

Portland – South Portland Smart Corridor Plan  
Portland – Forest Avenue North / Morrill’s Corner  
Public Input Meeting

Summary Notes and Public Comments

April 27, 2017, University of New England

*This summary comprises notes taken by Craig Freshley, along with later updates and editing, and a summary of comments provided by participants on large and small corridor maps.*

Introductory Presentation

Bruce Hyman, City of Portland Transportation Program Manager – Welcome and introduction to Smart Corridor Plan process

Ned Codd, WSP Consultant Team Project Manager

- Working with Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS), Cities of Portland and South Portland to develop ways of improving land use and transportation conditions in the Forest Avenue – Route 302 – Casco Bay Bridge – Broadway Corridor
- Address land use changes and traffic demand, while also improving safety and access in all modes
- Calling this the Smart Corridor Plan for several reasons
  - Corridor connects several institutions of higher education, build upon the opportunities of the educational sector
  - We want to manage these challenges in a manner that is smart and creative – doesn’t just rely on increasing traffic capacity, but provides travel choices and potential for balanced multimodal system
  - Want to use advanced technology (traffic signals, real-time traveler information, vehicle communication systems) to ensure that the corridor is as efficient as possible
- We are currently reviewing current plans and evaluating existing conditions
- Engaging public and corridor stakeholders to better understand issues and opportunities
- Based on this input and analysis, we will develop ideas for improvements in all modes
- Then we will develop recommendations and an implementation plan
- Current meeting is for the segment of the corridor from Morrill’s Corner to Woodfords Corner along Forest Avenue

- In this segment, corridor is currently congested and auto-oriented
- Large paved areas and wide crossings as intersections have been expanded to accommodate traffic
- University of New England (UNE) is an anchor; it is growing and that brings concerns about increasing traffic
- Development opportunities along Forest Avenue and near Morrill's Corner, such as former Morrill's Crossing site
- Transportation demand from development there will affect the corridor
- Well-planned development could have a positive effect on the corridor
- Some intersections along the corridor have poor levels of service, poor pedestrian and bicycle access
- Metro bus serves the corridor with Routes 2 and 9, a bidirectional loop route

Tom Doolittle, Alta Planning + Design, Consultant Team Ped – Bike Task Manager

- Pedestrian and bicycle issues
- We have identified key destinations for pedestrians and cyclists
- We have identified existing and planned bicycle facilities
- We have evaluated the Forest Avenue North bicycle network and mapped it by comfort level/level of traffic stress – this indicates where different types of bicyclists (beginner, intermediate, advanced) would feel comfortable riding, and helps us to identify bottlenecks/obstacles/areas that require improvement
- Automobile-oriented businesses fronted by parking lots, with wide driveways create an environment that is not appealing or comfortable for pedestrians
- Bicycle lanes along Forest Avenue for much of the corridor, but they are discontinuous through Morrill's Corner and Woodfords Corner, where vehicle lanes have been expanded for traffic, queuing
- We have also identified areas that have the highest incidence of bike and pedestrian crashes

## Discussion / Questions & Answers

What do you like about the corridor and would like to be preserved?

- McDonalds, Dunkin Donuts, and other businesses have a right to be there – support them
- Current mix of uses
- Getting people from I-295 to and from South Portland works well
- Lots of good green space
- Good traffic flow through Morrill's Corner

What to change

- Safety for pedestrians and bikes
- Visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists
- General coordination of traffic signals
- Encourage different modes of transportation to ease car congestion and improve safety
- Improve aesthetics
  - Make it look like a neighborhood and that will help calm traffic
  - More trees
  - Less trash
    - More trash cans
    - Signs to discourage littering
- Consistent sidewalks, bus stops, other aesthetic amenities
- Paint lanes better/better, longer lasting markings on the road
- Rocky Hill behind Reed and Canco Streets - Clean it up and make a destination
- Encourage small scale pedestrian friendly development
  - Mix of retail, services, residential that meet the needs of the neighborhood
- Make sure you have resources to maintain whatever infrastructure is in place

## Comments on Maps

### Overall Corridor

- Land Use
  - No “neighborhood” feel to corridor – need better city/business planning
  - Nothing attractive about it (the corridor)
- Roadway and Traffic
  - Main commute street
  - Small, simple changes could make a big difference: safety, lack of markings for lanes, lack of greenspace
  - Traffic flows well except for trains and accidents, which shut down traffic
    - Trains block traffic
    - Accidents block traffic and trains
  - Traffic flow works except when there are trains and high traffic
  - Traffic congestion even when a green light
  - Business and danger of traffic
  - Paint lanes regularly / keep lanes visible
  - Need to better update striping
  - Poorly aligned neckdowns can be a hazard to driving
  - No sidewalks (neckdowns?) out into the street
  - Loading lane is too short

- Don't like potholes – just fill the potholes
- Public Transit
  - Bus stops have no seats, trash cans, weather pavilion
  - Need bus service from Dorothy Street to work
- Pedestrian – Bicycle
  - Appearance, safety for walking and biking, crosswalks
  - No greenspace – walking/biking is unpleasant
  - Not safe – no visibility of crosswalks and lack of clear marking of lanes (drivers using single lane as double)
  - Can there be some crosswalks painted in ASAP – seems like this project might not be completed in several years
  - Lack of crosswalks
  - Teach people to ride bikes and cross streets
  - No bike lanes in the traffic
  - Increase pedestrian safety
  - Scared of hitting a pedestrian or bike when in a car
- Funding
  - Don't spend too much state or federal money
  - Concern that more infrastructure will cost more money to maintain

#### Specific Locations

- Morrill's Corner
  - Land Use
    - Too many auto-oriented uses
  - Roadway and Traffic
    - Congestion and poor timing of stop lights at Allen Ave & Forest Ave
    - Light timing in Morrill's Corner
    - Would like option to turn left from Stevens Avenue northbound to Bishop Street
    - Too much pavement in Morrill's Corner (at Forest Avenue/Allen Avenue and Forest Avenue/Stevens Avenue/Bishop Street)
    - Make Bishop Street a street for traffic
    - Can you connect Bell Street to Canco Road (across railroad and industrial properties)
    - Is there an opportunity for housing or a park between Forest Avenue, Canco Road, and Read Street?
  - Public Transit
  - Pedestrian – Bicycle
    - Biking is very dangerous through Morrill's Corner
    - Very trashy along railroad
- Forest Avenue Mainline

- Land Use
  - Trash and unpleasant feel on Forest Avenue – busy, aggressive, dirty
  - Wish there weren't so many abandoned buildings on Forest Avenue
- Roadway and Traffic
- Public Transit
  - Very trashy at bus stops, unpleasant
  - Forest Avenue/Read Street – crossings for bus stops very unsafe
- Pedestrian – Bicycle
  - No crosswalk across Forest Avenue by Poland Street and Waverly Street
  - Forest Ave needs a crosswalk near Park Danforth (at Poland Street and Read Street) where the bus stops are located
  - Poland Street needs lighting – UNE students walk this street before/after school
  - Forest Avenue/Read Street intersection is not clearly defined
  - No crosswalks at Poland Street and Waverly Street
  - Forest Avenue/Walton Street – good area, no problems
  - Bike lanes interrupt along Forest Ave and cause accidents
- Woodfords Corner
  - Land Use
    - Tipo Restaurant is very nice and new and neighborhood-friendly addition
    - Woodfords Corner Food & Beverage is a great addition! Nice and clean and friendly
  - Roadway and Traffic
    - Traffic builds up at stop lights by Woodfords
    - Northbound traffic stacks up all day – can't get in or out of Arlington Street with all the cars
    - People will often run red lights to go through
  - Public Transit
  - Pedestrian – Bicycle
    - No room for bikes through Woodfords Corner
    - No crosswalk over railroad