

Dear Advocates

Thank you for your November 13 letter to the OTC encouraging them to provide real, meaningful policy commitments in the updated Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

While I hope ODOT staff will suggest specific actions to address the issues you've identified - especially those related to safety and performance measures - past performance indicates that this is unlikely. It's more likely the plan will remain warmly worded but ambiguous, and leave any real changes to some later time or process. Assuming ODOT sticks to its script, I suggest that your group put forward specific proposals for the OTC to consider as it adopts the plan.

My suggestion is to encourage the OTC to adopt an "action plan" along with the proposed bike-ped plan that directs ODOT to take a series of immediate actions to implement the plan. Such an action plan would lay out several policy or program changes that ODOT would pursue and set a deadline or target date for completing each action.

(You may know that ODOTs schedule already calls for it to prepare an "implementation plan" once the B/P plan is adopted. That's correct, but the timing and content of the implementation plan is unclear. Based on ODOTs other implementation plans, like the STS short-term implementation plan, it is likely to be just as vague as the draft Bike-Ped plan itself. Unless the OTC clearly directs otherwise.)

Below are my ideas for immediate actions that the OTC could direct ODOT to carry out in the six months or so following adoption of the B/P plan. While I think these are good suggestions (and correspond with the points your November 13 letter makes about safety and performance measures), my main point is that your groups should work together to put forward specific proposals.

1. Update the Highway Design Manual to revise roadway design standards to make urban highways safer for walking and cycling, especially for segments posted for 35 mph or less. New or revised standards should include:
 - narrowing travel lanes and turn lanes
 - adding pedestrian crossing islands
 - improving lighting at intersections and pedestrian crossings
 - adding or widening bike lanes and, where there's room, adding buffered bike lanes
2. Amend ODOTs policy for resurfacing state highways in urban areas to include low cost and minor improvements to make walking and cycling safer. This would include to narrowing travel lanes, adding or widening bikelanes (where pavement width allows) and adding low-cost pedestrian safety improvements, such as crosswalks or mid-block pedestrian crossings or improved pedestrian signals.

(You may know that Florida has amended its standards to essentially do 1 & 2: That is, [FDOTs Policy](#) when it resurfaces a roadway is to narrow travel lanes to 10' and to add 7' buffered bike lanes. If Florida can do this, so can we.)

3. Scope overlay and other "fix it" projects proposed for the 2018-2021 STIP to incorporate measures to improve bike and pedestrian safety. This is important because ODOT says it is just now starting to scope projects for the 2018-2021 STIP. ODOT staff and OBPAAC and others should be given the opportunity to review the projects under consideration and suggest specific measures that should be incorporated or considered in projects as they go forward. While emphasis should be on low-cost actions, like restriping to narrow travel lanes or add bikelanes, ODOT should consider minor expansion of project budgets to allow incorporation of bike and pedestrian safety measures.

4. Direct ODOT to work with DLCD and metropolitan areas to develop performance measures for regional transportation plans that implement the Statewide Transportation Strategy (STS) to significantly expand walking and cycling in urban areas to help meet state goals to reduce carbon pollution. The STS, accepted by OTC in March 2013, identifies a comprehensive set of changes to state transportation policy and investments that would help the transportation sector help meet state goals. The strategy calls for metropolitan areas to more than triple the share of trips made by biking and walking over the next 40 years. The STS "Short-Term Implementation Plan, approved by the OTC in February 2014, calls for its proposals to be considered and carried out through the modal plans:

Evaluate the STS strategies and elements for inclusion, as appropriate, into all relevant planning documents to help achieve the STS trajectories. Applicable planning documents may include statewide plans, plan updates, guidance documents, and policy documents such as, but not limited to: ... Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update... (STS Short-Term Implementation Plan, February, 2014, page 16)

Despite this direction the proposed bicycle/pedestrian plan leaves this task essentially undone. OTC should direct ODOT to develop performance measures for use by ODOT and metropolitan areas to help assure that planning efforts monitor and make progress towards this goal. Such measures should include a measure for bike and pedestrian system completeness i.e. percentage of needed walkway and bikeway miles that are constructed or planned for construction.

I'll be drafting my own comments on the Bike Ped Plan, which will include the points I've made here. I'd welcome any feedback or suggestions you have. And I'd be glad to follow up suggestions with others who are working on this.

Thanks!

Bob

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(PS ... for those of you who don't know me: I just retired from working for the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development where I worked on efforts to better integrate land use and transportation planning. Also, I'm related to another Cortright you may know, my brother Joe.)