

### 3: Central City Bicycle Plan

Getting to and around Portland's central city is challenging for many cyclists. The City of Portland's Central City Transportation Plan Update will look at improving transportation flow in and access to downtown and the Lloyd District. The City's Bicycle Master Plan update will also include solutions for cyclists in these districts.

#### SITUATION

- Concentration of employment, students, and housing
- Over 10,000 cyclists cross downtown bridges
- Limited bike facilities
- Bicycles prohibition on most sidewalks
- Stoplights timed at low speeds
- Confident cyclists generally take the lane on most streets

Portland's central city contains the region's highest concentration of employment, shopping, housing, entertainment, and educational destinations, plus it hosts a changing calendar of special events and festivals.

The City of Portland's Central City Plan includes downtown, the inner part of NW Portland, and the Lloyd District. More than 10,000 bicyclists cross Portland's central city bridges on weekdays, and thousands park their bicycles at major waterfront festivals. Despite this heavy use, the central city has a very limited bicycle network and does not feel safe or comfortable to families and less-than-confident cyclists.



In the downtown business district, bike lanes may be found only on SW Broadway, SW Jefferson, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup>. The Lloyd District has more lanes but an overall poor level of access to the river, bridges, and residential areas in any direction. Low traffic streets, such as NW and SW Park, NW Davis, SW 9<sup>th</sup>, NW Johnson, and NE Holladay are more comfortable, but currently they are not treated for cyclists.

Most of the bicyclists riding downtown are experienced and will regularly ride in lanes with auto traffic to make their trips faster and safer. This may not be an option for many potential bike riders.

#### PROBLEMS

- Streets with high auto volumes and travel lanes
- Streets with bike lanes have hazardous turning, unloading, and other conflicts
- Limited supply of long-term parking
- Poor route signage and markings

Central City Portland is a commonly cited barrier for bicyclists of all abilities. The area has a very limited network of bike lanes and virtually no designated family-friendly bicycle boulevards. Many streets with bike lanes, such as Broadway and Multnomah Avenues can be dangerous because of

higher-speed and volume traffic, frequent turns by cars across bike lanes, opening doors, and standing or loading vehicles.

In downtown, most designated bicycle routes are shared multi-lane streets. These streets do not offer bike lanes, shoulders, or wider outside lanes. Bicyclists must therefore either take an entire lane and keep pace with car traffic, ride to the side of the lane and risk being passed too closely by cars from behind, or ride illegally on the sidewalk. The net effect is that many bicyclists do not enter, nor do area residents try to ride in our busiest commercial districts.

Lack of parking is another hurdle. Though secure long-term parking exists, it is rarely visible to people on the street; there are no large, easy-to-find parking garages for bikes as there are for cars.

Finally, bicycle routes are poorly signed or unsigned, making it even more difficult for bicyclists to navigate the scarce bike lanes and routes and one-way streets.

## SOLUTIONS

- Designate and prioritize network of low-traffic bicycle streets
- Establish new north/south routes
- Improve and add to parking
- Sign and mark bicycle routes

The SW downtown core, NW Pearl District, Nob Hill, and the Lloyd District can all be made much more hospitable with innovative and often inexpensive changes to streets and signs.

Developing a set of low-traffic bicycle boulevards is a primary strategy. The existing low-traffic streets mentioned above, or others, could be converted into primary bicycle boulevards. The routes would be connected to the bridges and the existing network of bike lanes. Bike boxes on higher-traffic streets would increase bicyclist safety and could potentially increase overall travel efficiencies on downtown streets. They would also greatly improve pedestrian safety.

Improved signage and marking for bicyclists would help inexperienced bicyclists navigate downtown, and could direct bike riders to long-term parking, some of which is being developed privately.

## WHO TO CONTACT

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