

# MAIN STREET PRELIMINARY THEMES

Summary of Collaborative Community Conversations

City of Springfield & Lane Transit District

June – September 2013



Submitted:  
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## OVERVIEW

### Historic Multimodal Main Street



The Main Street Corridor has played a vital role in Springfield over time. As the primary artery to the city's vibrant residential and commercial life, its importance will only increase over the next 20 years. The City, in partnership with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Lane Transit District (LTD), has received grants to coordinate future land use and transit system planning. The coordinated

approach allows the City and community to engage together in a broad inclusive visioning process to collectively decide on a preferred future for the corridor.

As a first step in this two-year long process, the City of Springfield and LTD embarked on a series of community conversations regarding Main Street. These conversations with the general public and area stakeholders occurred from June through August of 2013 as group meetings with stakeholders and at three large local events, SummerFair, National Night Out, and the Nick Symmonds Springfield 800 Community Run. The purpose was to gain an early understanding of initial community thinking about the current Main Street corridor, its potential future, and how transit might support it. Information gathered provides a preliminary platform for greater in-depth exploration with the broader Springfield community.

### Relationship to other planning processes

The results of this initial outreach will be built upon by other planning efforts (see page 3) underway, planned, or under discussion including:

#### *Main Street Corridor Vision Plan*

Identifies the community's preferred future for the land uses and transportation systems along Main Street, seeking input on ways to:

- Guide future development of mutually supportive land uses and transportation systems to improve corridor conditions and livability;
- Provide enhanced opportunities for successful commerce and corridor redevelopment;
- Increase corridor accessibility to jobs, workforce, education, services, and the ability to accommodate future growth in travel;
- Improve safety and balance mobility for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

### *Main-McVay: Improved Transit Feasibility Study*

A potential two-phase project that first seeks public and stakeholder input on transportation challenges and opportunities along Main Street and explores transit options to address and enhance mobility along the Main-McVay corridor.

### *Downtown Demonstration Project*

As an outcome of the Downtown Circulation project, this small project will install several pedestrian scale decorative posts and LED light fixtures along one block downtown.

### *Main Street Pedestrian Crossing Project*

A collaborative effort between the City of Springfield and the Oregon Department of Transportation to implement the six remaining pedestrian crossing projects recommended under the 2010 Main Street Pedestrian Safety Study.

### *SmartTrips Main Street (2014)*

A comprehensive individual household and business-marketing program aimed at increased bicycling, walking, use of public transit, and ridesharing through education, incentives, community outreach and events.

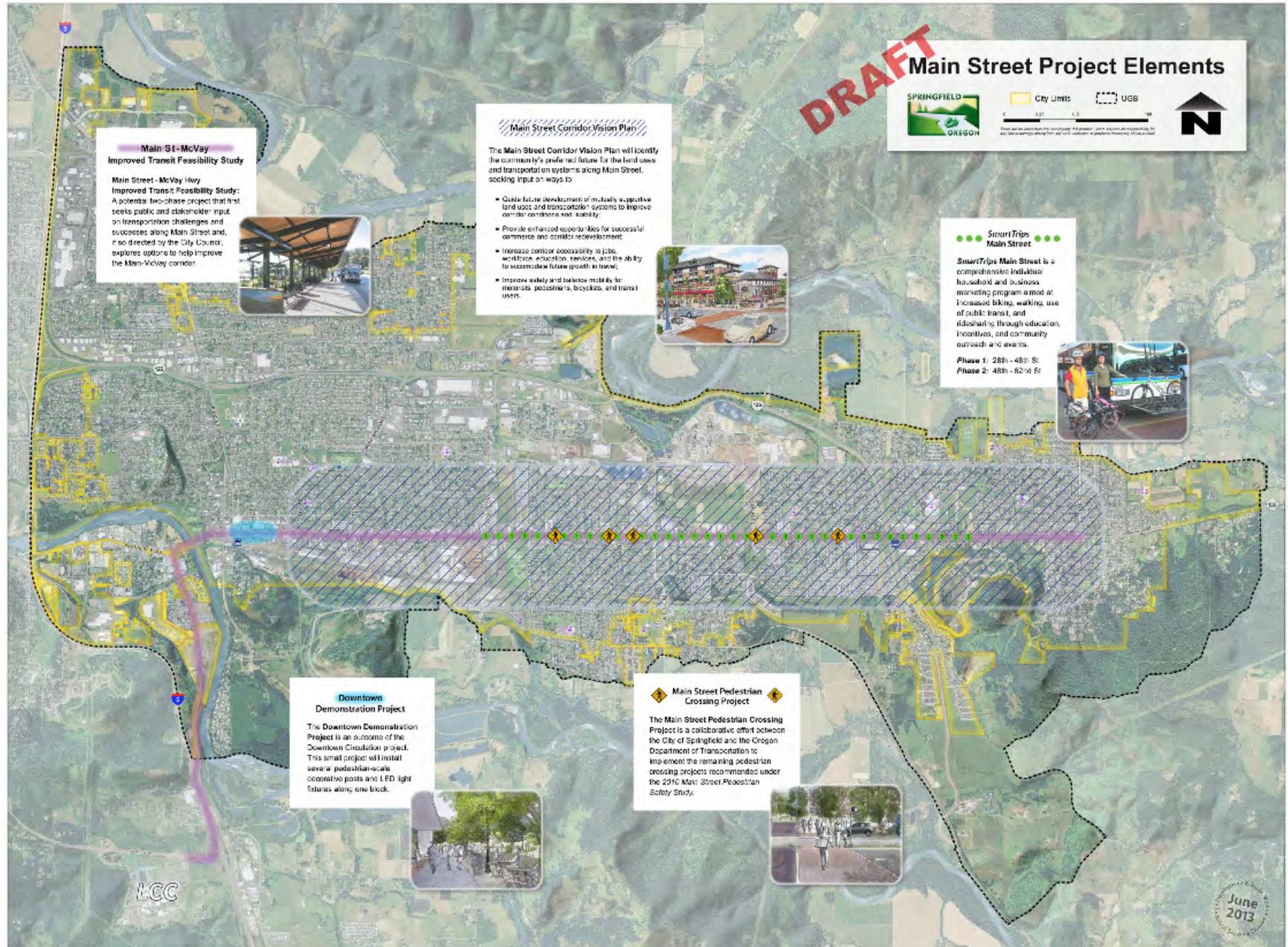
Phase 1: 29<sup>th</sup> – 48<sup>th</sup>

Phase 2: 48<sup>th</sup> – 62<sup>nd</sup>

### *Geographic scope*

The scope of the preliminary Main Street outreach encompassed:

- Main Street from 69<sup>th</sup> in Thurston to Mill Street downtown
- Approximately one-half mile on either side of the Main St. corridor
- Potential Main Street transit connections extending east to the Thurston area, and west to Lane Community College



## Preliminary Theme Development

Three key outreach strategies form the basis of the preliminary Main Street themes. Outlined is the process, questions, and dominant themes derived from public input received via:

- Community Conversations
- SummerFair
- Nick Symmonds Springfield 800 Community Run

## Community Conversations

Beginning in late spring 2013, leadership representatives from the City of Springfield and Lane Transit District hosted a series of small community conversations intended to capture a sample of thinking about the corridor's current assets, areas for improvement, and potential future.

### Participants

The City of Springfield developed the participant list with input from Lane Transit District to gather preliminary thoughts from Main Street stakeholders including representatives from:

- Corridor businesses
- Large corridor employers
- Recreation providers
- K-12 Schools
- Higher education
- Economic development
- City Services
- Social service agencies
- Community organizations

### **Why Main Streets Matter**

We all know where our Main Streets are, but do we know *what* they are and *why* they matter? Whether they are named First Avenue or Water Street or Martin Luther King Boulevard, what they represent is universal. Main Street is the economic engine, the big stage, the core of the community. Our Main Streets tell us who we are and who we were, and how the past has shaped us. We do not go to bland suburbs or enclosed shopping malls to learn about our past, explore our culture, or discover our identity. Our Main Streets are the places of shared memory where people still come together to live, work, and play.

**- National Main Street Center**  
*A subsidy of the National Historic Trust*

Between the months of June and August 2013, the City of Springfield and LTD invited participants to group conversations. The following reviews the stakeholder representatives that provided Main Street input.

MAIN STREET COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS	
STAKEHOLDER GROUP	NAME
Corridor Businesses	McKenzie Feed & Pet Supplies
	Wilson RV
	All American Barber Shop
	Fins Drive In
	True Value Hardware
	Roberts Supply Company
	Hutch's Bicycle Shop
	D'Marias Beauty Salon
	Veterinary Allergy & Dermatology Services
Corridor Large Employers	Rosboro
	International Paper Company
	Wildish
	John Hyland Construction
Recreation	Willamalane Recreation District
Schools	Academy of Arts and Academics
	Springfield High School
	Thurston High School
	Lane Transit District's School Solutions
Higher Education	Lane Community College
Economic Development	Chamber of Commerce
	NEDCO
City Services	Library
Community Organizations Social Service Agencies	Habitat for Humanity
	Planned Parenthood
	Catholic Community Services
	Head Start

## Process

### Community Conversations

Each community conversation adhered to a consistent discussion framework. Held at Willamalane, the 90-minute sessions all had a facilitator and note taker with up to two leadership representatives each from the City of Springfield and Lane Transit District. The representatives' role was to listen to stakeholder input and answer specific questions, if asked.

### Agency representatives included:

- City of Springfield Mayor, Christine Lundberg
- City of Springfield City Councilor, Marilee Woodrow
- LTD Board President, Doris Towery
- LTD Board Member, Mike Dubick
- LTD Board Member, Carl Yeh

To create a common stage for discussion, participants received a brief overview of Main Street's history, current employment, residents, and transit usage within the identified corridor. In addition, consultants provided future employment and residential growth projections for the City of Springfield.

Key questions posed included:

- What's working well on the Main Street corridor today?
- What's not working well?
- What changes/improvements, if any, would you like to see over the next 20 years?
- Should the City of Springfield and Lane Transit District study potential transit options on Main Street?

All participants were very open, candid, and appreciative of the opportunity to informally talk with their public leaders. Likewise, the City of Springfield and LTD leadership gained an early sense of the community's Main Street perspectives.

SummerFair / National Night Out

Over the weekend of July 19, 2013 Springfield leadership and staff hosted booths to gather additional input to explore on Main Street themes. Over 35 people provided thoughtful input on what positive attributes exist on Main Street today and what they would like to see, use, and enjoy twenty years from now. Springfield staff recorded public comments received.

Nick Symmonds Springfield 800 Community Run

City staff hosted an information booth to present the preliminary Main Street themes at this community event. The public reviewed the themes summary, added comments, and learned about opportunities for future involvement in the Main Street planning projects. Springfield staff and LTD's outreach consultant recorded public comments received.

## THEMES

Outlined are the primary themes by category as expressed through the community conversations and public events.

## WHAT'S WORKING WELL ON THE MAIN STREET CORRIDOR TODAY?

### ROADWAY

- Traffic flows well
- Pedestrian crossings are an improvement
- Good infrastructure for cars and bikes
- Good, wide lanes with few signals and driveways
- Limited congestion

*"Feels like the City is restoring and renovating."*

*"We have momentum."*

*"The City and Lane Transit District have created excellent public transportation for Springfield."*

*"We now have a small town feel with a modern twist."*

### BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Downtown is experiencing a revival with new businesses
- Main Street offers high business visibility
- High variety of businesses (type & age)
- It's a corridor of opportunity

### AESTHETICS & IDENTITY

- We have honored our past by keeping our historic architecture
- Downtown Main St. feels more like community now with Second Friday Art Walks, banners, flowers, etc.
- We have preserved our trees
- City is reshaping itself in a positive way

### TRANSIT

- Downtown LTD station has been an advantage to Springfield business
- Easy access to reliable and frequent public transportation is great
- Transit has helped create sense of place for Springfield
- City supports transit

### LAND USE

- Mixed use development in downtown (Royal Building)
- Diversity of Main St. because it represents the diversity of Springfield

## WHAT IS NOT WORKING WELL ON MAIN STREET?

### ROADWAY

- Speed is too high
- Congestion at intersections feeding into Main St.
- Difficult for bicycles and pedestrians to cross
- Corridor is not attractive to any other mode than autos, buses, and trucks
- Need a two-way bike path

*“Works great as a freight corridor but not as a community’s Main Street.”*

*“Once you leave downtown there is no ‘there, there.’”*

### AESTHETICS & IDENTITY

- Lacks a sense of ownership
- After 21<sup>st</sup> street, don’t feel connected
- Too much garbage along street

### SAFETY

- Crime an issue in mid-Springfield
- Sense of not feeling safe in our neighborhoods

### LAND USE

- Underutilized areas along Main St.
- Does not feel cohesive but jumbled
- The corridor divides neighborhoods

## WHAT ARE SUGGESTED FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO MAIN STREET?

### ROADWAY

- Adjust speeds to better serve all who use Main St. not just freight
- Make it easier to travel for ALL modes (car, transit, foot, bicycle)
- Explore alternate freight routes
- As traffic increases, improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure, access, and safety

### BUSINESS CLIMATE

- Take advantage of the corridor's opportunities (increase shopping, restaurants, and other services all along Main St.)
- Offer redevelopment opportunities
- Put future jobs on or near Main St.

### AESTHETICS & IDENTITY

- Make it more than one long drag
- Don't create a cookie cutter approach
- Invest in infrastructure that enhances the corridor aesthetics (improved transit, sidewalks with trees)
- Improved transit will add to the appearance of Main St.

### TRANSIT

- Improve public transit
- Transit offers opportunities for housing and access to jobs, school, and the region
- Make transit convenient and safe
- Buses should not stop traffic but be integrated
- Transit stops can reflect Springfield

### LAND USE

- More mixed use
- Can't do increased density without enhanced transit
- Close the gaps between downtown and Thurston
- More bike racks everywhere
- Look at development possibilities before you make decisions

*"Keep it unique.*

*Keep it special.*

*Keep it flowing. "*

## SHOULD THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD AND LTD STUDY POTENTIAL TRANSIT OPTIONS ON MAIN STREET?

- Need to get out in front of change to foster best development options for Main St.
- Now is the time to do it
- Can't be a great city without transit, good bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure
- Want to be forward thinking and transit is an essential part of that
- Do no harm to existing businesses by making it more friendly for transit, bicycles and foot traffic
- A transit study is not needed because transit is working fine on the corridor
- Nothing is broken - do not fix it
- Transit adds to the foundation to transform Springfield
- Be prepared for the future
- No better time to do than now
- Why wait until you have a problem? Study it now to anticipate it
- Cheaper to do it now than later
- Understand what right-of-way the City has now and what might be needed (don't want a South Willamette Street situation)
- Studying it now will help connect the dots
- Understand how transit can help maintain the existing traffic flow
- Connecting Thurston and LCC is a logical connection
- Create a community where you don't need a car
- Study it but realize you need to think about it all - multimodal integration
- If you expand EmX, parking will become an issue downtown
- Need to be sure to preserve parking
- Building of EmX should require a public vote
- Having access to transportation options is so very important
- Residents, visitors, employees, and employers all benefit, the economy benefits, the environment benefits
- EmX is awesome
- Just do it

Now is the time to do it

Need to get out in front of change to foster best development options for Main St.

Nothing is broken - do not fix it

### STUDY PROCESS

- City needs to be the lead or present when speaking with businesses
- Work on smart partnerships
- City and LTD can be part of the solution