

City of Jacksonville, Ped/Bike Master Plan Steering Committee

Meeting #4, December 6, 2016

Summary of Comments

The meeting featured a presentation from Andy Clarke, Director of Strategy for Toole Design Group, outlining progress to date and the primary recommendations of the plan, as currently proposed.

Following the presentation, discussion centered around three general areas: specific projects; funding issues; and what happens next to ensure the plan is implemented.

Specific Projects

The prioritization of the bikeway network projects resulted in improvements to Laura Street (from Water Street to West 1st Street) being ranked the top priority. Why? Laura Street is a key connector street – both for bike routes and transit corridors -- with high demand and a high number of crashes (especially around State, Union and Beaver). The corridor also has a high equity score as it serves low income neighborhoods and the college. One issue identified by the group was that Laura has only recently been rebuilt at the Water Street end – and it was done so with universally disliked cobbles that are virtually impossible to ride on.

Other top priority streets, such as West Eighth Street, Moncrief, and University Ave, made a lot of sense to people. Connections to the S Line were included in the assessment and some scored in the top priority band of projects.

Funding

Several questions revolved around the challenging question of funding for projects. The key points that were discussed were:

- a) Having the network map (for bike improvements) and the Street Improvement Program recommendations is important to ensure that all opportunities are taken, when they become available, to make streets more walkable and bike-friendly.
- b) Many of the recommendations are deliberately focused on things the city can do – on streets which they control, for example – and for which there is funding already available (for example the Mobility Fee program). However, this doesn't mean that FDOT, JTA, TPO and other agency projects that are resurfacing or rebuilding streets should ignore improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists – quite the reverse.
- c) All potential projects to be funded by the mobility fee program have to be identified during the mobility fee plan development – however, projects identified in this process remain eligible for all other funding sources as well and are not restricted to just the mobility fee funding.
- d) There are some restrictions on the use of Mobility Fee funds – they have to be spent within certain geographic boundaries and have to have a connection to transportation and traffic flow.
- e) There are numerous funding sources available through the City, JTA and FDOT for improvements to the walking and biking environment. Part of the follow-up to the plan development will be

identifying the most appropriate funding source for different projects and types of project to maximize opportunities and efficiently use the funds that are out there.

- f) Some sources of funding, e.g. the hotel room and restaurant taxes, aren't eligible to be used for infrastructure, but might be used for promotion, marketing and wayfinding.

What Happens Next

Participants noted the critical importance of staying involved in the public and political process that surrounds planning, funding, project development, priorities etc. The Mobility Plan, for example, will kick-off in January and people that care about biking and walking issues need to show up and participate in those discussions.

Similarly, City Council and other elected officials need constant reminders and affirmation that the community places importance on improving the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists (as well as the population generally). That's an ongoing process.

Continuation of the work of the steering committee was recommended under the auspices of the Context Sensitive Streets Committee – there is considerable overlap in personnel, both agency and public participants are involved, and the topic is fundamental to implementation of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. That committee could provide the accountability mechanism necessary to make sure the plan recommendations are followed.

The consultants will likely return for one more official visit as part of the project and indicated a willingness (even desire) to help the community organize the necessary institutional framework to ensure the plan is successfully implemented.