

Plan calls for removing a lane of Fairview and Main in Boise's West End

By: Teya Vitu February 2, 2017 0



ACHD plans to remove a traffic lane from Main Street to add street parking and a protected bike lane. Image courtesy of Ada County Highway District.

City and county planners are considering a plan to reduce the traffic lanes from four to three on Main Street and Fairview on Boise's west end to add street parking and bicycle lanes.

The city of Boise and Ada County Highway District will independently decide the priority of the Fairview and Main Local Streets Improvement between 16th Street and Whitewater Park Boulevard among the city's and ACHD's overall transportation agendas.

"Best guess: The project (could) be implemented in the next one to three years," ACHD spokesman Craig Quintana said.

The city and ACHD believe the project could be fast-tracked because its projected price tag is only \$143,000.

"It's a low-cost item and should be easy to accomplish," said Karen Gallagher, the city's transportation planner. "It's largely a restriping job."

The City Council has until March 17 to submit its transportation priorities to ACHD, which owns nearly all the public streets in Ada County that are not state highways. ACHD then will prioritize the Main/Fairway project among its own street proposals in Boise, Meridian, Eagle and elsewhere in Ada County.

The ACHD Commission on Jan. 25 approved the 79-page improvement plan, which is a collaboration among ACHD, the city, the Capital City Development Corp. and Valley Regional Transit.

The city and CCDC have branded the Main and Fairway corridor and surrounding neighborhoods as the West End and expect to see the area develop into a bustling corridor with a community college and hundreds of new apartments.

"It's complementary to our 30th Street Master Plan," Gallagher said.

The 2012 30th Street Master Plan outlines a potential of "vast revitalized commercial districts, vibrant residential neighborhoods, and stunning new recreation amenities along the nearby Boise River" in the 681 acres bounded by the Boise River, The Connector, 23rd Street, Veterans Memorial Park and Irene Street.

ACHD, the city and CCDC see the Fairview and Main couplet as an opportunity to add bicycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly features to the roadway.

Main and Fairview now have four traffic lanes within the 74 feet from sidewalk to sidewalk. The improvement plan calls for removing a traffic lane and adding a protected bike lane to each street with a buffer of some sort between bikes and cars.

The plan outlines street parking on both sides of Fairview and the left side of Main. On Fairview, the bike lane would run between the curb and the parked cars.



ACHD's concept for Fairview Avenue on the west end calls for one less traffic lane, street parking on both side and a protected bike lane. Image courtesy of Ada County Highway District.

The owners of the Bronco Motors and Sunset Motors dealership on Main and Fairview spoke at the commission meeting on Jan. 25, saying they were concerned residents of future developments would take up all the street parking in front of their businesses.

ACHD Commission President Paul Woods said parking is a legitimate concern. ACHD Commissioners Sara Baker and Kent Goldthorpe proposed metered parking and also discussed the idea of prohibiting parking between 16th Street and Whitewater Park (formerly 30th Street).

"With parking, it's extremely important that it be regulated," Baker said.

Brooke Green, ACHD's senior transportation planner and bicycle and pedestrian coordinator, said details about street parking and meters will be determined as the project goes to the design phase.

"The city is in charge of metered parking," Green said.

The improvement plan calls for 8-foot-wide sidewalks on Main Street and 6½-foot-wide sidewalks on Fairview with 7-foot-wide landscaping strips between the sidewalk and curb. These widths, too, may be adjusted in the design phase.

"The design is more exacting and yields the striping plan, lane widths, planters and any other relevant details to actually implement the concept," Quintana said by e-mail. "It will require another round of public outreach with an open house (possibly online)."

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