



Highway 93S Corridor Steering Committee

Meeting #4 Minutes

August 6, 2018

2:30-4:30 pm, 2nd Floor City Hall, Council Chambers Conference room

In Attendance:

Staff: Dave Taylor, Hilary Lindh, Craig Workman

Committee Members: John Middleton, Mark Pascoli, June Hanson, Roger Sherman, Marilyn Nelson, John Muhlfeld, Justin Lawrence and Ryan Hennen (Lisa Post absent)

Public: Dave DeGrandpre, Richard Turbiak

- A. Chair Middleton called the meeting to order at 2:30**
- B. Meeting minutes from July 9, 2018 were approved**
- C. Staff presentation – History of Commercial Strip Development and Alternatives**

Staff reviewed the factors that have enabled the development of commercial strips all over the country, and why people are interested in transforming the strip into something different. Best practices from the U.S. EPA and the Urban Land Institute for transforming the strip were presented. The best practices involve both private land use/development patterns and the public transportation right-of-way. Some of the best practices include, but are not limited to, reorganizing land use from linear to nodal patterns; orienting buildings toward the street and locating parking to the rear with connections or shared parking between multiple buildings; breaking up super blocks and converting them to a pattern of small blocks to increase street frontages and make them more walkable; developing distinct and unified identities along street segments with similar/related businesses; landscaping and vegetation between the sidewalks and curb; street lighting; bike lanes and bus stops; consolidation of driveways and access from side-streets; restricting left turn lanes; and expanding the street network to provide alternative routes.

Staff also presented some information on how other communities are restructuring or planning to restructure their commercial strips. Examples from Steamboat Springs, CO; Sante Fe and Taos, NM; McCall, ID; and Durango, CO were provided. A discussion of how to get the community to buy into any proposed changes to the strip followed. Residents and business owners are likely to have concerns about potential economic impacts and traffic implications. To address these concerns and as part of the planning process, the City will be providing case studies, economic studies and traffic analyses and simulations. As an example, staff summarized a report co-authored by the City's economic consultant that studied the economic impacts to businesses along corridors where raised medians were introduced. The City intends to help the public envision what an alternative to the strip could look like by providing drawings, sketches, and traffic simulations. Mark Pascoli asked that any information from other communities that have implemented changes to their commercial strips be included, so we can learn from their experiences. There was some discussion about what the corridor would look like if buildings were more street oriented, more landscaping/trees were incorporated, and parking was moved to the rear of buildings. Hilary offered to send some examples out to the committee. Mark also noted that if buildings are built right up to the street right-of-way that the views of the mountains might be blocked. Marilyn Nelson would like to see the powerlines along the highway buried underground and the

aesthetics of the street lights improved. She mentioned the amount of parking that is required for her new hardware store on the corridor, and Dave Taylor remarked that Whitefish has one of the higher rates of required parking in Montana; the committee can review and consider those rates as part of the corridor planning process. Marilyn also observed that the required setbacks from the road for development act to limit the design and layout of commercial spaces. June Hanson was interested in the sign code, as the amount and type of commercial signage has a big effect on the aesthetics of the corridor. Both standards will be reviewed as part of the planning process.

D. Public Open House - Preparation

The public open house is scheduled for Wednesday, September 5 from 5-7 pm at the National Parks Realty building. At this time, five of the committee members are available to attend the open house; three may be able to attend but are not sure; and one member was absent. The committee reviewed the different public outreach methods that could be used to get the message out and result in the most participation. In addition to the methods offered by staff, committee members recommended an announcement be included in the Citizens for a Better Flathead newsletter (Richard Turbiak confirmed he could include the announcement); advertising the open house with the banner that crosses the highway at about 7th Street (Hilary will look into this); the timing of any emails that go out is important (a week or two before the open house, plus a follow-up reminder the day of or day before); and an official invite should be extended to all business owners in the corridor. Justin Lawrence also offered the parking lot of his Lakestream Fly Shop for overflow parking, if needed at the event.

The committee also discussed how the open house and stations would be set up. Suggestions from the committee included having people stationed at the entrance to the open house to welcome and direct people and having a FAQ/cheat sheet available for committee members' reference during the open house. Hilary reviewed the role that committee members will play: helping staff educate the public on the existing conditions in the corridor, the planning process, and the opportunities for continued involvement; and helping staff record public preferences and the issues and opportunities that the public identifies.

E. Next meeting

The date for the next steering committee meeting, which would occur after the public open house, was discussed. Approximate timing will be last week of September or first week of October, but a specific date was not selected since too few people know their schedules at this time. Hilary will send out a Doodle Poll later in August to set the date. The meeting will include a debriefing of the public open house, as well as visioning work with the City's economic consultant.

F. Public comment

Dave DeGrandpre emphasized the importance of providing sketches and drawings to the public and making any presentation or information simple and free of jargon to ensure the best feedback.

G. Adjournment

Mark Pascoli moved to adjourn, and June Hanson seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm



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