

V. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM ALTERNATIVES

The primary objective of this chapter is to identify potential transportation alternatives that will provide for a safe, adequate, connected transportation system in Wheeler for the next 20 years. These transportation alternatives include Highway 101 alternative improvements, downtown area improvements, local street improvements that address safety concerns, pedestrian/bicycle facilities, and other multi-modal approaches to meeting community needs.

The draft recommended transportation improvements are the result of research and analysis of the existing transportation system, estimating future traffic and impacts on the transportation system, and from public involvement. The planning process incorporates the philosophy that in order to create a successful plan, Wheeler citizens must provide input. The citizens of Wheeler are the people who live, work, play, and use the city's transportation facilities. They are the people who consistently ride, drive, bike, walk and run in Wheeler. Therefore, Wheeler citizens know the existing transportation system, know what issues and conflicts currently exist, and have ideas on how to improve the transportation system.

The following tasks and public involvement mechanisms were utilized to identify transportation issues and alternative improvement projects:

- Three TSP Advisory Committee (AC) Meetings
- Two Community Open Houses
- Review of Existing Transportation-Related Plans and Policies
- Inventory of Existing Transportation Facilities and Conditions
- Forecast of Future Travel Demand

Several draft recommended transportation project are identified. For the majority of these recommended projects, there are two alternatives: "no-build" and "build". A key purpose for this chapter is to 1) draft recommended transportation improvements based on the above identified information and, 2) to review the draft projects with the public, city staff, and ODOT in order to determine and prepare the recommended TSP projects. The one draft project where more than one alternative should be considered is the recommended Highway 101/Downtown improvement project. For this project four alternatives were prepared (see following pages).

IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTIONS OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

There are four primary recommended transportation improvements that address the transportation system for the entire city or a large area. In addition, there are several individual or site specific transportation improvement recommendations.

ALTERNATIVE HIGHWAY 101/DOWNTOWN EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

This recommended transportation project addresses alternative concepts for improving the auto/truck, pedestrian, bicycle, and parking conflicts that currently exist along Highway 101 through downtown Wheeler. To demonstrate alternative transportation improvements on Highway 101, alternative diagrams were produced for a one-block section that includes the Highway 101/Rector Street intersection. (*See enclosed diagrams*) The intent of the alternative diagrams is to demonstrate potential Highway 101 improvements throughout the Wheeler downtown area – generally from Hospital Road north to Pine Street.

Alternative 1: Three Lanes with Parallel Parking

- Three lanes with one 12' travel lane in each direction and 14' center turn lanes at the Gregory St./Rorvik St. and Rector intersections.
- The center turn lane becomes a median where center turn lanes are not needed.
- 8' wide sidewalk on the east side.
- 8' wide parallel parking on each side.
- Reduces Highway 101 parking by replacing west side diagonal parking with parallel parking.

Alternative 2: Three Lanes with East Side Diagonal Parking

- Three lanes with one 12' travel lane in each direction and 14' center turn lanes at the Gregory St./Rorvik St. and Rector intersections.
- The center turn lane becomes a median where center turn lanes are not needed.
- 8' wide sidewalk on the east side with wider sidewalk areas associated with diagonal parking.
- Diagonal parking on the east side.
- No parking on the west.
- Sidewalk on the west side (adjacent to travel lane).
- Although east side parallel parking is replaced with diagonal parking, the overall Highway 101 parking is reduced by eliminating west side parking.

Alternative 3: Two Lanes with Separated West Side Parking

- Two lanes with one 14' travel lane in each direction
- 7' wide sidewalk on the east side.
- West side diagonal parking with access lane that is separated from the travel lanes by a 2' barrier. The parking access lane is between the highway travel lanes and the parking.
- Reduces Highway 101 parking by eliminating east side parallel parking.

Alternative 4: Two Lanes with Separated West Side Parking

- Two lanes with one 14' travel lane in each direction
- 7' wide sidewalk on the east side.
- West side diagonal parking with access lane that is separated from the travel lanes by a 2' barrier. The difference from Alternative 3 is the diagonal parking is between the highway travel lanes and the parking access lane.
- Reduces Highway 101 parking by eliminating east side parallel parking.

In comparing the alternative concepts, the primary consideration is parking. The primary consideration, as expressed by the public, is the need to maintain and increase parking. Other important factors are minimizing conflicts between different modes of transportation, i.e. pedestrian and vehicle conflicts, and addressing bicyclist's needs. Land use compatibility, environmental consequences, and costs do not vary to a significant level between these concepts. The recommendation for Highway 101/Downtown identified in the following chapter is to develop a Downtown Refinement Plan that will develop and evaluate plans in detail so that other considerations and measures of effectiveness can be applied and help determine a preferred and viable solution.

Downtown Refinement Plan and Special Transportation Area (STA)

This project includes the recommendation for a downtown refinement plan that will evaluate the alternative concepts and result in a preferred downtown plan with Highway 101 improvements. Consideration should be given to Highway 101 through downtown Wheeler being designated as a Special Transportation Area (STA). The STA would be an agreement between the City and ODOT to improve downtown and Highway 101 so that the needs and safety of autos/trucks, pedestrians, and bicyclists are balanced. This will include recommended traffic calming and pedestrian friendly elements, i.e. reducing the speed limit, curb extensions, parking configurations, medians, crosswalks, etc.

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LOCAL STREET NETWORK

There is an opportunity to connect some local streets by constructing street extensions within existing right-of-way. Topographic constraints limit the opportunities for connections. One objective for improving the local street network is to provide a north-south local street connection where local residents will be able to drive from one end of town to the other without having to access Highway 101. Alternative north-south, continuous local street connections include:

- **First Street Extension** from Hospital Road north to Hall Street and from Rorvik Street to Gregory Street.

The feasibility of extending First Street from Hospital Road to Hall Street is limited to one location due to topography. The street extension will need to be located on the east side of city hall where a one lane gravel access currently exists. Land adjacent to the east of that location is too hilly and steep to construct a road.

From Rorvik to Gregory Street there is ample room to extend First Street based on physical conditions. This will require land acquisition or an easement across private property, either the land the post office is located on or the property to the east. An alternative connection from the First St./Rorvik St. intersection is to improve Rorvik St. between First St. and Second St. then connect Second St. between Rorvik St. and First Street, however this alternative is fairly steep, would be costly to construct, and would not be as convenient or safe due to the steepness.

- **Fourth Street Extension** from south of Gamble St. north to Vosburg St., Hall St. north to Alder St., and Gregory St. north to Spruce St.

These three extensions are physically possible although still have some physical constraints due to steepness, extensions across Gervais Creek, and evaluation of land slide hazard areas identified between Gamble Street and Vosburg Street.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SYSTEM

There is an opportunity to create a connected pedestrian and bicycle system. The connected ped/bike system will enable residents to access destinations, i.e. shops, post office, homes, without having to use an automobile. The ped/bike system will also provide a recreational amenity for people to walk, run, or ride. The ped/bike system will utilize the existing right-of-way where feasible. The ped/bike system (*see diagram in next section*) should also be integrated with a park and open space system, i.e. pathways parallel to daylighted creeks and leading to and through parks. Designated routes include:

- Highway 101 – east and west sides
- Fourth Street from Dubois St. to Hemlock St.
- Hemlock St. from Fourth St. to Highway 101 and across the highway
- Country Road from Highway 101 to Hemlock St.
- Gregory Street from Fourth St. to Highway 101 and across the highway
- Parallel to a daylighted Gervais Creek from Fourth Street to Highway 101, across the highway to the bay. Daylighting Gervais Creek will provide visual and physical access to this natural amenity while having minimal to no adverse impact on the transportation system.

Gervais Creek would be daylighted, for the most part, within the unimproved Rorvik Street right-of-way. Rorvik Street currently extends from Hwy. 101 east to approximately 1st Street with a steep one-lane gravel road extending about one block further. Expansion of Rorvik Street as a road is unlikely due to the steep terrain. Daylighting Gervais Creek would still require flowing under Hwy. 101 to Nehalem Bay. The other transportation consideration of daylighting Gervais Creek is traffic circulation near the Hwy. 101/Rorvik/Gregory intersection. There is an opportunity to create a focal point utilizing the creek at this location, i.e. daylighted creek, fountain, pool, etc. while maintaining adequate traffic circulation. This detail should be part of the TSP recommended downtown refinement plan.

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- Akin Street from Fourth Street to Hospital Road and surrounding the City-owned land (future park) between Akin, Hall, Third, and Hospital streets.
- Third Street from Gervais Creek south to the City-owned land (future park)
- Rowe Street/Hospital Road from Fourth Street to Highway 101
- First Street from Gregory St. to Hospital Rd.
- Second Street from Akin St. (future park) to Dubois St.
- Parallel to Vosburg Creek from Fourth Street to Highway 101 and across the highway
- Third Street and Dichter Drive from Vosburg Creek to Highway 101 and across the highway

STREET DESIGN STANDARDS

In addition to street design standards for Highway 101, street standards are recommended for local streets and off-street pathways. Street standards identify how future streets should be designed and constructed. This will provide the City and developers with standard street designs. Each street design standard identifies travel lane widths, parking, bicycle lanes, sidewalks/pathways, and drainage recommendations. In addition to Highway 101, three street design standards are recommended:

- Collector Street: 50' right-of-way with two 11-12' travel lanes, 6' sidewalks, and 5' drainage swales.
- Local Street Option 'A: 50' right-of-way with two 11' travel lanes, 6' pedestrian/bicycle path, and 5' drainage swales.
- Local Street Option 'B: 50' right-of-way with two 11' travel lanes and 5' drainage swales.
- Pathway: 10-50' right-of-way with 10' pathway width (paved or hard-packed unimpervious material)

Local street design standard options are recommended because designated and separate pedestrian facilities, i.e. sidewalks, are not always necessary due to low traffic volumes on local residential streets. Often, residents in small communities prefer to not have sidewalks because it gives too much of an "urban" character and it is safe for pedestrians to share the roadway with vehicles because of the low traffic volumes and slow speeds. This also significantly reduces construction costs.

SITE SPECIFIC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- Waterfront Pedestrian and Circulation improvements. This may include a recommendation for designating Marine Drive as a street. Currently Marine Drive is not a public (or private) street but is used to access the waterfront and commercial/industrial uses along the waterfront.
- Highway 101/Pennsylvania Avenue intersection realignment
- Hall Street/Third Street Curve - Identification of existing right-of-way or easement that depicts the true turning movement (curve).
- Hemlock Street/Third Street – need to secure right-of-way or easement where Third Street curves to intersect with Hemlock Street (or realign Third Street to intersect with Hemlock at a 90 degree angle if topography allows – doubtful)
- Railroad improvements including auto/pedestrian conflicts, and the potential for Wheeler to become a passenger rail destination with a train station
- Accommodating RV parking.
- Gateway improvements – traffic, landscaping, signage improvements at each end of Wheeler that notify motorists that they are entering a community and provides an initial attractive appearance as one enters the community.
- Need for the citywide stormwater master plan (Stormwater drainage is typically integrated with the street system therefore it will be addressed in the TSP.)

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- Rorvik Street and Gregory Street.