BIKE CORRIDOR PROPOSED TO PROMOTE BIKE SAFETY

After David Minor’s death in 2008, his parents have fought for increased bike safety in Eugene.

In the summer of 2008, University of Oregon graduate David Minor was riding his bike along 13th Avenue and Willamette Street when he was hit and killed by a motorist.

Since then his parents, Susan and John Minor, have been advocates for safe biking in Eugene and recently decided to donate $150,000 in David’s honor to establish a two-way cycle corridor like the one on Alder Street that will lead from downtown to campus along 13th Avenue.

The plan stems from group members observing how bicyclists continually ride against traffic on 13th Avenue, despite it being unsafe. According to public planning and policy management professor Marc Schlossberg, who works with LiveMove, the students saw an opportunity with the new apartment complex being built downtown to rethink the connection from campus to downtown.

“We’re able to funnel people to school fairly easily,” said LiveMove Vice President Alex Page. “So why is it that we can’t return as easy?”

The project began in fall 2012 with group members looking into city policies in order to assure their plan had support. They then began a block by block analysis of 13th Avenue, where they recorded the number of parking spaces available and then the occupancy of those spots. The numbers showed only around 55 percent of the spots were being occupied. With this data the group strategically decided which spots to relocate to the surrounding blocks.

Another consideration was the number of cyclists using 13th Avenue. The group found that 40 percent of bicyclists travel against traffic. According to LiveMove president Nick Meitzer, this shows that people find 13th convenient enough to travel against traffic.

Once the design was complete, LiveMove held an open house in early June to display its design and begin a conversation with community members. The Minors heard about the group’s plan and attended the open house.

Inspired by the directness and safety the plan established, the Minors wrote an email to Eugene Mayor Katy Jolie offering $150,000 for the city to put the students’ plan into practice. So far, Piercy and other city staff members have given an overall supportive response to LiveMove’s plan. The group still needs to solidify more political and community support, but is enthusiastic about the plan gaining awareness.

The city has planned a public meeting for Dec. 4 to hear community members’ perspectives on how 13th Avenue is working and how it could improve. The Minors encourage cyclists to go and give their perspectives on what could improve along the corridor to make it more safe.

“We need something to create a safer route along 13th and this plan has just that,” said Susan Minor.

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