

Northbank Path Lighting

Project Background:

The Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) has been investigating the potential of lighting the Northbank Path. In order to create positive change in the community we as a committee would like the City Council's support for further consideration of this idea with Team Springfield partner and facility owner, Willamalane.

The Springfield BPAC sees an opportunity to make the Northbank Path corridor from West D Street to the I-5 bridge better by adding lighting. Lighting comes in many different forms that accomplish different goals. For example: we use spotlights and motion lights for safety and security, and we use string lights for decoration- two very different types of lights for two different goals. We as a committee do not have the expertise to recommend a lighting solution, but we do believe that some sort of lighting will enhance the safety and usability of this transportation corridor and recreation center. The BPAC understands the opportunities and constraints of providing lighting in a public space and natural area, and we believe that lighting technology has evolved to offer a solution that suits the needs of the users and the sensitive ecology of the area.

The Northbank Path begins at approximately 550 W. D Street. The entire subject area can be seen on the attached site plan. Willamalane maintains the multi-use path and green space that runs adjacent to it. The Springfield/Willamalane jurisdiction of the path terminates at the I-5 bridge, with multiple different "branches" of the same multi-use paths leading to neighborhoods to the north. This path corridor is the most highly utilized bicycle infrastructure in the City of Springfield that has been counted (approximately 450 bicyclists per day and almost 1,000 pedestrians per day on average). Path users include both commuters and recreational users. There are intersections when people walking, biking, boating, dogs, wildlife, and motor vehicles all intermix along the path. A crosswalk helps to denote the major conflict area of the path at the boat ramp. To denote the path's edge certain sections of the path are painted with white fog lines. One specific section is just west of the boat ramp, and is objectively the darkest portion of the path due to the dense tree canopy. This canopy is visible on the site plan. While these painted sections are incredibly helpful, the high use of the path, the lack of ambient light in portions under tree cover, and the many intersections along the path warrant a better solution.

Bicycle ridership data from LCOG was examined. With data collection being inconsistent between years and seasons it was difficult to derive any conclusive ridership patterns as they relate to seasonal changes and thus darkness. One solid finding was that peak travel times are mornings (6-10am) and evenings (4-7pm). The BPAC made the assumption that these folks are path users at dark times of morning or evening, and may be affected positively by lighting improvements especially in darker months of the year. BPAC members have heard from community members and expressed themselves that some people use the path less or not at all in the dark months because they are concerned about personal security and safety when the facility is dark and visibility is poor.

Intercept surveys collected by Lane Council of Governments in partnership with Springfield BPAC in October of 2014 provide important insight on this initiative. Two-thirds of respondents provided some suggestion for improving the route. Twenty-eight percent of these suggestions mentioned the path is too dark or wanting more lights on the path.

Each BPAC member was provided with the link to an online survey created by the BPAC Planning Subcommittee which asked about concerns along the Northbank Path area, if lighting could help mitigate those concerns, and if so, what type of lighting would be suitable to do so. Eighty percent of respondents believe that some sort of pedestrian scale lighting on portions of the Northbank path east of the I-5 Bridge can help with concerns such as darkness as it relates to personal safety, the condition of the path, and the inability to clearly spot pedestrians and people riding without lights in the narrow, winding section of the path.

Committee Recommendation:

- The BPAC recommends that Northbank Path lighting from I-5 to W. D Street be pursued further by Willamalane and City of Springfield, with ongoing input from the BPAC.
- The BPAC would like City Council's support to present this request to the Willamalane Board of Directors in early 2018.