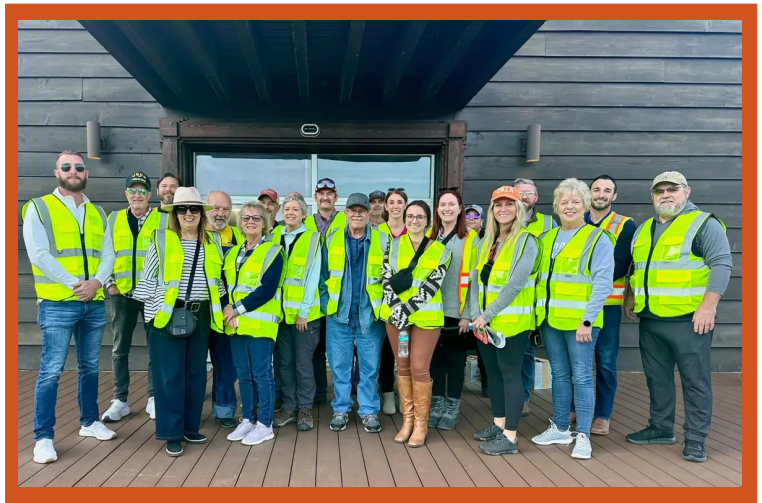


Hochatown Walk Audit

November 26, 2024

Google Earth [link](#) with locations labeled.
Provided by SERTPO.

PARTICIPANTS



Over 25 individuals participated in the walk audit. Attendees included residents, business owners, landowners, developers, public health professionals, engineers, ODOT staff, a congressional field representative, Hochatown elected officials and staff.

OVERVIEW

In response to local feedback regarding the US-259 project through Hochatown, JP 34333(04), ODOT plans to incorporate sidewalks and crosswalks to improve walkability and pedestrian safety. To facilitate a more in-depth conversation, AARP and the Southeastern Regional Transportation Planning Organization hosted a Walk Audit in Hochatown. Due to the distance of the project, this walk audit looked a little different. Participants were shuttled to the north end of the project and then transported south along US-259 while having facilitated conversations at key locations as well as walking portions of the project that currently experience heavier pedestrian traffic.

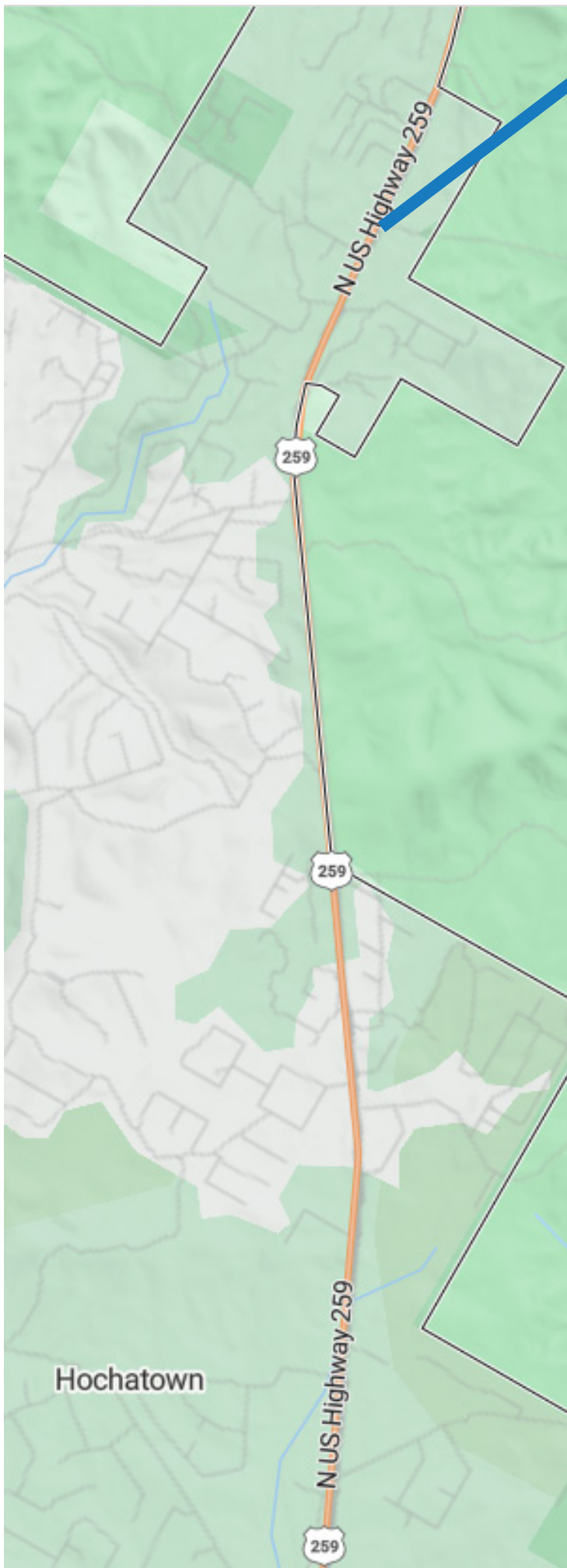
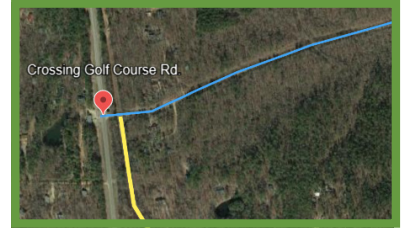
TAKEAWAYS

1. US-259 from Carson Creek Road to Stevens Gap Road was called the "Golden" or "Magic" Mile. This is approximately 0.7 miles. For purposes of this project, extending the concept to 2.1 miles from Carson Creek Road to SH-259A covers the area that participants particularly want pedestrian and/or bike facilities. This would effectively become downtown/"Main Street" for Hochatown.
2. Conversation indicated that having a 5-10' sidewalk primarily along the west side of the US-259 would be an acceptable solution, with the exception for the "Golden/Magic Mile(s)" area. In that area, sidewalks are preferred on both sides of the road. Ideally there would be a barrier between the road and sidewalk.
3. Due to the amount of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the Golden/Magic Mile(s) area, street and sidewalk lighting should be considered. Light pollution should be minimized where possible in consideration of the natural environment.
4. The community supports the idea of a north to south trail adjacent to along the power line right-of-way east of US-259.
5. The City of Hochatown will be building a new Town Hall and other municipal buildings. This could create a new "hot spot" for pedestrians and economic development. Ideally this will be a new development that creates a town square that other businesses could develop around. This new location and its impacts should be taken into consideration during the design of the US-259 project.
6. Uniform wayfinding signage should be considered. The signage should create a unique feeling in the area making pedestrians and drivers safer with easily distinguishable signs.
7. On the northeast corner of US-259 and Carson Creek Road is East Government Mountain. There are primitive roads to the summit of 1,062 feet. This could make a great location for a mountain bike park.

Stop #1 Observations and Feedback

Whip-Poor-Will Cabins / Golf Course Rd.

1. At least 19 semis/ logging trucks were counted in this location within a 25 minute timespan.
2. A jogger crossing the highway from west to east was also observed.
3. From north to south, US-259 is proposed to transition from 2 lanes to 3 lanes with shoulders. Participants would like to see the transition happen on the north side of Golf Course Road or at least have large turn lanes and a protected crosswalk.
4. Speed needs to be reduced in this area, especially if the sidewalks are next to the road. Community members asked that US-259 be designed in a way that will naturally slow traffic, especially the logging trucks.
5. Currently there is not much need for sidewalks or a trail at this location, but the group consensus is it would be nice to have for future development.
6. Ideally, US-259 will be designed with future phases, private developers, or grant opportunities in mind.
7. Currently, golf carts are not legal on US highways. However, it is being lobbied to allow them within city limits of towns that pass ordinances. Until legislation is passed, it would be useful to have a designated area for golf carts near US-259.
8. The east side of US-259 is US Forest Service land and will not be developed. There is an existing trail that is not regularly maintained. This area could become a future trail hub, if a trail system to the east is developed.
9. Participants prefer safe, protected crossings with medians.



Stop #2 Observations and Feedback

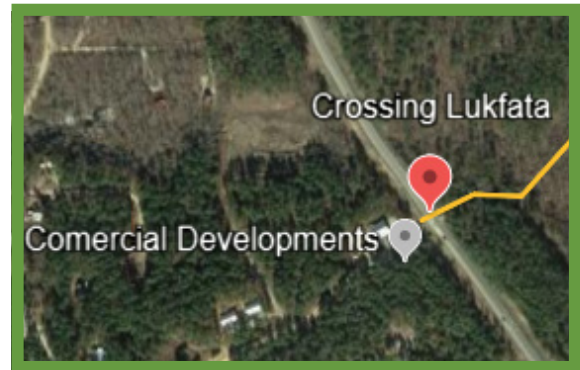
Market at Local 259 / Lucian Sorrel Road / Choate Road (walked)

1. From north to south, US-259 is proposed to transition from 3 lanes to 5 lanes. Participants mentioned the need for wide turn lanes and protected crosswalks.
2. Participants would like sidewalks from this location to Lukfata Trail Road (Stop #3) to help commercial development.
3. People currently walk and bike this area. Having a sidewalk on one side of US-259 is better than none. If a sidewalk can only be built on one side of US-259, the preference is that a multi-use trail is built instead of a sidewalk. Additionally, if the sidewalk can only be on one side, it makes sense for it to be the west side at the north end of this area.
4. Again, the US Forest Service land on the east side of US-259 was suggested as a trail option for this area.
5. Participants voiced concern regarding elevation, utilities and drainage in this area. A crossing solution that was suggested is a drainage tunnel that could double as a pedestrian tunnel when dry. This would connect The Maze and Local 259.
6. The connection between Sugarberry Trail (between stop 3 & 4) and the residential development was also a concern and should be taken into consideration in the proposed design plans.
7. Participants requested a protected crossing in this area, potentially a HAWK (High-intensity Activated crossWALK) beacon due to the number of people walking from the cabins on both sides of US-259 to Local 259 and the Maze.
8. The City of Hochatown, landowners and business owners will need to discuss how the establishments will be connected to the sidewalk or multi-use trail.

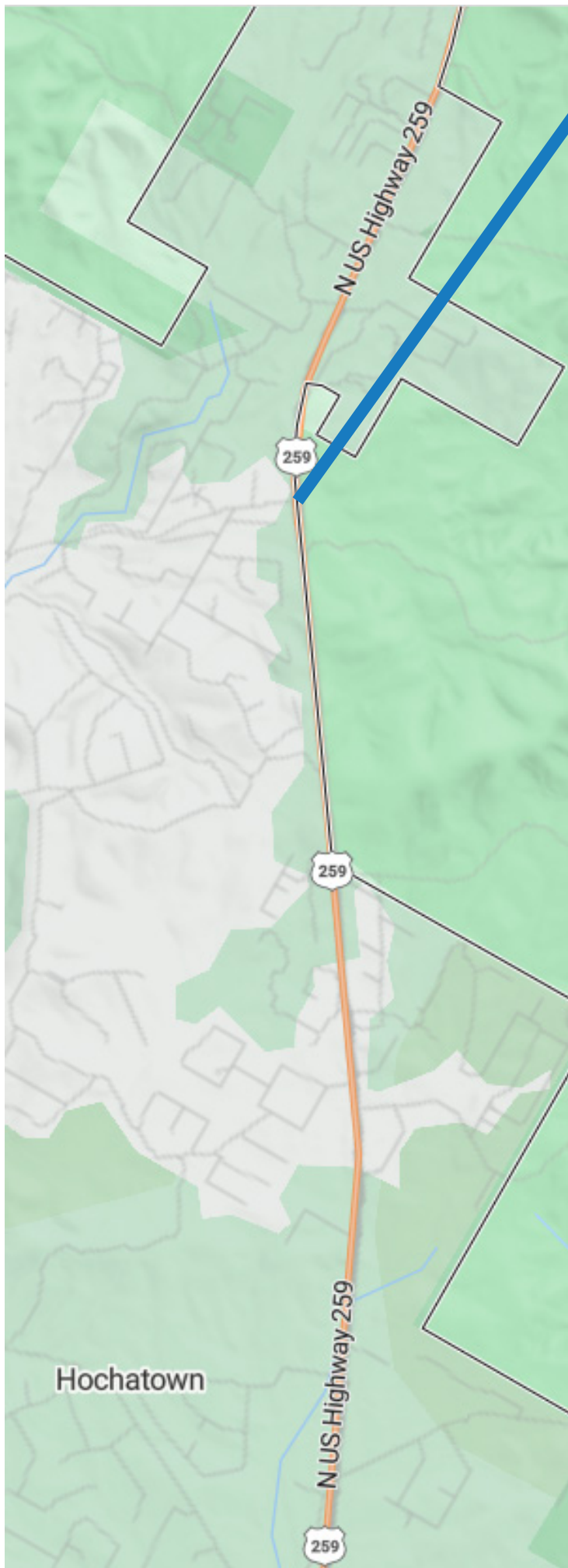


Stop #3 Observations and Feedback

N Lukfata Trail Road / Timber Creek Trails / Tin Star & Co

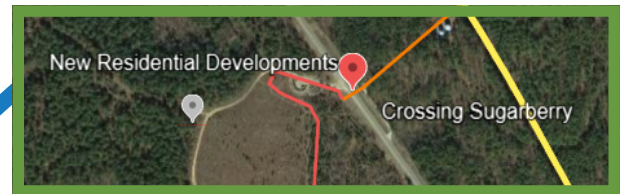


1. This area of US-259 is proposed to be 5 lanes.
2. The city mentioned utility issues due to elevation and grade.
3. Currently there are not many pedestrians along US-259 in this area due to development only on the west side of US-259. Existing establishments are connected by parking lots.
4. The group determined the best pedestrian access options for this area would be for a trail to be built on the US Forest Service land on the east side of US-259 or a trail to be built through the residential area on the west side of US-259. The trail through the residential area would connect to the commercial area.
5. There was conversation around a crossing to be installed to connect to future trails.
6. ODOT mentioned actual crossing needs must be determined.
7. Participants requested traffic calming elements in the new design of US-259. This is especially important for the semi/logging traffic.



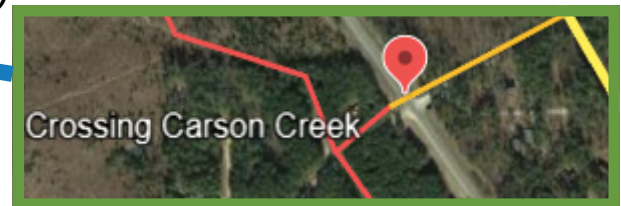
Additional Areas of Discussion

Sugarberry Trail (didn't stop)

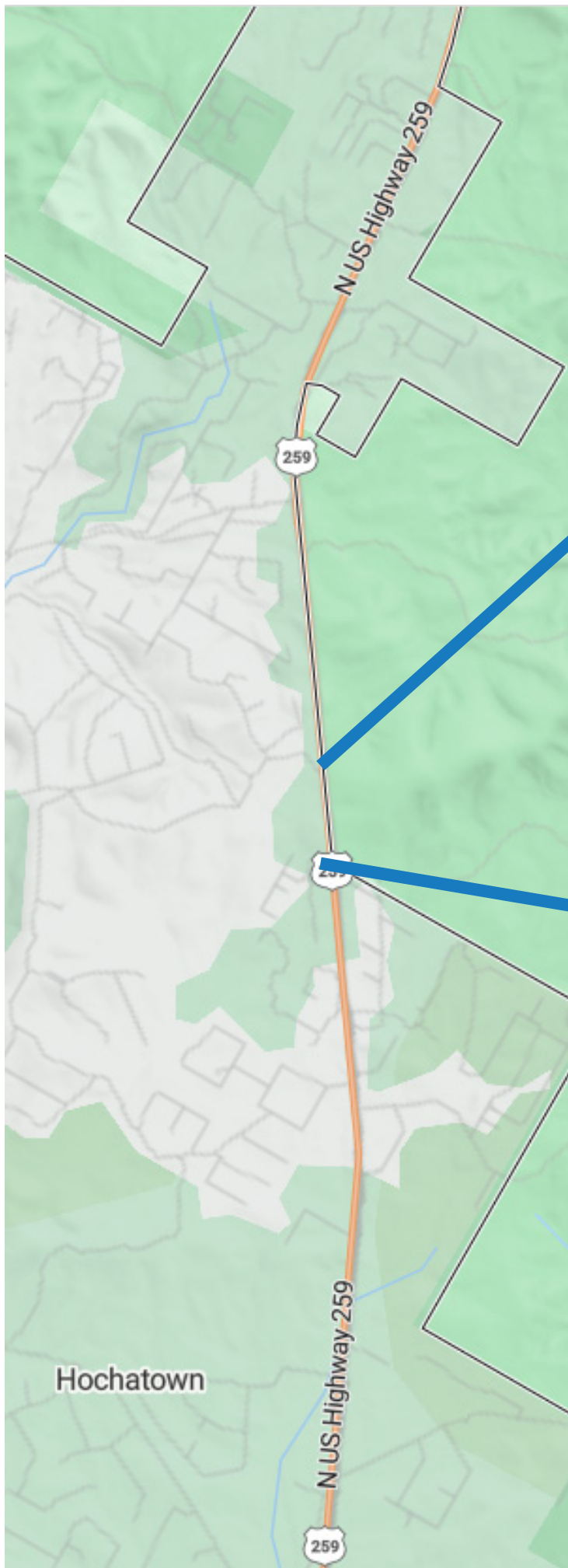


1. The city bought property in this area which may change the demand for pedestrian access.
2. There is a large numbers of rental cabins that are located off of this road.
3. There is also potentially additional commercial development coming to this area.

Carson Creek / Juniper Road (didn't stop)



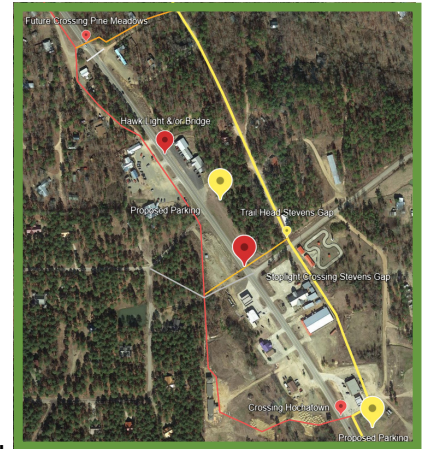
1. In the future there could be the need to have a crossing here.
2. There was conversation regarding a new residential development off of Carson Creek.
3. Carson Creek leads to boat ramps, RV camping, and several adventure destinations. This would mean a high probability for active living use of this road as well as recreational trailers. Carson Creek is connected to Stevens Gap via Indian Nations Hiking and Biking Trail.



Stop #4 Observations and Feedback

Grateful Head / Girls Gone Wine/ Stevens Gap Road / Rock Oak Lane (walked)

1. This area of US-259 is proposed to be 5 lanes.
2. Multiple pedestrians were observed walking on the east side of US-259. A vehicle was also observed crossing US-259 from move from one parking lot to another.
3. Due to the limited visibility at the north end of the area, a pedestrian bridge was suggested.
4. Sidewalks should be on both sides of US-259 and the north end should start at Carson Creek.
5. This whole area will need street and pedestrian lighting.
6. US-259 should feel like a small town downtown or "Main Street" through this area and should be pedestrian friendly.
7. The proposed north crosswalk looks good. Consider realigning the one to the south and making it a protected crossing (HAWK beacon).
8. Ideal speed should be 25 or 35 mph. Many drivers were not comfortable with people walking next to the highway. If possible, there needs to be a buffer between pedestrians and the back of the curb.
9. Warning devices such as pedestrian warning signs and rumble strips may need to be added to help slow traffic.
10. Concern was voiced regarding pedestrians trying to cross anywhere instead of just at the crosswalks. Maybe US-259 design can include physical deterrents to funnel people to crosswalks.
11. Proposed parking lot locations on the east side of US-259 were identified as just south of Spinner Trail and just south of Spearfish Road.
12. Some road realignment may make adding crosswalks easier.
13. A crosswalk is needed at the Stevens Gap Road light.
14. Once constructed, a zero-tolerance enforcement might help to maintain posted speeds.



Stop #5 Observations and Feedback

Petting Zoo / Hochatown Saloon



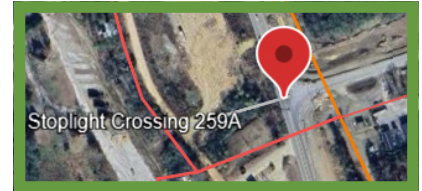
1. Observed a family and business owner crossing US-259 while at this stop.
2. This area has family pedestrian traffic during the day. Many people cross US-259 to get to the Hochahut from the Petting Zoo.
3. In the early morning, around 2:30am, especially when there are concerts or other events at the Hochatown Saloon there is a large number of adults that cross US-259. Currently, pedestrians are walking to parked vehicles. In the future, there will be a cigar bar on the west side of US-259 so there will potentially be an increased number of pedestrians crossing at other times during the day and night.
4. A protected crosswalk such as a HAWK beacon should be considered for the area near the Petting Zoo. However, the crosswalk near Hochatown Saloon should have light indicators. It was mentioned that the lighted domes in the highway might be helpful in this location.
5. There was conversation that families can be seen getting into their vehicles and driving across US-259 because they believe it is too dangerous to cross on foot.
6. One of the proposed parking lots would be to the north of this area on the west side of US-259. This too may increase pedestrian traffic crossing US-259 in this area.



Additional Area of Discussion

SH-259A (didn't stop)

1. On the drive from US-259A there were pedestrians observed walking both north and south bound on the east side of US-259.
2. One pedestrian was seen sitting in the right-of-way of US-259.
3. During high attendance events, Hochatown Saloon runs a shuttle service to parking in this area, which may also increase pedestrians along US-259.
4. It would make sense to continue the "Golden/Magic Mile" to SH-259A or at least make sure the pedestrian facilities are connected. SH-259A has Rock Pile hiking and biking trails, stables, train dam, float trips, etc located along it.



Other General Comments

1. ODOT prefers to build the pedestrian facilities as far away from US-259 as the right-of-way will allow.
2. A reoccurring theme was the reduction of the speed limit. Through the "Golden/Magic Mile", ideally the speed would be 25mph. The rest of the corridor would be 35mph. It was also suggested that the design of US-259 should naturally encourage the reduced speeds.
3. Sidewalks should be a minimum of 5', but 8'-10' is the preference.
4. Although a street's name has "trail" in it, most are not associated with a multi-use trail.
5. For back of curb sidewalks, it was requested that there be at least a 1' buffer between US-259 and the sidewalk. Ideally the buffer would contain vertical separation such as planters, lights or other physical barrier between the cars and people.
6. The east side of US-259 is mainly US forest land and will not be developed but could support trails. However, there is also some private ownership. Determining ownership may help map out crossings based on potential future development.
7. Having walking and biking facilities is important to the participants.
8. Current plans showed sidewalks ending at Carson Creek. Locals understand there will be trade-offs due to budgeting.
9. Participants want safe and protected crossings. Protected center medians should be used to increase pedestrian safety.
10. Multiple areas had crossings that could benefit by realigning and/or combining street crossings.

