BACKGROUND

In October 2006, the City of Eugene kicked off its first Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategic Plan with the Eugene Walking and Biking Summit. The summit marked the beginning of a year-long public involvement process that includes a series of community workshops and focus groups. Workshop topics included Youth Safety and Education, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities and Infrastructure, Accessibility for Seniors and People with Disabilities, Education and Encouragement, and Bicycle Parking and Theft.

This workshop provided a unique opportunity for seniors and people with disabilities to participate in the pedestrian and bicycle strategic planning process. It was an opportunity for participants to take an active role in their community. It was also a chance for staff to learn about the needs of a population that is often under represented in planning processes.

The summit was facilitated by the University of Oregon’s Community Planning Workshop (CPW). CPW is an experiential program within the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the University of Oregon. Established in 1977, CPW provides students the opportunity to address planning and public policy problems for clients throughout Oregon. Students in the Master of Community and Regional Planning Program work in teams under the direction of faculty and Graduate Teaching Fellows to develop proposals, conduct research, analyze and evaluate alternatives, and make recommendations for possible solutions to planning problems in rural Oregon communities.

YOUTH SAFETY AND EDUCATION

The Youth Safety and Education workshop involved discussions with 6th-8th graders about perceptions of biking and walking, and what could be done to make those activities more appealing and safe. Key findings show that:

- A perception of danger is a major issue or drawback preventing youth from walking or biking more;
- Improving or increasing bicycle amenities, such as GPS units and bicycle attachments would make young people want to bike more;
- Having special walking and biking events that involve games and activities is a great way to conduct walking and biking outreach to youth.

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This workshop focused on visual preferences that serve to make walking and biking more comfortable modes of transportation. CPW facilitated focus groups that collected data from local pedestrians and cyclists to meet the specific needs of the City of Eugene.

The workshop included three methods of data collection, and involved 45 participants. The first was a survey presenting images of facilities, and had participants rate them by comfort level; the second involved a facilitated discussion of the ratings; and the third had the
participants filling out a brief questionnaire covering personal demographic information.

The data collected here affirms many of the best pedestrian and bicycle planning, design, and engineering practices. Pedestrians indicated that they are more comfortable on shared-use paths, sidewalks with landscaped buffers, and crossings that are well-marked and clearly indicate the requirement for drivers to stop. Cyclists responded that they are more comfortable on facilities having minimal conflict with cars, neighborhood streets designed for bicycle use, and using striped bike lanes on higher volume streets.

**BI CYCLE THEFT AND PARKING**

This workshop, involving 40 community members, plus city staff and CPW members, was a public discussion and strategy session on two topics: bicycle theft and bicycle parking. Participants affirmed the relationship between the two topics, as many indicated that increasing in parking would decrease thefts.

In the strategy session, participants noted that bike theft is too high, and that law enforcement should prioritize the matter. Strategies included increasing bike registrations; educating people on how to lock bikes securely; and making it easier to report stolen bikes.

During the discussions on bicycle parking, the themes included: inadequate parking as a barrier to ridership, parking accommodations for all styles of bikes, special event parking, workplace facilities, changing city code to help improve enforcement of proper parking, and improving parking at existing facilities.

**EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT**

25 community members attended this workshop to brainstorm activities related to pedestrian and bicycle education and encouragement.

Key recommendations from the workshop include:

- **Community Culture** - Hold community-wide events and activities involving walking and biking.

  Participants generated many ideas for community-wide activities, including: annual events celebrating walking and biking; organized walks, rides, and races; and activities that involve walking and biking, such as a restaurant tasting to which participants must walk, wheel, or bicycle.

- **Strategy** - Develop programs that encourage people to shift trip to promote walking and biking.

  Many participants suggested a need for government partnerships with community businesses and organizations to develop promotional programs. Youth-oriented organizations should also be involved in promotional activities. In addition, the city and/or various community organizations should create and distribute educational materials to help promote increased walking and biking.

- **Safety** - Provide outreach and educational opportunities to increase safety and awareness for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

  Examples of outreach work include safe behavior education, a community-wide campaign to get the word out about safety, and increased signage.

- **Accessibility and Connectivity** - Offer education and outreach activities to increase community knowledge about walking and biking infrastructure.
Diverse and more frequent way-finding and directional signs will increase access. And the city should create and distribute better maps to facilitate users’ access to convenient and efficient routes to their destinations.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR SENIORS AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This workshop was an open house format, with participants being free to come and go at any time during the three hours of operation. A mapping exercise allowed participants to identify specific issues on a map of the city and include suggestions for improvement. In addition, city staff from the Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department brought two 3-wheeled bicycles to demonstrate options for increasing mobility for seniors and people with disabilities.

Participants discussed issues related to seniors and people with disabilities, themes for a vision statement, and how the issues should be prioritized by the city.

Themes for the vision statement include:

**Culture of Respect**
Each group had at least one concept that fits under this theme. Participants expressed a desire for a community where people are treated with courtesy, people exhibit a sense of responsibility, and there is equity for all users of the transportation system.

**Safety**
The theme of safety was the second most common among the groups. The idea of safety included emotional safety as well as physical safety. Participants wanted to see safe routes to schools, and an infrastructure that is well-lit and maintained.

**Accessibility**
Participants envisioned a community where the facilities are designed with accessibility as a priority, where people of all ages and abilities would have access to alternative modes of transport, and appropriate signage.

**Connectivity**
Gaps in sidewalks and indirect routes are particularly challenging for seniors and people with disabilities. Continuity, convenience, practicality and integration were ideas that participants described in their vision of a walkable and bikeable community. They also expressed an interest in more pathways and a need to integrate existing pathways with new designs.

**Education**
Two of the four groups had an education element in their list of vision themes. Participants described education about rules and access to education materials as important components of their vision.

**Enforcement**
Two groups listed enforcement as key vision themes. Their ideas include creating more and better rules as well as enforcing existing laws and regulations.

**Tourism**
One group suggested tourism as an important element of a theme recognizing the need to promote Eugene as a destination for bicycling and walking enthusiasts.