



Highway 93S Corridor Steering Committee

Meeting #2 Minutes

May 30, 2018

12-2pm, 2nd Floor City Hall, Council Chambers Conference room

In Attendance:

Staff: Dave Taylor, Hilary Lindh, Craig Workman

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

Others: Mayre Flowers, Rhonda Fitzgerald, Richard Turbiak

- A. Chair Middleton called the meeting to order at 12:07; roll call.
- B. Meeting minutes from May 17, 2018 were approved.
- C. Staff presentations:

Roadmap

Dave Taylor discussed the big picture framework for the planning process. We are in the Issue/data collecting phase where we are reviewing the inventory of existing conditions and identifying issues and opportunities within the corridor study area. Once issues are well-identified, the process moves into the visioning phase in which the community vision for the future of the corridor is defined. The third phase of the planning process, and the final phase for the Steering Committee, is the policy phase. This phase will include developing goals, objectives and policies that will enable the vision for the corridor to become reality. Implementation of the plan and using the plan to guide decision making are phases of the planning process that occur after the plan has been adopted.

He presented a roadmap showing the how steering committee meetings and public meetings fit into the planning framework.

Dave also discussed the budget for the project, which includes funds from the Fiscal Year (FY) 17 and FY 18, and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). For each of the two fiscal years there is \$10,000 in the budget and \$15,000 in TIF funds, for a total of \$50,000 (\$25,000 per year) available for the project. Note, however, that FY 17 ends June 30, 2018. Funds from FY 17 could potentially be rolled over into the FY 18.

Resources allocated to the project include the Long-Range Planner position that was created specifically to facilitate and coordinate this type of long-term plan, and the Planning Director.

Potential consultant roles were also discussed, and included traffic engineer, landscape architect, economic analyst, and web designer.

Review Issues/Opportunities Exercise

Hilary Lindh reviewed a summary of the issues and opportunities that were identified by the Steering Committee at the last meeting. She also discussed items that weren't mentioned at the first meeting,

but that are called out in the Growth Policy for consideration in the corridor plan, or that have been brought to the attention of planning staff as issues. There was a discussion regarding how annexation works, some of the pros and cons of extending city services south of the highway 40 intersection, and staff provided some examples of neighborhoods that have been annexed by the City and why. There was also some discussion over the idea of replacing the culverts that convey Whitefish River under the highway north of 13th Street with a bridge, which led to a brief discussion about an upcoming Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) project that would occur between 13th and 2nd Streets. Marilyn Nelson also suggested adding the overhead powerlines as an issue affecting the aesthetics of the corridor and burying them as an opportunity.

Detailed review of zoning, land use

Hilary presented some more detailed information on the existing conditions in the corridor to follow up on the zoning and land use maps provided at the first meeting. There are several locations throughout the corridor where the Future Land Use designation from the Growth Policy is inconsistent with the zoning and/or the existing uses. These are areas that could be looked at further during this planning process, as this is an opportunity to refine the Future Land Use map or to modify zoning in the corridor. The Growth Policy considered land use at a broad scale; the corridor plan is a chance to zoom in and focus on what's appropriate or what the community wants in this specific area more carefully.

Corridor Boundary and Planning Segments

Dave reviewed the draft corridor boundary and said it is a starting point but there may be some areas we want to exclude and other areas we want to include that make more sense. The boundary is expected to evolve as everyone learns more about the corridor and what the issues are.

Dave also showed how the corridor could be split up into different sub-districts that share common issues or themes for discussion purposes. The north end of the corridor has small lots compared to the rest of the corridor area that is zoned WB-2, it has the Whitefish River crossing, and other considerations that the corridor between 13th Street and Highway 40 do not have. The south end of the corridor is outside the City limits and under the jurisdiction of the County; as a result, it has its own set of unique considerations and perhaps could be discussed as one unit.

D. Discuss public kick-off meeting

Timing of meeting and locations were considered. A date sometime around July 18 works for the City's traffic consultant, but not all Steering Committee members would be available that date. Regarding locations, Justin Lawrence suggested an outdoor setting in the corridor with tents. Possible locations include DePratu Ford vacant parking lot, the City lots by 7th Street, or Tee Bauer's properties around the Highway 40 intersection. The expense of renting tents and porta-potties for outdoor locations was brought up, and the group generally acknowledged those funds could probably be better spent elsewhere. Possible indoor locations include one of the hotels (Hampton Inn, Rocky Mountain Lodge, or the Marriott, if completed by then) or National Parks Realty. The community hall out on Blanchard Lake Road behind Montana Coffee Traders was generally considered too small/fragmented a space.

The committee also discussed the way information could be presented. Staff suggested several stations with visual aids that the public could move around between. Roger Sherman asked if the corridor could be presented in the sub-district areas presented previously, and a short discussion followed.

E. Next meeting



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Staff initially thought a June 14 meeting with a transportation focus would be appropriate based on the availability of the City's consultant traffic engineer and MDT; however, City Public Works staff also needs to be present at this meeting and Craig Workman indicated they have conflicts. Hilary will coordinate with Public Works, MDT and the consultant engineer to find dates that work for them, then send out a Doodle Poll to committee members to determine a date that works for the most people.

F. Public comment

Rhonda Fitzgerald, representing Heart of Whitefish, made several comments. She referenced the Whitefish Downtown Business Master Plan and its overlap with this Highway 93 South corridor study area. The downtown plan calls for a gateway at 13th Street on the highway. She also noted that the downtown plan does not cover the area zoned WR-4 between 4th and 6th Streets and encouraged this corridor plan to include that area. Rhonda said that the corridor planning process is an opportunity to think about the future of the community and advised the committee that strip development is not inevitable. She encouraged use of an urban design consultant to pull the plan together and requested a chart showing the amount of blighted properties in the corridor (which include the A-frame at 7th Street, the old hospital site, the former Greenwood trailer park, and the now vacant DePratu Ford lots). Rhonda stated that development of the frontage and backage road systems is key to improving the corridor and suggested that if the public open house is a drop-in event, to advertise it as such.

Mayre Flowers of CommUnity Consulting requested that: meeting presentation handouts be made available at the beginning of the meeting (and posted on the website earlier); the resources provided to the committee in a binder the first meeting be posted on the website; public comment be provided for at the beginning and the end of the committee meetings to improve participation; draft and adopted meeting minutes be posted on the website; links to other community plans/corridor plans be posted on the website; Bruce Boody be invited to a transportation meeting since he was involved in the landscaping plan for the highway corridor and knows its history; and staff take a realistic look at the extension of Baker Avenue and provided an anticipated timeline for its construction. She also stated that an urban design vision is needed and that the County's future land use map for areas south of Highway 40 differs from the City's and should be considered.

G. Adjournment

Roger Sherman moved to adjourn and Mark Pascoli seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.