

SignalViewpoints

State zeroes in on Highway 101 stretch in Gearhart

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



A three-lane roadway, access to public transit, sidewalks, safer crossings and a possible roundabout at Gearhart Lane are among the options being considered by the Oregon Department of Transportation to improve U.S. Highway 101.

The multiyear process will culminate with delivery of a final facility plan at the end of 2022.

“All of our solutions were built off that 2017 transportation system plan that was adopted by the city, really focusing on this three-lane cross section that provides traffic calming and then access to the residences and businesses in the corridor by creating a continuous center turn lane throughout the corridor,” Kenneth Shonkwiler, a regional traffic planner with the Department of Transportation, said at an update for the City Council last week.

Cost for lane reconfiguration, a 12-foot multiuse path on the east side of the highway and a 6-foot sidewalk on the west, along with bicycle lanes, curb and landscape buffer, is estimated at \$14 million. An alternative using a barrier to separate north and southbound traffic is estimated at \$6.9 million.

Costs to improve crossing at the intersection of the highway and Pacific Way is projected at \$2.1 million.

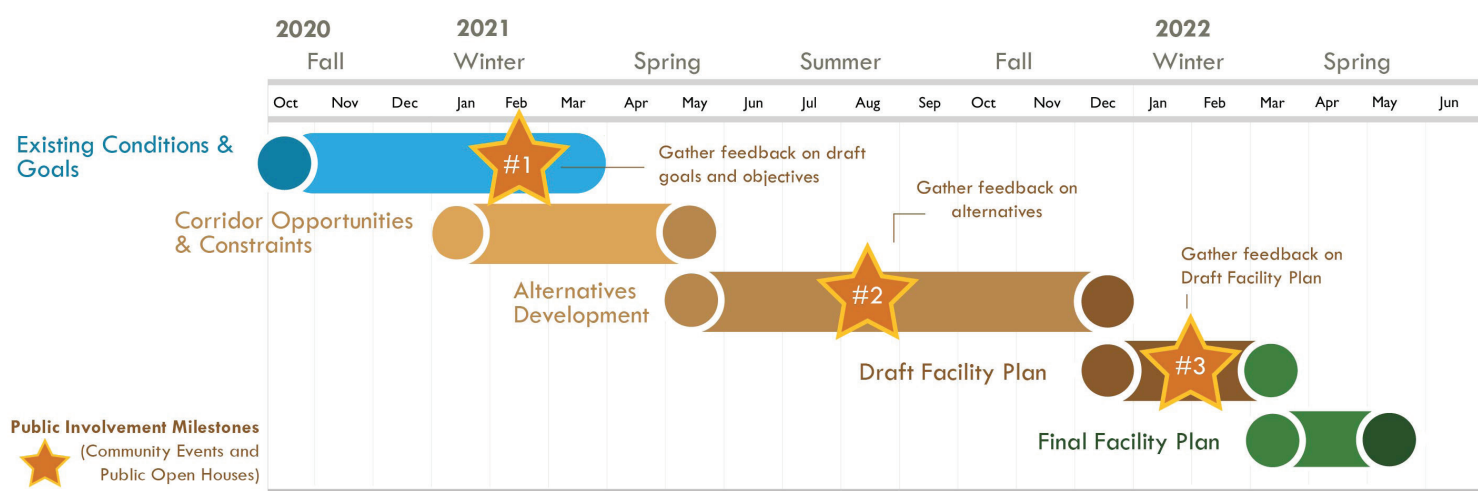
Gearhart’s stretch of Highway 101 has safety issues for highway users and is not comfortable for people walking, biking and crossing the highway, Shonkwiler said.

“It’s difficult for people whether they’re on foot, on a bike or in a vehicle to make turning movements to get across the highway and get to the residences and their businesses,” he said.

In conversations with Police Chief Jeff Bowman and the community, what people really desired were safe and comfortable places for people to move up and down the corridor, Shonkwiler said.

The three-lane design could make it safer for both vehicles and pedestrians.

US 101 Gearhart Facility Plan Schedule - Updated 12/1/20



Schedule of the U.S. Highway 101 Gearhart Facility Plan.

“In addition to this, we have a slew of pedestrian crossings that are planned throughout the corridor,” Shonkwiler said. “We wouldn’t likely have all of these installed but we want to know from the community which ones are the priorities, and should we actually pursue an engineering judgment to see what’s feasible.”

The Department of Transportation’s website offers a virtual tour with an interactive guide to difficult crossings, areas of speeding, flooding concerns and turning crashes.

“We are about halfway done with the facility plan,” Shonkwiler said. “We had a round of public outreach earlier this year and got a lot of good feedback on what the issues were in the corridor and right now we’re coming up with a couple of different alternatives that we can give to council and give to the public.”

At that point, the city and the state will come up with a draft, followed by additional public comment. “Then I go back to the of the Oregon Transportation Commission and then get this adopted,” Shonkwiler said.

An online open house is available through Nov. 24, with an opportunity for people who live in or travel through Gearhart to share information and offer feedback.



The area of U.S. Highway 101 in Gearhart, with areas of hazard or concern identified.



R.J. Marx

Intersection of U.S. Highway 101 and Pacific Way in Gearhart. The intersection is one of several along the highway facing transportation review.

GUEST COLUMN

Face masks and kids

GUEST COLUMN
WHITNEY LATHAM



A face mask is a simple thing, yet it’s one of the best tools we have to help protect one another from COVID-19.

That’s why public health experts say almost everyone should wear a mask until they’re fully vaccinated — including children as young as age 2. Many areas have mask mandates in addition to recommendations. And children may need to wear a mask at least part of the time while they’re at school.

Tips for masking up

Wearing a face mask can be challenging for children. You can help them adjust with these suggestions:

Make it fun. Put a face mask on a stuffed animal. Give your child’s mask a cool decoration. Point out that many superheroes wear masks.

Practice together. Help your child get used to wearing the mask before you go out.

Show your child pictures of other kids wearing masks. This will help your child avoid feeling different or singled out.

Talk about the importance of masks. Using age-appropriate words, talk with your child about face masks and why your family wears them: to avoid spreading germs. Talk with them about how germs can spread when people breathe, talk,

cough, or sneeze. Wearing a mask keeps the virus from reaching others and it can stop germs from reaching you! Additionally, contaminated hands are a way for the virus to spread and masks stop people from touching their mouths and faces, adding another level of protection.

Right mask, right fit

You can buy a face covering for your child. Or if you sew, you can find DIY mask patterns online. A pleated cloth mask with elastic ear loops usually works best for kids.

Just make sure the mask you buy or make will fit your child’s smaller face and can be securely worn over your child’s nose and mouth. Adult face masks are too large for kids.

Also, children often need to be reminded to:

Wash their hands before and after wearing the mask.

Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.

Remove the mask by taking it off from behind rather than from the front.

When to talk to your child’s doctor
Some children have a developmental or intellectual disability or a health condition that may make it harder to wear a mask. Ask your child’s doctor for advice.

Call your CMH clinic or visit columbiamemorial.org to request an appointment or learn more information.

Dr. Whitney Latham is the in-house pediatrician at CMH-OHSU Health Pediatric Clinic — Seaside.



Neal Maine/PacificLight Images

Elk make their way across U.S. Highway 101. Wildlife add an additional concern to local road planning.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

MONDAY, NOV. 22

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., cityofseaside.us.

TUESDAY, NOV. 23

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 5:15 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center.

Seaside Airport Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

MONDAY, NOV. 29

Seaside City Council and Planning Commission workshop, vacation rentals, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, NOV. 30

Gearhart City Council, special meeting, 6:30 p.m., cityofgear-

hart.com.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 1

Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.
Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., cityofgearhart.com.

THURSDAY, DEC. 2

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.



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