

Transportation plan needs more bikes, Solons say

By Michael Polhamus Jackson Hole Daily | Posted: Friday, February 13, 2015 4:30 am

A draft countywide transportation plan released last week drew criticism Wednesday from public officials for what many described as excessively modest goals.

The plan envisions a doubling of public transit ridership by 2024 and a redoubling by 2035, but it also describes a 17 percent increase in automobile miles traveled in the county.

The Jackson/Teton County 2012 Comprehensive Plan that was meant to guide town and county policy decisions states that all future traffic growth should be in the form of cycling, walking and transit ridership.

Members of the transportation advisory committee, which reviewed the plan, also said it didn't give enough emphasis to cycling and walking.

“Given the community's vision as recorded in the comprehensive plan, and the relative importance that's placed on shifting trips away from single-occupancy vehicles ... there's an argument that the integrated transportation plan should also address biking and walking more significantly,” said community member and Jackson Hole Community Pathways director Brian Schilling.

The plan would better serve Jackson Hole if it were to include data collection on cycling and pedestrians, Schilling said. It should also outline ways to better integrate cycling and walking with public transit and other forms of transportation, he said.

The plan remains in draft stages and is expected to undergo several revisions before adoption, which officials expect to take place before mid-summer.

Schilling said the plan is not yet at the point where incorporating revisions would represent a departure from what Colorado consultant Jim Charlier was contracted to do.

Schilling's concerns echo many of those expressed by the advisory committee.

Other members worried increases in transit that were described would outstrip the capacity of Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit facilities.

They also discussed the need to use parking management strategies — including but not limited to paid parking in downtown Jackson — as a disincentive aimed at discouraging additional automobile trips.

A public version of the plan is expected to be released in late March or early April, and the plan is

expected to be adopted by the beginning of July.