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Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

This chapter describes current bicycle and pedestrian facilities within Benton County, forecasts future needs for these modes of transportation, lists current policies and necessary policy changes, and describes the preferred alternatives for improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians (section 4.4).

4.1 Existing Conditions

4.1.1 Existing Facilities Inventory

Existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities were inventoried and summarized in text and maps in the Benton County TSP Background Document, Chapter 5. Bicycle facilities are classified as follows (as described in the 1995 Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan):

Multi-Use Path: A facility separated from motor vehicle traffic by an open space or barrier, either within the roadway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way. These are typically used by pedestrians, joggers, skaters and bicyclists as two-way facilities. Multi-use paths are appropriate in corridors not well served by the street system (if there are few intersecting roadways), to create short cuts that link destination and origin points, and as elements of a community trail plan.

Bikelane: A portion of the roadway designated for preferential use by bicyclists. Bikelanes are appropriate on urban arterials and major collectors. They may be appropriate in rural areas where bicycle travel and demand is substantial. Bikelanes must always be well marked to call attention to their preferential use by bicyclists.

Shoulder Bikeway: Paved roadway shoulders on rural roadways provide a suitable area for bicycling, with few conflicts with faster moving motor vehicle traffic. Most rural bicycle travel on the state highway system is accommodated on shoulder bikeways.

The term **Bicycle Facilities** refers to bike paths, lanes, ways, and routes, and more broadly can include bicycle racks, storage lockers, bike racks on buses, or other physical objects that facilitate bicycle travel.

Pedestrian Facilities include sidewalks, multi-use paths not specifically prohibited for shared-use, and shoulder bikeways where no sidewalks exist. In addition, pedestrians may use trails that are not suited to or are forbidden to bicyclists.

Benton County provides signed and striped bikelanes on a number of roads in the northern half of the County, as shown in **Figure 4-1A**. However, none are located on roadways in the southern half (south of Airport Avenue). Multi-use paths are provided parallel to the south side of U.S. 20, through and between

Corvallis and Philomath, and along the west side of SW 53rd Street/NW Walnut Boulevard, from Country Club Drive to Walnut Park.

The City of Corvallis maintains a well-developed system of bike facilities and multi-use paths, some of which continue beyond the city limits to become County operated facilities in unincorporated areas. Multi-use paths parallel the south side of U.S. 20 between Corvallis and Philomath, the west side of SW 53rd Street/NW Walnut Boulevard, and a section of Campus Way on the Oregon State University campus.

Most signed state highways within Benton County have bikelanes or shoulder bikeways, except parts of Highway 99W in the Monroe and Lewisburg areas, U.S. 20 southeast of Wren, and approximately two-thirds of Highway 34 west of Philomath.

The Linn-Benton Loop bus is equipped with a bicycle rack. Bicycle parking will be provided at the new Corvallis intermodal transfer center. The transfer center will provide a comfortable, safe, central location for transfers among Corvallis Transit System buses, Linn-Benton Loop buses, bicycling, and walking.

Maintained trails in Benton County are located in MacDonald Forest, Siuslaw National Forest, and the Finley National Wildlife Refuge. These areas provide extensive systems of trails and logging roads suitable for hiking and mountain biking. A portion of Cardwell Hill Road is closed to motorized traffic and is used by bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians, connecting Oak Creek and Kings Valley northwest of Cardwell Hill. The Benton County Parks Comprehensive Plan identifies trail facilities within the County.

4.1.2 Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs Assessment

Both safety and connectivity needs have been identified through review of existing documents, technical analysis, and public involvement. Caution areas in the rural parts of Benton County are indicated on the Corvallis Area Bikeways and Benton County Bicycling Guide map, including the following:

- ◆ Highway 99W from Monroe south to Lane County
- ◆ Highway 34 west of Campbell Park and the grade east of Mary's Peak Road
- ◆ U.S. 20 from Wren southeast to the summit (this deficiency has since been corrected)
- ◆ Bellfountain Road in the vicinity of Airport Avenue
- ◆ Portions of West Hills Road

No figures are available for bicycling demand on Benton County facilities. Information provided by County staff and the Bicycle Advisory Committee identified heavily used routes and times of the year when bicycling activity is at its highest.

During these peak times capacity is generally not the issue. With few exceptions the only impedance to bicyclists are continuity of route and volume of vehicular/pedestrian traffic. Discontinuous routes impact choice of mode and choice of route when bicycling is considered. Volume of traffic impacts the quality of the route and influences both mode and route choice. Existing vehicular traffic volumes on sections of U.S. 20 and Highway 99W during peak times of the year, are reported to impact bicycle ridership according to the Bicycle Advisory Committee. In addition, heavy pedestrian traffic on multi-use paths sometimes causes riders to resort to riding on the adjacent roadway to reduce friction or increase the timeliness of the ride.

Bicycling outside of the urban areas of Benton County takes the form of recreational riding for pleasure and fitness, as well as bicycle commuting between population and employment centers. Deficiencies in the bicycle facilities on the commuter routes between cities within Benton County are an impediment to the use of this mode of travel. Providing adequate facilities for cycling on these routes promotes a shift to cycling from the single occupant motor vehicle, helping to preserve capacity on the highways. The mild climate of the Willamette Valley makes year around bicycle commuting viable. Many bicycle commuters choose to rely upon bicycles for their commute during the drier, and warmer seasons.

Widening paved shoulders on rural recreational bicycling roads with higher traffic volume benefits all users of the road by minimizing conflicts and improving the overall safety of the road, particularly for trucks. Independence Highway and Bellfountain Road experience high truck use and regular recreational bicycle use, yet lack adequate shoulders.

Additional areas of concern include Independence Highway, Granger Avenue, Bellfountain Road, and Highway 223 south of Kings Valley. Sections of these facilities are narrow, with limited sight distance, sharp curves and/or steep grades, all of which compromise safe and efficient bicycling and pedestrian use.

Connectivity issues include the need for safe, accessible Willamette River crossings at Albany and Corvallis, and the desire to pave the remaining gravel portion of South Fork Road.

Better bus service and carriage of bikes on buses is needed to extend the practical range of these transportation modes in the County. The entire Corvallis Transit System bus fleet has recently been equipped with bicycle racks.

There are no sidewalks associated with Benton County roads, outside of urban areas. Multi-use paths have been developed through and between Corvallis and Philomath south of U.S. 20, along the west side of SW 53rd Street/ Walnut Boulevard, and along a portion of Campus Way on OSU campus. These pedestrian facilities are illustrated in

Figure 4-1A.

A Corvallis-to-the-Sea Trail has been proposed that would provide day-use and overnight recreation opportunities for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. No funding has yet been identified to commence development of this trail.

No figures are available for the existing pedestrian demand associated with any Benton County facilities. Anecdotal information suggests that demand is sparse, intermittent, and somewhat unpredictable. The exception to this is in school zones in rural areas. Several members of the community noted locations of school-aged pedestrians traveling to/from school on oftentimes inadequate facilities. These locations include the following (adequacy of roadway shoulder widths in these areas is the identified capacity constraint):

- ◆ Bellfountain Road near Inavale School
- ◆ Highway 223 near the rural communities of Kings Valley and Wren
- ◆ North Albany Road near North Albany School and Middle School
- ◆ Granger Avenue near Mountain View School
- ◆ Highway 34 near Alsea

4.2 Forecast of Future Conditions

The performance evaluation of future conditions on the no-build transportation system identified deficiencies of capacity, mobility, and connectivity for bicycle and pedestrian travel. Future travel demand on the transportation system will exacerbate certain existing deficiencies of the bicycle system and may dissuade future use of this transportation mode. Conflicts between cyclists and motorists will increase as traffic volumes for both modes increases as projected. The effect on the transportation system would likely be a greater reliance on the automobile for safe and timely travel.

The noteworthy bicycle system connectivity/mobility deficiencies of the no-build scenario include the following:

- ◆ U.S. 20 Willamette River bridge crossing (substandard bikelane)
- ◆ Independence Highway south of Camp Adair Road (substandard shoulders)

- ◆ Granger Avenue (substandard shoulders)
- ◆ Bellfountain Road: Airport Avenue to Greenberry Road (substandard shoulders)
- ◆ Highway 99W: Dawson Road to Lane County Line (substandard shoulders)
- ◆ Highway 34: west of Decker Road to Alsea (substandard shoulders)

These missing or unsafe links are barriers to full use and access for the bicycle mode. Provision for these improvements would provide a complete and interconnected primary bicycle system with the inherent safety necessary to promote this travel mode as a reasonable alternative to the automobile.

4.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Policies

4.3.1 Existing Policy

Existing policies will be modified when the new policy recommendations are approved.

4.3.1.A Benton County Comprehensive Plan

Section E: Transportation

11. A system of bikeway routes will be identified in a bikeway master plan, which connects residential, school, commercial, employment, and recreational areas. Standards will be established to provide for adequate widths, grades, [etc.], to allow maximum safe use.

Section H: Environmental Quality, Air Quality Policies

11. The County shall plan for and develop bike paths along existing and future roads for commuter and recreational use.

4.3.1.B Benton County Development Code

The roadway standards for the shoulder bikeways and walkways are contained within the roadway standards in Chapter 99 of the Development Code. Paved shoulders of five foot minimum are standard for collector and arterial roads.

4.3.2 New Policy Recommendations

The efforts of reviewing related documents and identifying policy issues with staff, agencies, and the public has resulted in the identification of policies and codes that are recommended for modification. Summarized below are the recommendations.

Purpose

A safe, useable, and fundable bicycle and pedestrian system is an essential element in meeting Benton County's transportation goals. County citizens and staff have expressed the importance of providing transportation choices, of safe operations for all travel modes, and of maintaining the qualities that define Benton County as a highly desirable place in which to live. Bicycling and walking are important elements in all of these concerns.

Role of Bicycling and Walking

Bicycling and walking are alternatives to motorized transportation. Within Corvallis and other urbanized areas of Benton County, these modes can be used effectively for many types of trips that in most instances would otherwise require use of an automobile. A smaller, but still significant, number of rural residents use bicycling as a commute mode and walking for local trips. In addition to direct transportation use—getting from one point to another—bicycling and walking provide healthful, non-polluting recreation. The same large, open, rural areas that provide excellent recreational opportunities also limit the numbers of rural residents who will choose to walk or bicycle as an alternative to driving a car for some or all of their trips. Nonetheless, bicycle and pedestrian transportation modes should continue to grow as improvements are made to the convenience and safety of facilities and as citizen awareness increases. Provision for bicycling and walking is also an essential element in providing for those residents who are unable to drive. Non-motorized transportation will continue to play a small but important role in meeting the County’s goals for its transportation system.

Proposed New Policies

A set of policies expresses the goals and process for developing Benton County’s bicycle and pedestrian system. These policies resulted from the public involvement process. Based on this input, it is clear that: (1) the safety of bicyclists and the public is of greatest importance; (2) both commuting and recreational uses are important factors in planning an appropriate bicycle system for Benton County, and; (3) multi-modal connections can expand the opportunities for bicycling.

These policies will guide future refinement of specific plans. The policies are:

- ◆ Bicycle facility planning and development for the County shall be conducted in coordination with other local jurisdictions and with ODOT.
- ◆ County bicycle facilities shall be developed with ongoing citizen and community involvement.
- ◆ Expected cost-effectiveness shall be a major consideration in bicycle facility planning. High priority will go to relatively small projects that complete needed links or otherwise eliminate obstacles to full use of existing facilities. Priority should be given to completing commuter routes.
- ◆ The Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (1995) may be used for reference in creating appropriate standards. Land partitioning rules and road standards shall address the need for bike and pedestrian accessways that ensure connections between activity centers with easements or right-of-way dedication.
- ◆ Where possible, community activity centers such as schools, parks, employment centers, shopping areas, and major transit stops (including commercial uses allowed in policy 20) shall provide bicycle and pedestrian facilities into their site design.

4.4 Preferred Alternatives

The County’s bicycle network contains a number of gaps, which forces bicyclists to share travel lanes with traffic, creating potential safety hazards and discouraging bicycling as an alternative travel mode. Some County collector roadways are within the Urban Growth Boundaries of cities and eventually will need sidewalk facilities to be brought up to urban standards. The development of this recommended project list was coordinated with the Benton County Bicycle Advisory Committee.

4.4.1 Planned Bikeway & Walkway Projects

County staff, the general public, and the Bicycle Advisory Committee identified many potential bicycle/pedestrian improvement projects. These potential projects were evaluated within the framework of the transportation system goals. Based on this evaluation, the projects are presented below in two groups:

Planned projects are those included in this current 20-year Transportation System Plan; they meet definite needs for safety and connectivity and/or are part of otherwise needed road improvements and they can be funded within the projected resources available to the county.

Other projects are those that cannot be included at this time due to financial constraints.

Patterns of development, bicycle and pedestrian use, and/or unanticipated funding possibilities may move any of these projects to a higher level. The planned bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects are shown in **Figure 4-1B**.

- ◆ Crystal Lake Drive [M2]
- ◆ Chapel Drive, 19th Street to Bellfountain Road [M4]
- ◆ 19th Street, U.S. 20/Highway 34 to Chapel Drive [M5]
- ◆ Bellfountain Road, Airport Avenue to Greenberry Road [M6]
- ◆ Granger Avenue, Pettibone to Independence Highway/U.S. 20 [M8]
- ◆ Independence Highway, Camp Adair Road to U.S. 20 [M9]
- ◆ Metge Avenue, Independence Highway to Oak Grove Drive [M10]
- ◆ Country Club Drive, Barley Hill Drive to U.S. 20/Highway 34 [M12]
- ◆ Highway 99W, Dawson Road to Lane County line [M14]

4.4.1.A Planned Projects

The following projects reflect concerns identified in the public process, through the work of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and by the County staff and consultants. These are the projects recommended as part of the overall Transportation System Plan for Benton County. Widening of the roadway to provide six-foot shoulder bikeways will be the most appropriate treatment, except where otherwise noted. In some cases this may be in conjunction with significant roadway realignment, to improve sight distances and overall safety and operations.

Crystal Lake Drive: Park Avenue to S. 3rd Street [M2]

The City of Corvallis TSP includes upgrading this roadway to Collector standards, including bikelanes and sidewalks.

Chapel Drive: 19th Street to Bellfountain Road [M4]

19th Street: U.S. 20/Highway 34 to Chapel Drive [M5]

This will complete a missing link connecting Bellfountain Road/Plymouth Drive bikelanes to Philomath and the U.S. 20/Highway 34 multi-use path. This is a developing area; schools are also present here. Sidewalks should be constructed as part of development. Widened shoulders will serve pedestrians in the intervals between sidewalks.

Bellfountain Road: Airport Avenue to Greenberry Road [M6]

This project will continue existing bikelanes, providing a critical north/south connection between Philomath/west Corvallis and the south County. Widened shoulders will also provide for safety and comfort of walkers. *(For more information on this project, see “Bellfountain Road Refinement Plan” in Chapter 3, section 3.4.1.F.)*

Granger Avenue: Pettibone Road to U.S. 20 [M8]

Granger Avenue links the bikelanes serving the Lewisburg/Crescent Valley area with bikelanes on U.S. 20 to North Albany and Albany. These improvements will serve pedestrians as well as bicyclists.

Independence Highway: Camp Adair Road to U.S. 20 [M9]

This road is heavily used by bicyclists. Narrow shoulders, vertical curves, and truck traffic create problems for cyclists and discourage higher use. Wider shoulders will also provide for safety and comfort of walkers.

Metge Avenue: Independence Highway to Oak Grove Drive [M10]

This provides an attractive east-west link between Adair and North Albany. Widened shoulders will also provide for safety and comfort of walkers.

Country Club: Barley Hill Drive to U.S. 20/Highway 34 [M12]

This project completes bikelanes on the west end of Country Club Drive. A parallel multi-use path exists and will continue to provide for the needs of walkers. It is anticipated that this link will be completed in conjunction with development after this area is annexed into Corvallis.

Highway 99W: Dawson Road to Lane County line [M14]

Complete widening of Highway 99W south of Corvallis. Creates continuous bikeway connection between Monroe and Corvallis. (A complete link to Junction City will require widening of Highway 99W in Lane County.) Widened shoulders will also provide for safety and comfort of walkers.

4.4.1.B Other Projects

These additional projects also reflect concerns identified in the public process, through the work of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and by the County staff and consultants. These projects, though desirable, cannot at this time be justified for inclusion in the recommended projects for implementation in the twenty-year time horizon due to limited resources. However, these projects have been identified as needs, based on either the technical analysis or public input. For the projects identified below, widening of the roadway to provide six-foot shoulder bikeways will be the most appropriate treatment except where otherwise noted. In some cases this may be in conjunction with significant roadway realignment to improve sight distances and overall safety and operations.

Highway 34: Botkin Road to Mary's Peak Road

Highway 34 connects Alsea and Lobster Valley with the central and northern parts of the county. No alternate route is available. The curves east of Mary's Peak Road combine poor sight distance, poor shoulders, and high truck traffic—a hazardous combination for cyclists, walkers, and motorists alike.

Highway 34: Yewood Lane to Alsea-Deadwood Highway

Highway 34 connects Alsea and Lobster Valley with the central and northern parts of the county. No alternate route is available.

Alsea-Deadwood Highway: through curves around Little Lobster Road, from south of Bummer Creek Road to north of Hazel Glen Road

This has been mentioned as a dangerous area for bicyclists, but apparently is not an area of significant bicycle demand.

Kings Valley Highway: U.S. 20 north to County Line

Further study of the Kings Valley Highway is proposed to better understand the safety concerns and needs of all travel modes.

U.S. 20 Bridges

The bridge between Rondo and Independence Highway is currently narrow with inadequate shoulders to facilitate a shoulder bikeway. A second deficiency in this corridor involves the absence of bicycle access to the sidewalk on Willamette River Bridge to Albany. Taken together these would provide a continuous bikeway connection from Corvallis to Albany. However, given the high cost of widening these bridges, this improvement is currently cost-prohibitive.

Scenic Drive: Oak Grove to U.S. 20

A shoulder bikeway would provide connection between U.S. 20 and the areas served by Scenic Drive without out-of-direction travel.