

Transforming Forest Avenue
Public Meeting #3
Woodfords Congregational Church
10/27/11
Notes

Public Comments

- Neighborhood bike and pedestrian byways should be acknowledged and integrated into the plan. Oakdale Street is the next potential one near the corridor.
- Woodfords Corner parking and travel lane discussion:
 - Necking down (creating sidewalk bumpouts) - Deering Avenue is important to nearby residents and this strategy would be good for traffic calming.
 - Maintaining one lane SB on Forest Avenue is important to pedestrian and bicycle interests, especially related to getting to and from Ocean Ave School by shortening crossing distance.
 - Creating a more robust pedestrian safety island in the middle of Forest Avenue at Woodfords is also of interest.
- Enforcement of laws about bicyclists riding on sidewalks is important, especially if a bike lane is created and/or riding in the travel lane is emphasized. A lot of people ride on the sidewalk along Forest.
- Crossing Forest Ave in the Marginal/Kennebec area is a challenge because streets need to be crossed multiple times if utilizing the existing crosswalks and sidewalks. One potential solution would be to create a sidewalk on Marginal Way in front of Century Tire.
- Integrate a Bayside Trail connection to Deering Oaks Park into this plan.
- Include trash cans in the list of street furniture improvements
- Improving the ability to cross Forest Avenue on foot and on bike is just as important as improving the corridor itself. Reducing speed of auto traffic, and ensuring that traffic signals can sense bikes.
- Note that crossing busy streets at unsignalized intersections is increasingly dangerous – texting and other distracted drivers make it even more so.
- Advertising on bus shelters may be one way of funding them and new infrastructure that shows schedules and next bus arrival times, etc. This is now legal in Maine and should be explored. Forest could be a pilot?
- Transparent bus shelters will help to solve the concern of some business owners that their storefronts will be blocked visually. Like example depicted in Concept Plan
- Crossing aides should focus attention on pedestrians instead of overhead (e.g. Hawk lights.)
- Sidewalk plowing needs to be addressed. Development of a business district (e.g. Downtown District) could be a way to address this.
- Consider all-way crossing at Woodford's Corner.
- Will timing of the signals along Forest Ave be made clear with signs that explain that traveling the speed limit is key to smooth travel (e.g. – you'll hit the green lights if you maintain 30 mph)? No, but a temporary sign and other public outreach when it is turned on could be helpful. This is a good idea worth exploring.

- Signage going NB on Forest at Woodfords Corner is not clear – not sure which lane to be in to make turn onto Woodfords St at light. Better signage is important (not just more).
- Business owners within the affected area requested that the peak travel time restrictions on on-street parking to create an additional NB travel lane through Woodford's Corner be established for the **shortest period possible**.
- Bike Lane on Casco Bay Bridge senses bicycles and alerts merging drivers coming off of on-ramp. This technology should be explored for the exit 6 ramps to alert drivers that there is approaching bicycle traffic or pedestrians?
- Improve lighting near I-295 overpass sooner rather than later. Investigate if existing lighting can be improved. There are existing lights that have been turned off. Area is very unsafe.
- Cars tend to create long lines waiting to turn left onto Bedford Street to get onto USM campus. Block lanes for through traffic.

PAC Comments

- Between Walton Street and Forest Ave – consider narrowing Ocean Avenue to reduce traffic speed.
- Does Saunders Street need to connect to Forest Avenue? Adds to confusion of a complex intersection and seems only to serve as a cut through to Woodfords Street. Maybe should be closed to cars but remain open for bicycles and pedestrians as part of bike byway system.
- Look into connecting Bayside Trail to Deering Oaks Park.
- Can all four crossings of the Park/Forest intersection be included in the plan? Right now the northerly crossing is all that's shown. This intersection should be completed and improved in its entirety.
- Deering Center Neighborhood Association (DCNA) is less comfortable with adding a new southbound lane on Forest Avenue through Woodford's Corner than with installing new bump outs at that location and on the Deering Avenue side, reducing Forest Ave to a single lane southbound through Woodfords for a short stretch, as described in the plan.
- DCNA prefers that bike lanes near underpass of I-295 be geared more to the less experienced riders to encourage more riders, versus asking bikers to ride with traffic.
- Hope that the energy of the planning process will be carried forward into implementation. Business and resident involvement would help with prioritization and phasing of projects.
- Public/Private partnerships offer a competitive advantage when pursuing PACTS funding. This should be explored in collaborations between the City and the business community.
- Ocean Ave ped/bike byway is a showcase for the state. For it to succeed, it needs to cross Forest Avenue safely at Woodford's corner. Bump out of sidewalk into Forest Avenue is preferred (as currently proposed in the plan).
- Saunders/Nevins connection to Forest Avenue is important for bikes.

The entire intersection at Park Ave, Portland Street and Forest Ave should be improved as part of this plan. Not just the Park Ave/Forest portion (southerly leg of the intersection).

- Diamond interchange is preferred over any improvements to existing cloverleaf interchange at I-295 exit 6.
- Any consideration of creating a pedestrian/bicycle overpass over Forest Avenue at the Bayside trail is not preferred, as it is better to keep bike/ped on grade to emphasize its equal value.
- Bike boxes can be unsafe except for specific applications. Similar to cars not seeing bikes when the light changes as the car approaches and begins making a right turn. Public education would be required if any are installed, as are proposed in the plan.
- Support bump out into Forest Avenue and maintaining single SB travel lane at Woodfords Corner.