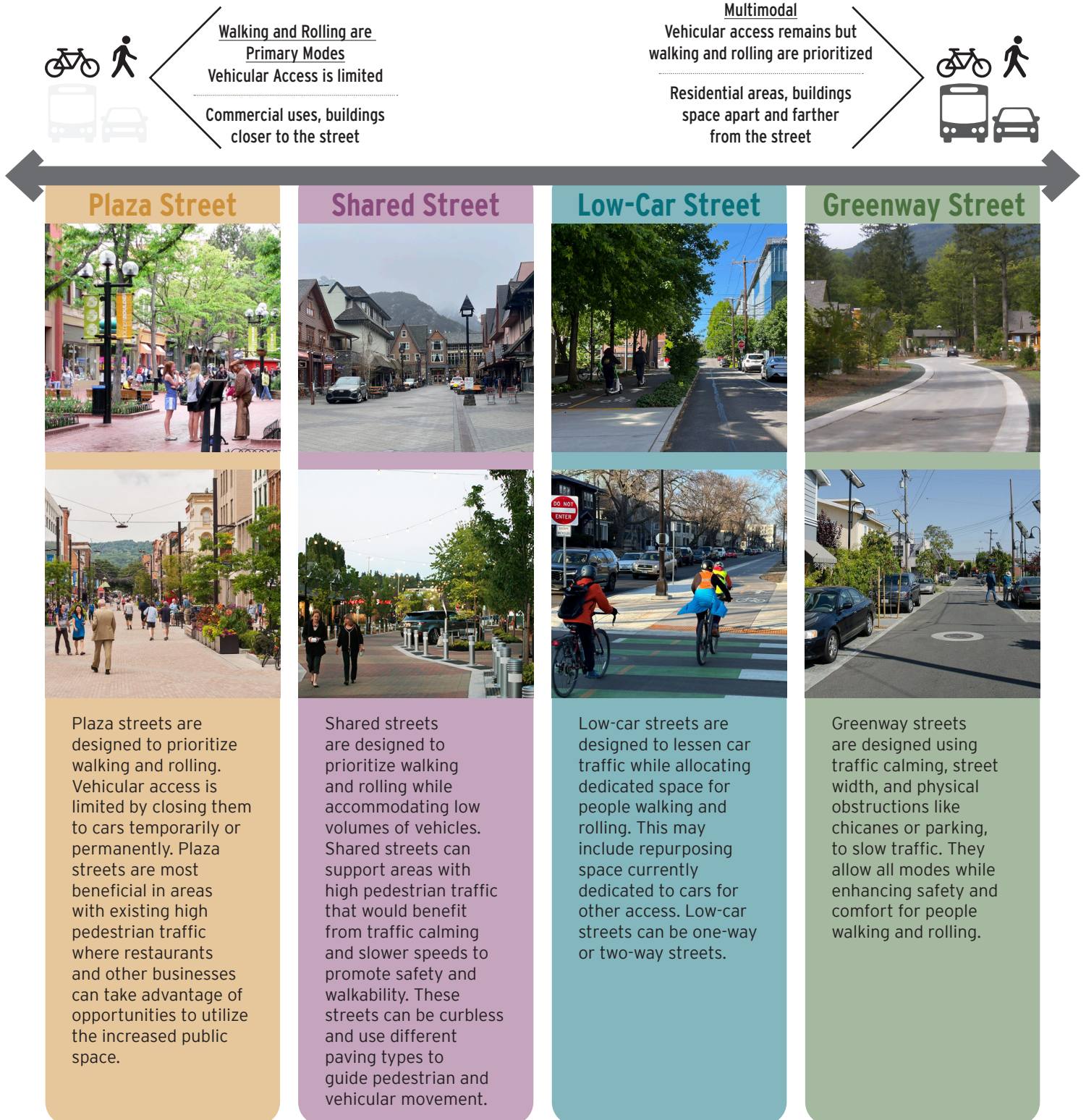


### Resilient

These spaces will be built with durable, maintainable, and resilient materials to ensure they are vibrant now and in the future.

## PEOPLE STREET TYPES

The following People Street types were developed based on best practices from nationwide research and case studies. They provide a starting point for further study as part of future City policy updates.





## BEST PRACTICES FOR PEOPLE STREETS

People Streets will be designed for people to safely and conveniently walk, bike, and roll. To support this, vehicular traffic may be slowed down, reduced, or restricted. People Streets can help improve health and quality of life, foster a sense of community, and reduce carbon emissions and air pollution. They can make it easier to use transportation options other than driving. They are intended to provide social, economic, and environmental benefits to the community. To create successful People Streets, the City should consider the following best practices:

### Design

- Offer a range of street types that include different levels of access for vehicles while supporting walking and rolling.
- Tailor street designs to support the vitality and functionality of mixed-use and residential areas.
- Rebalance allocation of space to support pedestrian and bike activity, gathering, and commerce.
- Plan for how new street designs are safely integrated with the broader network of streets, including traffic calming features.
- Connect destinations and fill gaps in routes for walking and rolling.
- Provide high-quality street and urban design that supports social activity (seating, lighting, wayfinding, etc.)
- Design streets to be accessible, safe, and enjoyable for all ages and abilities.
- Select durable and attractive paving materials that can accommodate vehicular use.
- Define clear areas for parking, pick-up/drop-off, transit stops, and other public curbside uses.
- Design and plan for service, loading, delivery, and emergency access.
- Determine responsibilities and funding sources for maintenance and management.
- Plan for seasonal impacts including snow and weather protection.
- Offset impacts to existing parking as needed with nearby parking resources.

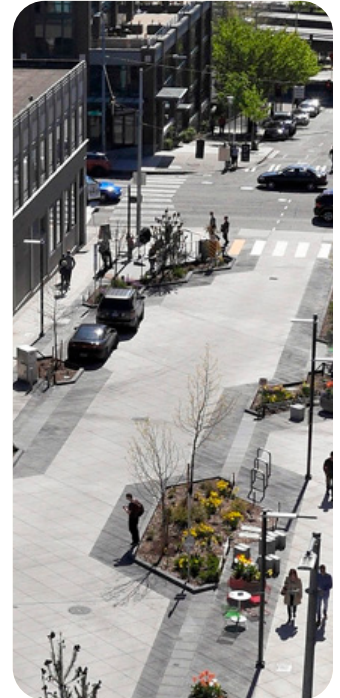


### Activation

- Promote regular programming and activation, both through daily use by businesses and residents as well as festivals / events.
- Encourage pop-ups in vacant spaces, cross-promotion / business collaboration, and other programs to activate and create destinations.

### Targeted Implementation

- Focus on areas where People Streets can leverage other investments and provide the highest benefit.
- If limiting vehicular access, consider temporary redesigns or traffic closures on summer weekends or other periods of high visitation to test viability. If success is demonstrated, refined street designs can be implemented.



Examples of People Streets



## PEOPLE STREETS CASE STUDY: JUNIPER PARK TO DRAKE PARK

As a case study, the planning effort applied People Street ideas to streets between Juniper Park and Drake Park, connecting Bend's Core Area with Downtown Bend via the planned Hawthorne Bike and Pedestrian Overcrossing. Through feedback from community stakeholders, design concepts identified a series of potential benefits and trade-offs. The results of this study are intended to inform future policy recommendations as People Streets are allowed and incorporated citywide.

### Key Findings

This study resulted in the following findings:

- Coordinate People Streets investments to leverage other major infrastructure investments such as the future Hawthorne Bridge.
- Incremental investments in People Streets should be designed to support existing uses while considering future opportunities. For example, in the Core Area, this might mean low-car street improvements in the near term with the potential for future plaza streets with long-term infill and redevelopment that brings activity.
- Downtown Bend is attractive, thriving, and successful, with a low vacancy rate; but businesses continue to face challenges in a changing retail environment (e-commerce, etc.). Any future People Street improvements should prioritize Downtown's continued success and growth as a vibrant and unique destination.
- While multiple routes through Downtown can support pedestrian and bike circulation, prioritize providing direct routes between destinations.
- Continue to enhance sidewalk environments and promote traffic calming to support pedestrian safety and comfort.
- Consider development of People Streets in areas with high density and people-oriented land uses such as restaurants, cafes, and retail to support economic vitality.
- Coordinate closely with stakeholders and businesses on any future street improvements to ensure service, delivery, maintenance, emergency access, and other needs are met.



Case Study Area Overview







## NEXT STEPS

The City will determine how best to incorporate People Streets concepts into its policies and regulations. There are multiple pathways to achieve this. Examples of options for policy updates include:

- *Prescriptive Approach* - the City may define new land use and transportation designations specific to People Streets and low-car districts.
- *Complementary Approach* - the City may integrate People Streets and low-car districts into existing land use and transportation designations.
- *Minimal Approach* - the City may adopt general policy statements to allow for People Streets and low-car districts without geographic specificity.

**When conducting policy, code, and standards updates to allow for the future implementation of People Streets, the City will balance the need for flexibility with the need for clarity of requirements for land owners, developers, and City staff who may help implement these concepts through future projects.** The City may also seek opportunities to test People Streets concepts where these investments could be beneficial. Throughout the process ahead, the City will conduct ongoing public communication and outreach on this topic and policy updates.

