

Stakeholder interviews were held on September 16 and 17, 2009 in Pinetop-Lakeside Town Hall for the Pedestrian Safety and Transportation Study. Stakeholder discussions included one to four interviewees plus the consultant and the town and ADOT project managers. There were 18 total interviewees. A list of those interviewed appears at the end of this report.

Stakeholders were invited to be interviewed three weeks in advance of the interview dates, in correspondence beginning with the following statement and questions to consider:

Greetings! The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), in cooperation with the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside, is beginning a Pedestrian Safety and Transportation study for school children and others in the area of Pinetop-Lakeside that has much pedestrian traffic. The study area map is attached. This planning effort would be enhanced if you could share your perspective on the future transportation issues in the area. The study is to guide the town in improving pedestrian travel facilities and conditions in a fashion that is compatible with the rest of the transportation system.

1. What improvements are needed to encourage pedestrian travel and to make it safe?
2. What do you suggest regarding how ADOT, the Town, and the Blue Ridge Unified Schools might work with additional partners on facilities or educational programs for safe pedestrian travel?

At each interview the consultant first asked the stakeholders to describe what they believe to be the most important pedestrian issues in the town. Maps were displayed that illustrated some of the issues. Follow-up discussion elicited more issue statements and provided details.

The stakeholder report below is a compilation of the statements made by stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER STATEMENTS BY CATEGORY

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

It is dangerous for walkers to cross SR 260 and for motorists to turn onto or off from SR 260.

A pedestrian bridge is needed across SR 260. Perhaps the best location would be near the Safeway store.

Need more crosswalks and stop lights for safer crossings. Additional stop lights within one-half mile either side of Penrod might be appropriate.

Stop lights for pedestrians are currently all of the “triggered” type. They will be checked periodically as to whether they are working properly. Also, since half of summer visitors are elderly, the lights should stay green for longer to allow more time for crossing.

Elderly people want to limit their driving. Some effects of that fact on Pinetop-Lakeside are that more elderly seasonal residents stay in their second homes in Pinetop-Lakeside for a greater share of the year, rather than going on longer trips.

On roads other than SR 260 there should be more sidewalks

There should be a crosswalk at SR 260 adjacent to the Best Western, for access to a popular trailhead.

The dual left-turn lane makes for a high risk of head-on vehicular collisions. Near the Chevron gas station is the worst location.

Left turns are risky so area utilities require that meter readers make right-hand turns, only.

More street lights are needed, especially for summer evening walkers; however, many town residents perceive lighting would ruin the “dark skies.” Lighting aids safety, aesthetics, and more. Business persons find it difficult to settle upon lighting that is acceptable to all. Might some solutions in Sedona help Pinetop-Lakeside?

Many Pinetop-Lakeside residents like the lights in Snowflake that were not funded by ADOT and that do not meet ADOT standards. Might ADOT allow lights that are not standard if Pinetop-Lakeside town paid for them?

Street lights that are a part of the landscape project on SR 260 will help in that area.

There should be a median either side of the Woodland Lake Road and SR 260 intersection (across from the Chevron Station, etc.). Medians or pedestrian refuge should be considered near Safeway, near Turkey Track, and on SR 260 near the Lakeside post office.

It is known by most town residents that it is risky for school children to cross SR 260 in front of the school campus. There would be much support for placing a high priority on a demonstration project with safety, access-control, and mobility components at that location. How about a demonstration project comprising a median and detached sidewalk, from Moon Ridge to Woodland Road?

Medians on SR 260 should include landscaping.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, *continued*

Town police are noticing pedestrian traffic infractions at the schools and will start to cite soon.

Two town police officers have been trained as bicycle officers and will have bikes in their cars at all times. They will accompany the “walking schoolbus” in October for educational and safety purposes.

Additional analysis of a possible Woodland Road median, discussed as part of the signal study, was one of the stated needs leading to this pedestrian study.

The perception of unsafe conditions influences how much people walk. When one walks on the sidewalk directly in front of the schools and adjacent to SR 260, “it feels dangerous,” especially when logging trucks are present. Similarly, “it feels dangerous” when walking near Penrod and SR 260.

The high school is limiting the “open lunch” policy partly to protect students from the danger of crossing SR 260. Those who cannot leave campus at lunch are freshmen this year, adding sophomores next year.

The community may resist unfamiliar access and safety facilities at first but accepts them when they prove to function well. The roundabout on Porter Mountain Road is an example.

The Penrod Road and SR 260 intersection is dangerous for walkers. High speeds are a special problem. Parking space demand exceeds supply. Business persons have asked about pedestrian refuge islands as part of the solution. Some want consideration of a longer median either side of Penrod.

People walk from motels to the restaurants and grocery at Penrod Road and SR 260. A longer stop light cycle to cross SR 260 would help. In general, better pedestrian facilities would be good for safety, businesses, and tourists’ enjoyment of their visit to Pinetop-Lakeside.

FUNDING

Neither motorists nor walkers can make trips around town at a reasonable level of service (LOS) in the winter season, because SR 260 is the town’s main street and inadequate funds are available for SR 260 improvements, maintenance, and operations.

Transit funding levels are poor. Examples of long walks to work are from the Penrod mobile home park to the nurseries.

Pinetop-Lakeside supports the recommendation of the 2007 Regional Transportation Study that Porter Mountain Road should be four lanes by 2030. The Town is seeking funding (TIGER grant application, etc.) to build portions of the Porter Mountain Road improvements sooner.

ADOT POLICY

ADOT, after much discussion with Pinetop-Lakeside town government, lowered the speed limit from 45 to 35 mph in much of Pinetop-Lakeside and speed enforcement is strong.

On SR 260 traffic passes through Show Low, while Pinetop-Lakeside is often its destination. Separate policies are needed to manage “pass-through” and “trip-end” traffic.

MULTIMODAL SAFETY

School bus routes have changed for 09-10 for purposes of safety and efficiency.

Many school children live in neighborhoods with bar ditches and without a walking path

Porter Mountain Road, especially the narrow bridge, is dangerous for walkers.

The bus stop locations have been reduced. When the bus stops to drop off several children, there is a delay while children leave the road, before the bus may resume its trip.

Some routes require buses to make 3-point turns (Poplar and Phipps)

State guidelines state the maximum walking distance to school at 1.0 miles for K-8 and 1.5 miles for 9-12.

BRUSD continues to bus children who live closer to the schools than state guidelines state, because of the winter weather and lack of sidewalks. Some children have a 45 minute bus ride; on some routes those who live closest to the school are picked up at home first, so ride the farthest.

Trails may make good walking paths to school; in Pinetop-Lakeside some of the trails are on private property (i.e. Springer Mountain and Twin Knolls)

Bicyclists are angry because there was a wide shoulder by Game & Fish that bikes used and it was “cut off” to construct a sidewalk.

Could there be a median on SR 260 combined with opening up the “old junior high entrance” to the campus for right in, only (not right out)? It would lessen congestion both on the south school campus and on westbound SR 260.

The Yellowjacket Road and SR 260 traffic light is an example of incremental improvements: the light was installed in about 2004, followed by eliminating the offset in Yellowjacket’s intersection, and finally improving the light timing.

More street lights at transit stops would make them safer, especially in winter.

Access management could improve traffic and parking conditions for businesses, such as::

Education on how to use the center lane of SR 260.

Install “Hawk” facilities as in Tucson, with a pedestrian switch to trip the light, which is never red otherwise.

Driveways with high curbs require tighter turns than new rolling curb driveways that meet ADOT specifications.

A cooperative program could make it profitable for businesses to encourage customers to park one place, patronize that business, then walk to shop at two other businesses, then return.

Several adjacent businesses could connect their parking lots, and in some cases remove at least one access to SR 260. An existing example is Iguana Imports/West USA, etc; the Chamber of Commerce that is connected to Safeway; and Pueblo Southwest/Taco Bell/Ace Hardware.

There is no town-owned parking lot; the Tejido plan calls for one. Parking space demand

exceeds supply at Log Cabin shopping center, Darbys, and Pinetop P.O.

SEASONAL /OCCASIONAL

ADOT Snow plowing is to the center of SR 260 in Show Low, where there is less snow and it melts faster. In Pinetop-Lakeside ADOT snow plowing is to the outside of SR 260. Plowed snow covers the sidewalks; some walkers move into the road while others stop walking.

A solution to the problem of snow plowing to the outside of SR 260 would be to move the sidewalks back a few feet; at that point the snow could be plowed into the buffer space between the street and sidewalk.

ADOT has one blade that clears the curb to plow sidewalks, often as late as one week after a snowfall, and the town has no plows.

Traffic congestion for weekend events begins Thursday for events popular with tourists such as the Fall Festival, Run to the Pines, and Car Show. Congestion is Saturday and/or Sunday only for the more local events.

Traffic patterns have been affected because two large employers, Navopache and Pinetop-Lakeside town, and other smaller employers have switched to a four-day workweek. Whether the four-day workweek will be permanent cannot be predicted at this time.

Congestion is high for two months Aug-Oct, once school is in session but summer residents are still in town

Outdoor recreation is the top reason for visits to Pinetop-Lakeside but visitors and residents (seasonal and year-round) drive, rather than walk, except in their own immediate neighborhoods.

PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES (safety and additional components)

There should be more signs to direct people to parking in locations that would encourage trip completion by walking. Whenever gas prices are relatively high, people plan more multiple-purpose trips to save on gasoline costs.

The urban trails plan would provide trails in locations where the “trip purpose” would be purely recreational, and where the “trip purpose” would also include shopping or a commute, etc. All of those could support health and safety and ease congestion.

There should be a traffic light at Pine Lake Road where there will be a link between the WMTS and Pinetop-Lakeside urban trail system.

There should be more signs to direct people to trailhead parking and to the trails.

A trail that would connect the two school campuses, perhaps along Billy Creek, could be eligible for Safe Routes to Schools funding

SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS AND INFLUENCES ON TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

Low-income workers: Many who are residents of Pinetop-Lakeside walk to work along SR 260. Others commute by driving from Vernon, Heber, and other areas.

Middle- and high-income workers: Most drive to work in Pinetop-Lakeside in single-occupant

vehicles.

PARTNERSHIP EXAMPLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A trail along Scott Ranch Road (northwest of the study area) is being developed by a partnership of Pinetop-Lakeside, Navajo County, Show Low, and perhaps others.

The town has IGAs with ADOT for a trail at Buck Springs Road and for the new landscaping on SR 260.

Perhaps snow plowing could be handled jointly via an IGA, whereby ADOT would plow travel lanes and Pinetop-Lakeside would plow median turnouts.

Perhaps there could be a solution on SR 260 that would be as satisfactory as the median with a crosswalk that was done jointly between ADOT and the the Flagstaff Unified School District on SR 180 at Sechrist School (2230 N Fort Valley Rd).

LAND USE PLANNING

A mixed-use referendum failed recently, but Town government is not giving up on the 2006 Land Use Plan (“Tejido group”) ideas.

This pedestrian study and the upcoming general plan could support more travel by bicycle, walking, horses, and transit. A more walking-friendly design of land use and the transportation network would result in more alternate mode use.

The Walnut Creek node of the Tejido plan is a good concept and there would be an opportunity for visitors at existing hotels to walk throughout that node.

BICYCLES

(bicycle planning is not part of the study but pedestrian-bicycle interaction will be considered)

There should be a bicycle path separate from the road on Porter Mountain Road, especially because of the large amount of bicycle travel by children.

There should be a bicycle lane along SR 260. A study confirmed that there are many riders on SR 260 even without a bicycle lane (some riding in town only, some headed for trails), and there are conflicts with motor vehicles already.

Limited right of way availability is the most common obstacle to adding bicycle lanes to SR 260.

There is a lack of bicycle facilities within the developed town, on and off SR 260.

Some businesses have rings in walls where bicycles may be locked. Some have a fenced area where bicycles may be parked.

Stakeholders interviewed for the pedestrian study included:

Wednesday, September 16, Session 1

Nick Lund	President	TRACKS
Dennis Hughes		Navopache Electric
Kelly Udall		Town Manager
Brian Gilbert		Town Planning Commissioner

Wednesday, September 16, Session 2

Tom Thomas		Town Public Works Director
Mary French-Jones		Town Grant Coordinator
Brian McCabe		Town Planner

Thursday, September 17, Session 3

Luke Smith		Mayor and Assistant Principal, Blue Ridge High School
Nancy Bortin		Transportation Staff, Blue Ridge Unified School District (BRUSD)
Greg Schalow		Superintendent BRUSD
George Turner		Governing Board President, BRUSD

Thursday, September 17, Session 4

Beverly Stepp		Chamber of Commerce
John Vuolo		Town Parks and Recreation Director
Jerry Croney		White Mountain Entertainment Group

Thursday, September 17, Session 5

Woody Eldridge		Town Police Chief
Leslee Wessel		Town Council

Thursday, September 17, Session 6

Mike Digeno		Red Devil Restaurant
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Thursday, September 24, Session 7

Norris Dodd		Town Council
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