February 23, 2014

TO: Commissioners, Director, and Deputy Directors

FROM: Matt Edmond, Senior Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: Reconfiguration & Parking Removal on 15th Street between Bannock and Fort Streets

Regular Agenda Item – March 4, 2015 Commission Meeting

Executive Summary
As presented to the Commission on September 24, 2014 as part of the Downtown Boise Bike Lane discussion, staff is proposing to make modifications to 15th Street from Bannock Street to Fort Street to improve an inadequate bike facility. As this will have an impact on parking, staff is seeking Commission approval before proceeding. This reconfiguration would consist of removing the street parking on the east (right) side and apportioning the extra space to the existing sub-standard bike lane and the west (left) side parking lane. This proposal is in response to multiple individual complaints to fix/widen the bike lane in recent years, as well as part of an ongoing effort to improve bike facilities in and around downtown Boise.

Facts & Findings
ACHD has received a number of unique complaints in recent years about the condition of the 15th Street bike lane, primarily due to the fact that it is a narrow bike lane adjacent to a narrow street parking lane on a moderately busy arterial roadway. 15th Street between Americana Boulevard and Hays Street is one-way and includes a northbound bike lane on the east side; the southbound counterpart for this bike lane is one block over on 16th Street. The bike lane on 15th Street between Bannock and Fort is generally 4 feet or narrower, and it is next to a parking lane that is generally 7 feet or narrower. This effectively places the bike lane entirely in the “door zone” anywhere it is adjacent to on street parking.

In response to these complaints, and in association with recent efforts to improve bike facilities in and around downtown Boise, ACHD staff (in coordination with Boise City Planning and Parking Services staff) is proposing to remove the street parking on the east (right) side and apportion the extra space to the bike lane and the remaining street parking lane on the west (left) side of the street. This would benefit not only people who ride bikes along the corridor, as the new, wider bike lane would be outside of the “door zone”, but it would also benefit people parking on the west (left) side of the street, where the parking lane would be increased from less than 7 feet to 9 feet.

Although the proposed reconfiguration would impact people that park on the east (right) side of the street, based on observations, ACHD staff believes the area would continue to have adequate street
parking available. Very little of the daytime parking utilized appears to be residents or customers of adjacent residences or businesses. Other than the northernmost block between Hays and Fort, overnight (assumed residential) parking is sparsely utilized along the east (right) side of 15\textsuperscript{th} Street.

The reconfiguration proposal was outlined in a mailer (Attachment 1), which was in turn mailed to area businesses, residents, and property owners, and posted to cars parking along 15\textsuperscript{th} Street. The mailer included a link to a survey that was available online January 5-30. Of the 365 survey responses received, approximately three-quarters supported the proposed reconfiguration. As would be expected, most of the responses in opposition to the proposal cited loss of parking as the primary concern. Survey questions and results are included in Attachment 2.

**Policy Implications**

While on-street parking is an essential component of an urban street network, and should not be taken lightly, it is a secondary consideration to the establishment of a safe and efficient transportation system for those actively using the roadway. The proposed reconfiguration of 15\textsuperscript{th} Street would eliminate approximately 10 time-limited and 34 open street parking spaces. Attachment 3 shows other street parking that will remain available in the area.

**Fiscal Implications**

ACHD has $30,000 set aside (from 2015 Bikeway Set Aside funds) to implement the reconfiguration this spring.

**Alternatives**

1. Approve reconfiguration of 15\textsuperscript{th} Street as proposed, to include removal of parking on the east side of the street and widening of the bike lane on the east side and the remaining parking lane on the west side.
2. Do not approve the reconfiguration of 15\textsuperscript{th} Street as proposed.
3. Remand to staff with additional direction.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the reconfiguration of 15\textsuperscript{th} Street as proposed, to include removal of parking on the east side of the street and widening of the bike lane on the east side and the remaining parking lane on the west side.

**Next Steps**

April-May: Reconfigure 15\textsuperscript{th} Street between Bannock and Fort
April-May: Coordinate with Boise Parking Services staff on education, enforcement, special parking district modifications

**Attachments**

1. 15\textsuperscript{th} Street Mailer
2. Survey Results
3. Vicinity Parking Map
**What do you think?**

Your input will be a very important component in making a decision on this issue. Let us know what you think about the proposal by taking the survey at www.achdidaho.org by January 30, 2015.

If you do not have internet access and would like to take the survey, please call 387-6100 to request a paper version.

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**MORE INFORMATION**

Matt Edmond  
ACHD Sr. Transportation Planner  
387-6100  
www.achdidaho.org  
projects@achdidaho.org

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**15TH STREET BIKE LANE & PARKING**

The Ada County Highway District (ACHD) and the City of Boise, are seeking comments on a proposal to remove the east parking lane along 15th Street between Bannock and Fort streets to accommodate a wider bike lane.

Currently, the existing bike lane and both parking lanes are narrower than ACHD standards. Parked vehicles frequently spill into the bike lane, which combined with a narrow bike lane, pushes bicyclists into traffic.

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**EXISTING**

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**Proposal**

Remove parking on the east side of 15th Street  
Widen existing bike lane, parking lane on west side of the street and travel lanes to meet ACHD standards

On-street parking is an essential component of a healthy street network, as it provides convenient access to businesses and residences, while providing a buffer between the sidewalk and the street. While removal of parking is sometimes unavoidable to ensure safe and efficient travel, it is not a decision that ACHD or its partner agencies take lightly. Please see map on reverse illustrating areas where parking would be removed if this proposal moves forward.

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**PROPOSAL**
Proposed Parking Removal

The map below illustrates where parking would need to be removed if the existing bike lane, parking lane on west side of street and travel lanes were widened.

Ado County Highway District
3775 Adams Street
Garden City, ID 83714
208-387-6100

15th Street Bike Lane & Parking
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
www.achdidaho.org

To arrange for a translator or other accommodation, contact ACHD at (208) 387-6100. Se les recomienda a las personas que necesiten un intérprete o arreglo especial que llamen a la coordinación de participación pública, al (208) 387-6100.
The Ada County Highway District sought comments throughout the month of January on a proposal to remove the east parking lane along 15th Street between Bannock and Fort streets to accommodate a wider bike lane. We received 365 responses, with most in favor of the proposal.

**Question 1 - Do you agree or disagree with the proposal for 15th Street between Bannock and Fort streets?**

![Pie chart showing survey results](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Themes from the written responses:**

*Safety/Travel room*
- Currently a narrow, scary/dangerous corridor.
- Cramped
- More space for cyclists will be good; cyclists will feel safer and be safer.
- Many people ride along this corridor.
- The cost of losing on-street parking is worth the benefit of cyclist safety.
- Reduce car lane width and make a buffer between cars and bikes.
- The speed limit in the corridor is too high; reduce car lane width to reduce it.
- Dedicated bike routes are needed to increase safety.
- Better driver/cyclist education on road rules.
- Better cycling infrastructure needed throughout Boise.
- Look to Europe for examples of bike safety.
- The bike lane isn’t a bike lane, it’s a door lane.
Attachment 2: 15th Street Survey & Comment Summary

Alternate routes
- Cyclists should ride on 14th, a road with fewer cars.
- ACHD should encourage cyclists to use back paths, not main arterials. Separate cars from bikes to increase safety.

Parking
- Too little parking in the area, many businesses in the area rely on what is there. Include in the plan ways to replace the parking that will be removed.
  - People who live and work in the area need to use the on-street parking.
  - Maybe reduce sidewalks instead of removing/reducing parking
  - Could put some businesses out of business if parking is removed entirely.
- Why remove parking for low quantity of cyclists for small parts of the day?
- Removing on-street parking will increase visibility for cyclists and motorists
- Keep parking for homeowners, losing parking reduces home values.
- Parking=Good for the economy, less is bad

Question 2 – How do you use 15th Street between Bannock and Fort streets?

How do you use 15th Street between Bannock and Fort streets? Please choose all that apply.

![Bar chart with percentages and counts]

There were also about 60 respondents who indicated that they regularly drive this route as well.
Question 3 – General comments

Parking
- Find a way to replace the parking that will be removed, the area needs it.
- Parking is good for patrons, but I would rather bike to visit the businesses in the area.
- Businesses need parking in the area.
- Residences need on-street parking, home owners in the area should have more input than the average taxpayer.
- Parking is more valuable than bike lanes in the area.

Safety Concerns
- Cyclists violate traffic laws often; education program for both drivers and cyclists would be beneficial.
- Too many people park partially in the bike/door lane.

Alternate Solutions
- There should be a better solution than removing parking to improve bike routes.
- Make a parallel bike system, separate bikes and motorized vehicles.
- Alternate routes where cyclists already travel. Use 14th St or 16th St instead of 15th.
- Reduce car lane size; put the extra road into the bike lanes to widen them.
- Don’t look at the cheap short term. Rebuild the sidewalks wider and dedicate half the sidewalks to a green bike path, like Europe. You already have the right of way.
- Make no parking during peak hours.

Questions
- How many cyclists use this portion of the bike system?
- Will this street set precedence and force ACHD to put 6’ bike lanes everywhere?

Businesses adjacent to project area
Ten individuals indicated that they owned/operated a business adjacent to the proposed project. Five out of ten respondents disagreed with the project, while four agreed.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal for 15th Street between Bannock and Fort streets?

[Pie chart showing the distribution of responses]
- Strongly agree: 40.0% (4)
- Agree: 10.0% (1)
- Disagree: 10.0% (1)
- Strongly disagree: 10.0% (1)
- Not sure: 20.0% (2)
Attachment 2: 15th Street Survey & Comment Summary

**Advertising methods used**
- Ads in the Idaho Statesman
- Fliers on the windshields of parked cars
- Sandwich signs on the street
- Approximately 1,743 fliers mailed to the surrounding area
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- ACHD website
Attachment 3: 15th Vicinity Parking Map

Legend

- Blue: Accessible
- Purple: Bus
- Orange: Loading
- Yellow: Metered
- Pink: Motorcycle
- Red: No Parking
- Green: Open
- Purple: Police Only
- Orange: Timed
(Primarily 1.5-hour limit, except residential)
Planning & Development Services

February 27, 2015

Jim Hansen, President
Ada County Highway District
3775 Adams Street
Garden City, Idaho 83714

Re: 15th Street Bike Lanes

Dear President Hansen:

The Boise City Planning and Development Services and Parking Services Departments worked with the ACHD staff to design and implement the reconfiguration of the 15th Street bike lane to improve safety and rider comfort. We believe the proposed design meets these objectives and are fully supportive of the project.

We look forward to seeing this project completed. Please do not hesitate to call if you have questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Daren Fluke
Comprehensive Planning Manager
Yes, please! I am an avid urban cyclist and happened to use 15th Street this morning. A bike lane would be absolutely wonderful and is much needed on this downtown route.

Thank you for making Boise better for bicycles!

-----Original Message-----
From: Amy Howe [mailto:idahowes@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 8:42 PM
To: Projects
Subject: 15th Street Bike Lane and Parking Proposal

15th street is a major bikeway but it is not safe in its entirety. The pathway through downtown is too narrow with cars pulling in and out. We have had too many bicycle deaths in Boise. This proposal provides a safe north south artery through downtown. The only reason not to do this is if we don't care. Bicycling is an integral feature of Boise. South safer than other cities. Let's not turn a blind eye to safety

Amy Howe

From: Cheryl Rachetto [mailto:cherylrachetto@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 4:48 PM
To: Projects
Subject: 15th Street Bike Lane and Parking Proposal

My husband bike commutes on 15th every day in the summer. I sure hope this bike lane gets widened because his safety is at risk every time he rides that route. Also, our grandchildren ride on that lane when they come to visit and it is just too narrow. See attached photo of my husbands bike next to a parked truck on 15th.

Cheryl

cherylrachetto@gmail.com

From: Paul Rachetto [mailto:rocketpdr@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2015 5:16 PM
To: Projects
Subject: 15th Street Bike Lane and Parking Proposal

Please approve the wider 15th street bike lane.

- Removing parking on the east side of 15th Street.
- Widening the existing bike lane, parking lane on west side of the street and travel lanes to meet ACHD standards.

Thank you for saving a life.....
Paul D. Rachetto
http://rachettolle.com/
Good Day!

The proposed 15th Street Bike Lane and Parking plan is excellent and will be a huge improvement. As a cyclist, I have had numerous run-ins with cars and trailers parked in the way-too narrow bike lane on 15th. I then have to ride out into the right north-bound lane of 15th Street to avoid a car partially parked in the lane, a trailer partially parked in the lane, or even a suddenly opened car door. When using the traffic lane, I get honked at, yelled at, and have even had to come to a complete stop in the bike lane to wait for an opportunity to use the right traffic lane. Eliminating parking adjacent to the bike lane will eliminate vehicle parking blocking part of the bike lane, suddenly opened car doors into the bike lane, and provide adequate space for a safe bike lane.

As a motorist, it will make my driving easier in the north bound right lane of 15th by eliminating the need for cyclists to come out into the lane to avoid cars or opening car doors that are blocking the lane.

Please proceed with eliminating parking on the east side of 15th and widening the bicycle lane.

Thanks for your great proposal!

Michael Stuth Adams

Hi Matt,

I will not make it to this meeting. However, I have comments regarding the 15th Street bike lane and parking proposal that I would like the commission to consider. (Note that I added comments on your web form weeks ago. But I will elaborate in more detail here.)

First, a bit of my background. As a 21-year resident of Boise's north end, and a year-round bicycle commuter, I have ridden my bike on this stretch of 15th Street thousands of times. I feel I am qualified to give what I believe to be an honest assessment of this stretch of road from a cyclist's perspective.

1) While on 15th Street, immediately after crossing State Street, a cyclist is naturally funneled to the right by the bike lane painted on 15th Street. Then, a cyclist is immediately forced to gradually veer to the left to stay in the bike lane and avoid any parked cars. This is unnerving for a cyclist as there is regularly a steady stream of cars coming from behind. (See attached screenshots taken from Google maps on 2/24/2015.)
2) Along this stretch of road, the parking space on the east side is so narrow that for cars parked on this side of the street, the driver's side doors must necessarily open directly into the bike lane when a person desires to exit or enter a vehicle. Also, extra-wide vehicles parked here force cyclists out into the car lane. (See attached screenshots.)

3) While the narrow, east-side parking space is an issue on this entire stretch of road, and it is accurately depicted in the graphic representation on the ACHD website, I want to draw particular attention to the combination of points #1 and #2 above. As a cyclist heading north on 15th Street, it is very common to be stopped by the State Street stop light. So when the light turns green, there is always a backup of cars in the right lane waiting to proceed northbound. A cyclist, after crossing State Street, is forced right by the bike lane, then gradually directed back to the left. Now, add to this the common occurrence of a vehicle being parked directly in front of the Chevron station, and there is a recipe for trouble that could cause a cyclist to be reflexively directed out into the lane of car traffic, or possibly knocked out into the traffic by the opening of a car door.

4) I’ve been commuting on my bike for nearly 30 years, and my awareness as a cyclist is acute, thus keeping me alive and well thus far. While I do have a keen interest in self-preservation, I worry, too, about less skilled and less aware cyclists riding this stretch of road. Case in point, I ride this with my own children. Teaching them the rules of the road, and how to be a cyclist with proper awareness, is an ongoing process. But at their ages, they currently lack the skill and awareness to react to some of the worst-case variables that could occur on this street. And given the proper circumstances, I do to.

5) There might be people who have concerns over the loss of available parking in the area. By my observation, this area is not short on parking spaces; those desiring to park around here would still find nearby availability, even without available parking on the east side of 15th Street.

I believe investing in this change is good for Boise for the following reasons.

- It would be a positive step toward the safety of citizens who choose to travel by bicycle through this corridor.
- It would be a positive step toward making Boise more accommodating to cyclists. In turn, this would help continue building a community that, in my view, has a vibrancy that directly correlates to the number of cyclists on its streets.
- It would move to meet existing ACHD standards.
- Relative to the benefits gained, it would, in my opinion, cause minimal (if any) parking and accessibility inconvenience.

Thank you,

Mark Ritchie
Boise

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From: greasyregs@gmail.com [mailto:greasyregs@gmail.com] On Behalf Of Gary Segers
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 8:07 AM
To: Projects
Subject: 15th Street Bike Lane and Parking Proposal to go before ACHD Commission

I support this proposed project along 15th street. 15th Street is a heavily used north/south bike route and currently the bike lane is either nonexistent or too narrow.
Gary Segers
Boise

On Mon, Feb 23, 2015 at 6:24 PM, Paul Rachetto <rocketpdr@gmail.com> wrote:

-----Original Message-----
From: David Guiotto [mailto:dbguiotto@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 7:07 PM
To: Projects
Subject: 15th Street Bike Lane and Parking Proposal

Please improve 15th with the widened bike lane and removal of parking. I regularly ride that way and am nearly pinched out of existence on some stretches.

Thank you!!

David Guiotto

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----
From: tracyhouse [mailto:tracyhouse@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 5:53 PM
To: Projects
Subject: 15th Street Bike Lane and Parking Proposal

Matt,
I will not be able to attend the meeting regarding this project on the 4th, but wanted to express my strong support for the proposed plan. Anywhere we can move to 6ft wide bike lanes, especially on high traffic areas like 15th street, is a great idea to improve safety. One thing I'd suggest to point out to drivers who make think a six foot lane in excessive, is to consider how little room they would have between car traffic lanes if they had only the space a bicyclist has in a four foot bike lane. Loss of parking is unfortunate but a small price to pay for improved safety.
Bob

Sent from my iPad

Matt –

I’m unable to make the meeting on Wednesday regarding this proposal. I am in full SUPPORT of removing the parking on the east side of 15th and widening the existing bike lane(support the entire proposal).

I live In the area and am an active cyclist/bike commuter.

Great to see projects like this happening in the Boise area, keep up the good work.

Thanks
Doug Oplt