GEORGETOWN BIKE PLAN STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES

DETAILS:

DATE: OCTOBER 11TH, 2018

TIME: 2:00 PM TO 7:00 PM

LOCATION: HISTORIC LIGHT & WATERWORKS BUILDING

DISCUSSION:

Practicality

• In order to be successful we need to focus on the implementation side, keeping cost of implementation and maintenance in mind. Once a project is built, it’s here permanently, and some projects can be expensive and difficult to maintain.

• Public works states safety, costs, capital costs, and maintenance as the most important factors.

• It was recommended to plan on-street bike infrastructure in three categories. The first category could be sharrows, signage, or pavement markings. The second category would be modest improvements on roads that experience bottlenecks. The third category would be long term improvements consisting of miles of bike lane that are higher cost. Focusing on what is doable and working our way up is a good strategy.

Safety Measures

• Sentiment was expressed for peace of mind with little risk. If this means that some roads just aren’t feasible due to limited right of way or high traffic, putting cyclists in lanes of traffic isn’t the preferred answer.

• Educational efforts were stated to be very important for both cars and bikers. This needs to go beyond “bike survival” efforts (like wearing your helmet and blowing up your tires) that are currently in place.

• Cycling is currently fairly safe in Georgetown in terms of crashes, however, if many more bikes get on the road crashes will go up and that needs to be planned for in order to prevent it.

• Safety is a top issue. Some points of view believe that a recreational use master plan could be more useful for Georgetown because the goal isn’t connecting point A and point B in the fastest manner, but the safest.
Trails & Regional Connections

- Parks and Rec also hopes to connect into the regional trail system, as shown in the Trail Master Plan, like the City of Leander is currently working on. These plans have been in the works and may see implementation soon.
- County Parks has a conceptual trails plan. Their long term vision is to make key connections between east to west and north to south and to connect in to Hutto, San Gabriel, Leander and Lake Granger, sometimes through unincorporated areas.
- Regional trail networks should be used to tie in local infrastructure that is built in the future, capitalizing on what is already there to reduce costs — there doesn’t need to be a full trail network and a full on street network, as long as they connect to serve the whole area.
- The regional trail is used by some as a transportation corridor that connects to Leander to the train.
- County Parks states a frequent issue of too-narrow trails with too many different users on them. Eventually they would like to separate trails into wheels and foot traffic.

Shadow Networks

- The idea of a shadow network seemed popular among all stakeholders which directs bikes to lower traffic roads, i.e. avoiding bike investment on University Ave. and instead adding infrastructure to 29th Street.
- Other major corridors mentioned were 29, Austin Ave., Williams Dr. and the bridges.
- Looking at where people are moving to and from and finding a safer route is an important approach.

University Connections

- Southwestern would probably be on board to have routes to downtown, and if students were more connected to areas they go there could be an increase in ridership. The University would also benefit from reduced traffic and parking on campus. However, Pirate bikes may never go off of campus because of the way that program is structured.
- In connecting to the University, the current plan to widen the sidewalk on 7th Street between Maple and Ash could be a good opportunity. It has been identified as the preferred route to downtown from campus and will already be 8 ft. wide making it a potential candidate for shared use.

Tourism

- The Sheraton gives bikes to guests, but there is a need for east west connections and wayfinding for out of town guests.
Popular Routes & Upcoming Projects

• Ronald Regan is a popular route for people to ride and could use improvements.
• There are plans for Donn Drive that is targeted to get traffic moved off of Williams Drive.
• The City has big 5-10 year plans for infrastructure across I-35, such as Williams Drive and 29. These don’t currently include bike infrastructure, but this is a great opportunity to capitalize on planned improvements in terms of biking.
• Parks and Rec sees east west connections across 35 as a key biking barrier and wants to coordinate with any new planned infrastructure to include bikes and pedestrians.

Biking in Neighborhoods

• There are no additional legal issues with implementing bike lanes in residential areas, people just have to obey traffic laws.
• If the City wanted to take away some of the on-street parking, they’re going to have to defend the backlash from the community.
• Sun City has their own regulations about biking on sidewalks and those are not enforced by the City. They self-enforce and have the right to.

Biking to School

• Safe Routes to School would be really beneficial for schools and children. In some areas, kids are already biking to school and it isn’t safe. If they are going to do it anyway, we need to give them a way to be safe. One example is kids going to Eastview over 35.
• The Sidewalk Master Plan already maps many of the paths that students walk to school. This could be used to help identify where bike infrastructure should go, or the UT team could have a meeting with parents, students and staff.
• Georgetown ISD is most concerned with safety. The District takes pride in its neighborhood schools, and wants children to walk and bike to school. This is already happening naturally at Village Elementary and somewhat at McCoy. Children are really only allowed to use sidewalks and bike lanes that are fully separate from the road.

Separation from Cars

• Even though the Brushy Creek Trail is 8 ft. wide, some cyclists prefer riding it to Southwestern and fighting strollers and pedestrians than taking a chance with cars.
• There is also sentiment that biking shouldn’t be thought of only as separate completely. Making it clear that bikes are allowed and welcome on streets through signage and sharrows is important, too. Biking is already fairly safe and separation is only truly necessary for children.
• The County is concerned with separating bikes from vehicle traffic. If someone falls on a bike, there is a strong hope that they would not be falling into traffic, and it’s worth it to
invest in getting far from the roadway. When there is a road construction project, the county always tries to bundle in right of way for bikes and trails.

• From a public safety standpoint, connectivity to the schools, park, trails for people who ride recreationally is important. However, there are people that ride to commute and separation in some form is key because drivers and cyclists do not interact well with one another — neither follow traffic safety rules appropriately.

**Education**

• Getting bikes off of the road isn’t the answer, it’s educating everyone and making it safer when they are.