SSTTOP or Go?
'Ve know it will be a while before we get to the widening of State Street'
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Early estimates are that the State Street widening project could top $60 million.

It's hard to fathom which makes the head hurt more: how to fix State Street or how much it will cost.

In April 2011, Boise Weekly first reported on something called SSTTOP, aka the State Street Transit and Traffic Operations Plan (BW News, "SSTOP Waits for Green Light," April 15, 2011), and the prediction that the current volume of vehicles traveling along State—30,000 on an average weekday—would balloon to more than 56,000 vehicles by 2035, an increase of 93 percent.

A 100-plus-page analysis included a half-dozen scenarios to widen State Street and introduce high-occupancy lanes.

"It’s the funding part that could drive someone to drink," Mayor Dave Bieter told planners on March 31, 2011.

Hizzoner may want to make it a double.

When Sabrina Anderson, director of planning and project management, and transportation funding coordinator Ryan Head, both from the Ada County Highway District, returned to Boise City Council chambers more than two years later, on June 18, they updated city officials on SSTTOP—flying through a series of maps. They said that if and when State Street is widened, presumably by 2030, the price tag might need $45.7 million in local funding and an additional $15 million in federal dollars.

"We know it will be a while before we get to the widening of State Street," cautioned Anderson, adding that federal funding should probably focus on maintenance while local funding should be earmarked for larger, street-widening projects.

The most recent version of SSTTOP recommends that much of State Street be widened to seven lanes, with lanes dedicated to transit and other high-occupancy vehicles. The plan also "recommends projects to expand the capacity of the transit system and bicycle and pedestrian facilities and to design State Street to accommodate all travel modes."

"But we should focus on funding pedestrian facilities and sidewalks and the connection of a safe path as soon as possible," said Anderson.

Improved sidewalks and intersections would occur incrementally, with most—between 27th Street and Glenwood Avenue—completed by 2020. Widening of State Street would follow with 27th to Veterans Parkway completed by 2026, Veterans to Collister by 2028 and Collister to Glenwood completed by 2036.

Anderson told policymakers that ultimate decisions on funding "will be determined" by ACHD’s budget, but she promised to return with another update sooner than later.