

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