

Portland – South Portland Smart Corridor Plan
South Portland Public Input Meeting
Summary Notes and Public Comments

April 12, 2017, Southern Maine Community College

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

Charles “Tex” Haeuser, City of South Portland Planning Director – 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
- SMCC is an anchor; it is growing and that brings concerns about increasing traffic
- Cacoulidis site
 - An important component of the corridor
 - Transportation demand from development there will affect the corridor

- Well-planned development could have a positive effect on the corridor
 - Currently being master-planned
- Mill Creek and Knightville
 - Traffic congestion at 3 major intersections
 - South Portland Greenbelt Trail
- Some intersections along the corridor have poor levels of service
- South Portland Rt. 21 bus serves the corridor roughly every 30 minutes
- There are proposals to improve transit service to improve connections from SMCC to USM and Westbrook

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 South Portland 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
- We have also identified areas that have the highest incidents of bike and pedestrian collisions
- Opportunities
 - Bike lanes east of Cottage Street
 - Sidewalks and paths

Discussion / Questions & Answers

- What are current SMCC policies that encourage carpooling, reduce traffic?
 - Students have free use of South Portland Bus system
 - Education and promotion of TDM programs
 - Pre-tax deduction for transit benefits for employees
- Do SMCC students have to pay for parking?
 - Yes, but it is built into tuition
- Is it possible to schedule SMCC classes around peak traffic times?
- What planned development will affect transportation in the corridor?
 - Marine railway property, Cacoulidis site, and REO Marine boat storage place are all likely to re-develop along the corridor
 - The project team will get information about planned development or make assumptions about properties to be developed in order to make projections about transportation impacts

- How fast do the cars go on Broadway relative to other sections of the corridor?
 - MaineDOT has not done any recent speed studies
 - It is a straight and fairly open corridor; in some areas, speeds appear to be high
- How does this tie in to the Portland study on State and High Streets?
 - The Smart Corridor Plan encompasses the State Street and High Street one-way pair as part of the study corridor
 - The State Street – High Street study concluded that it’s feasible to convert these streets to two-way circulation, but it would be costly
 - The City of Portland is not currently pursuing a place to convert those streets to two-way, but has conducted road safety audits and is pursuing targeted safety improvements, including pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements at key locations
 - The Smart Corridor Plan will evaluate potential improvements in the State Street – High Street segment of the corridor, in particular more global and systemic improvements, such as transit system improvements, but will not revisit the findings or recommendations of the previous study
- If someone sends an email through the website, who will read it?
 - Ned Codd, and he will also send to the appropriate person in Portland or South Portland

Summary of Public Input from the Small Group Breakout Reporting

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

- Greenbelt walkway
- Water views
- Access to the water – all types

What would you like to change about the corridor?

- Reduce the number of cars on Broadway
 - Charge for parking at SMCC
 - More frequent bus services
 - Light rail along corridor
 - Ferry service
 - Bike to bus connections
 - Park-and-ride lots
- Improve safety
 - Safe walking
 - Safe bike amenities

- Reduce number of uncontrolled right turns
- Improve the intersection of Sawyer and Broadway
 - Put a stop light there
- Bicycle crossing from Casco Bay Bridge to Erskine Drive
- Protected bike lanes along the bridge
- Crossing at the Boys and Girls Club and at the Browns School
- Better ped/bike access from the Knightville end of the bridge into Mill Creek
- Get people (pedestrians and bikes) from Broadway onto the greenbelt
- Put a roundabout at Broadway and Breakwater
- Create connection (a new street) from Cacoulidis Property into Ferry Village and Sawyer
- Pedestrian bridge from Mahoney School to Mill Creek
- Put in a flashing beacon at Sawyer and Broadway sooner than later
- Make sure all the mid-block crossings are in the right place and optimally designed
- The corridor needs to serve the local residents, not just through-travelers
- Let's take a look at the existing rights of way across undeveloped land and see what opportunities they present

Comments on Maps

Overall Corridor

- Land Use
 - Need to realize the reasonable redevelopment potential of the Cacoulidis property
 - Circulation improvements to enable future development along Sawyer Street, Cacoulidis property
- Roadway and Traffic
 - Benefit – Connects South Portland with Portland
 - Broadway is too wide, too fast, too much of a barrier, too auto-centric
 - Corridor is a race track for some drivers
 - Slow traffic – they go fast!!!
 - Broadway perceived as “highway” by drivers
 - People drive too fast on Broadway
 - Awful traffic in the afternoon
 - Number of cars on Broadway
 - Left turns from side streets
 - Intersection wait times make it difficult to get out of SoPo from Meeting House Hill
 - Are left turn lanes [center turn lane on Broadway] necessary? Can bike lanes connect?

- Lane widths: 11' – 12' lanes become 10,' give additional space to bike lanes
- Heavy truck use of the corridor is extremely noisy
- “Level of Service F can be LOS A for business” such as restaurants & retail
- Only one road to SMCC, Bug Light, and Cacoulidis Property
- New roadway along RR ROW to Sawyer Street
- Zip cars to connect Portland, South Portland
- Public Transit
 - Benefit – Supports bus service
 - Commuter parking outside of corridor, then use public transit?
 - Consider costs vs. benefits of bus service with 10-15 minute headways
 - Consider single bus route from SMCC to Outer Forest
 - There may be legal prohibitions against running a bus all the way from Portland out to SMCC
 - Consider ferry between Portland & South Portland
 - Ferry terminal near Bug Light for Casco Bay Lines
 - Ferry to Portland
 - Ferry Bug to terminal in Portland
 - How about a ferry across?
 - Monorail system
 - Dream – Light rail or streetcar using collective impact
- Pedestrian – Bicycle
 - Benefit – Provides some level of bike/ped service at some points
 - Benefit - Greenbelt
 - Broadway is mostly unfriendly to bike/ped
 - Improve status of peds & bikes relative to autos
 - Biking narrow roads
 - Safety of people on foot & bikes
 - Need for safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings all along Broadway corridor (especially Mill Creek area)
 - Greenway needs widening & repaving
 - Widen Greenbelt
 - Greenbelt is 7' – 8' wide (substandard)
 - Encourage Greenbelt for pedestrians. Sidewalk on one side to allow room for cycle lane
 - Pedestrian access to Greenbelt
 - Plow Greenbelt with same focus as sidewalks
 - Relocate the Greenbelt to Waterfront access
 - Possible to relocate Greenbelt to Cacoulidis property?
 - Relocate part of Greenbelt off Portland pipeline property across Cacoulidis property near water
 - Re-examine bollards on Greenbelt at street crossings

- Bike lanes have some awkward transitions, e.g. at Cottage Street (WB narrows, goes away), between Sawyer Street and Spring Street (go away) – improve bike lane transitions
- Consider reallocating existing pavement to provide wider bike lanes – now 12' & 4' should be 11' & 5' or 10' & 6' even better
- Crossing Broadway is dangerous, diminishes City's ability to achieve Comprehensive Plan, need to slow traffic
- Make the corridor so more people could walk or bike along the corridor, and get on and off it easily
- Lots of bike & ped improvements possible
- Where to put RRFD?
- Coordinate (add) signals to East Broadway to provide breaks in traffic for crossing
- Facilitate ability of pedestrians & bicyclists to move across Broadway to better integrate neighborhoods

Specific Locations

- Casco Bay Bridge
 - Land Use
 - Roadway and Traffic
 - Public Transit
 - Pedestrian – Bicycle
 - Approaches to bridge are difficult for peds and bikes on Portland side
 - Side path on bridge is too narrow
 - Side path far too narrow
 - Wider side path on bridge
 - On-street bike lanes often contain debris, adjacent to speeding traffic
 - Bike lanes on bridge deck good, but need physical separation
 - Reallocate existing bridge deck to create wider side path (sidewalk)
 - Bicycle crossing Casco Bay Bridge SB to Erskine Drive
- Mill Creek – Knightville
 - Land Use
 - Mill Creek Park is common gathering space – skating, art shows
 - Roadway and Traffic
 - Control right turns off Broadway to Cottage and Highway 77 (Ocean)
 - Geometry [at Broadway/Waterman Drive] conducive to high speeds
 - Can this connection [Cottage Street – Ocean Street in Knightville] be improved?
 - Re-pave path in Thomas Knight Park [northern tip of Knightville]
 - Awful traffic in the afternoon [Broadway/Cottage Street]

- Waterman Drive to Cottage Road – lack of ability to cross Broadway diminishes residential use of businesses in Knightville/Mill Creek
 - Public Transit
 - Pedestrian – Bicycle
 - Broadway from Waterman to Cottage very challenging bicycle riding, sidewalks are narrow, shrubs encroach
 - Make it easier to get to & navigate Ocean Street/Broadway for Portland – SoPo connection
 - Improve ped-bike connection along Ocean Street/Cottage Street to Casco Bay Bridge ramp
 - Crossing Broadway [at Waterman Drive, Ocean Street, and Cottage Street] is difficult
 - Have good crossings at Broadway intersections so pedestrians can get to businesses
 - Make a [ped-bike] bridge [over Broadway / Waterman Drive intersection]
 - Ped/bike bridge from Mahoney School to Mill Creek Park and another
 - Must cross Broadway to walk from Knightville / Mill Creek to reach church, schools, library
 - Bike route along Ocean Street
- Ferry Village
 - Land Use
 - Roadway and Traffic
 - Traffic light at Broadway/Sawyer Street
 - Stop light needed at Broadway & Sawyer
 - Stop light at Broadway / Sawyer Street
 - New street through tank farm/along railroad ROW from Bug Light Park to Front Street/Preble Street
 - Public Transit
 - Pedestrian – Bicycle
 - Crossing for school students & others to Boys & Girls Club
 - Bicycle route along Preble Street
- Bug Light Park
 - Land Use
 - Roadway and Traffic
 - Roundabout at Broadway / Breakwater Drive / Pickett Drive
 - Public Transit
 - Pedestrian – Bicycle
 - Could use bike lanes here [on Madison Street to Bug Light Park]
 - Extend shared use path along Preble Street to Cacoulidis parcel
 - Extend shared use path from Breakwater Drive to Front Street

- Southern Maine Community College
 - Land Use
 - Roadway and Traffic
 - SMCC's massive parking lots encourage driving
 - Students drive fast
 - No policy exists to disincentive driving – raise the price of parking pass!!
 - 3-lane intersection [at Broadway/Breakwater Drive/Pickett Street] seems excessive
 - Turn lanes [at Broadway/Breakwater Drive/Pickett Street] necessary?
 - Public Transit
 - Pedestrian – Bicycle
 - Need sidewalk along both sides of Pickett Street
 - People walk across SMCC, pipeline property west of Pickett Street from SMCC to Greenbelt