

## FHWA's Livable Communities Case Study Series

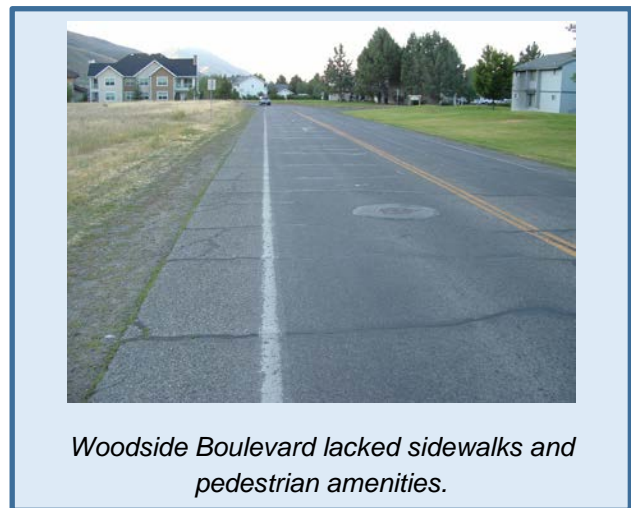
### **Woodside Boulevard 'Complete Streets' Initiative—Improving Safety for All**

#### **Challenge**—Addressing Safety with Limited Resources

In a small, close-knit, mountain town like Hailey, Idaho, there are few issues that elected officials do not hear about from residents. In 2008, residents submitted a petition to the city council requesting design and traffic management improvements on Woodside Boulevard after a pet was killed by an automobile. While such an incident might not usually receive much attention, in Hailey it illustrated the level of danger that residents had experienced themselves when traveling along Woodside Boulevard.

Though it offers a variety of uses along its 2.4-mile length, one could only access them by car on Woodside Boulevard. The lack of sidewalks left pedestrians exposed to fast-moving traffic, especially during the winter when snow banks narrowed the roadway. Drivers also could not depend on an easy trip. With no traffic signal at the intersection with the main thoroughfare (Route 75), drivers would find themselves inching forward in long, rush-hour bottlenecks. Those growing impatient with the wait would often merge onto Route 75 at inappropriate times, leading to accidents.

Since 1990, Hailey's population more than doubled to about 8,000. Nearly half of its residents (3,500) live adjacent to Woodside Boulevard in 1970s-era subdivisions, including many lower-income workers at the region's ski resorts. As Hailey's population and needs increased, city resources (funding and staff) faced tight restrictions. Traffic increases also led the city to recognize that small-scale, piecemeal fixes would not be sustainable for the deteriorating road.



#### **Solution**—Designing a Street that Accommodates All Users and Increases the Value of Other Infrastructure

The city of Hailey pursued a "Complete Streets" approach to improving safety and traffic flow on Woodside Boulevard where the addition of bicycle lanes, sidewalks, as well as traffic signaling and calming features would meet the needs of all users. Designated space would be provided for pedestrians that would separate them from traffic and enhance safety, and signalization and traffic calming features would reduce automobile congestion.

The city conducted a cost-benefit analysis of the complete streets approach, which found that pedestrian improvements (e.g., sidewalks) had the potential to increase property values by up to 8 percent over four years. The city also determined that a traffic signal at the southern end of the road could help ease congestion, making the industrial park more attractive to new businesses. The complete streets approach also presented the opportunity to add value to other existing infrastructure and services in Hailey. To support the project and

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increase transit ridership, Mountain Rides, the local public transit provider, committed to creating three bus stops with dedicated pull-outs. The nearby Wood River Trail, Wood River High School, sports complex, and Community Campus (which houses a college, technical academy, and government service offices) also stand to benefit from the improved connectivity and access the Woodside Boulevard project provides.

While a complete streets project could potentially incur higher upfront costs, city officials recognized the long-term cost effectiveness of such a coordinated approach. Concrete edging, new drainage, and transit enhancements installed at the same time as pedestrian amenities would help mitigate future deterioration and maintenance costs while simultaneously producing public health benefits.

### **Funding**—Engaging Community and Leveraging Partnerships

The city of Hailey worked to gain support from residents and stakeholders such as the Blaine County Recreation District, Mountain Rides, the Idaho Transportation Department, College of Southern Idaho, and the La Alianza Multicultural Center (serving the large Latino community in the Woodside subdivision). In 2010, the city applied for and received a \$3.5 million TIGER II<sup>i</sup> grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. To demonstrate the importance of the Woodside Boulevard project to Hailey, the city also allocated \$800,000 in capital improvement funds and \$110,000 in in-kind labor.



*Woodside Boulevard under construction.*

### **Results**—Connecting Programs and People

The city conducted several public hearings to gather input on the complete streets design approach. Construction is currently underway. The city of Hailey also received a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Community Climate Challenge grant, which addresses greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency through numerous initiatives, including a bicycle-sharing program. Launched in the summer of 2012, the program is poised to take advantage of the bicycle lanes being installed on Woodside Boulevard.

The Idaho Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has also supported the city of Hailey staff by providing guidance on Federal regulatory

compliance and project management. In turn, the city of Hailey is providing the South Central Idaho region with its first model of the complete streets concept. Because many of Idaho's state highways also contain community services and amenities, safe accommodations for both cars and people is a common problem. Through FHWA-sponsored webinars and other communications, Hailey is sharing lessons learned from its experiences and partnerships so that other small communities can replicate its success.

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<sup>i</sup> The Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program provides funding for investments in road, rail, transit, and port projects that are critical to the Nation's infrastructure. TIGER grants have been awarded in three rounds to communities across the Nation: \$1.5 billion for TIGER I (2009), \$600 million for TIGER II (2010), and \$526.944 million for TIGER III (2011). In FY 2012, \$500 million in grants was awarded to 47 transportation projects in 34 States. For more information, see: <http://www.dot.gov/tiger/index.html>.

