City of Whitefish
Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Steering Committee

Date: Tuesday, April 11, 2017
Time: 3:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Location: Whitefish Ski Museum, 705 Wisconsin Ave., Whitefish

Steering Committee In Attendance: Rebecca Norton, Mary Person, Reeves Stanwood, Ryan Brown, Tom Tornow, Toby Scott, Carol Atkinson, Pam Barberis, Kent Taylor, Tim Hinderman

Others In Attendance: Dave Taylor, Kate McMahon, Ryan Mitchell, Necile Lorang, Marcia Sheffels, Charles Abell, Tom Abshire, Tracie Coppedge

Discussion Items:

1. Approval of minutes
The Committee approved the minutes from March with some editorial corrections.

2. Chapter 4 – Land Use Road
   • Kate McMahon explained that the first part of the chapter contains goals and policies. The goals and policies were derived from comments at the public meeting in November, steering committee discussion and existing planning documents.
   • Ms. McMahon noted that the link between land use and transportation is important because of the need to reduce vehicle trips in the corridor.
   • The committee suggested that Goal 2 regarding transportation, should reference safety and Policy 6.8 should reference preserving single-family character
   • The future land use recommendations have been divided into three sub-areas. The land use categories are the same as in the existing Growth Policy. Some changes have been made to the map to reflect current zoning, land use or potential future development.
   • Sub-area A extends from Edgewood Pl. to Denver Street. Things to note on the future land use map include:
     o Some of this area overlaps with the Downtown Master Plan. The land use categories are generally consistent with the Downtown Master Plan except for two areas between Skyles and Woodside lane that have been designated as “Neighborhood Mixed-Use Transitional” to reflect current land use patterns.
     o The map shows a major gateway at Edgewood and Wisconsin where there should be landscaping, signage and public art.
     o Single-family areas on Colorado have been changed from “High Density Residential” to “Urban” to reflect current land use.
     o There is a pedestrian/bike crossing shown at the Wisconsin/Denver Intersection.
     o Key development areas are shown at Edgewood and at the northwest corner of Skyles/Wisconsin.
   • Sub-area B extends from to Denver Street to the Lodge at Whitefish Lake. Things to note on the future land use map include:
The former gravel pit is shown as a key development area and the future land use reflects a Growth Policy amendment that was approved in 2009.

- The Averill Wetland Preserve is now shown as rural.
- Trail crossing are shown at Lodge at Whitefish Lake and south of LaBrie Drive. The Committee suggested indicating a pedestrian/bike crossing in front of the Ice Den.

Sub-area C extends from the Lodge at Whitefish Lake to the Big Mountain Road intersection. Things to note on the future land use map include:
- This area is more rural, lower density in nature.
- Northeast intersection at Reservoir Road is shown as neighborhood commercial to reflect current land use and zoning.
- The Big Mountain Road intersection is shown as a gateway. The Reservoir Road intersection is show as a gateway needing improvements.
- Properties around Big Mountain Road are under common ownership and are shown as a key development area.

- There are four “Key Development Areas” identified in the plan. Each area is generally under common ownership and have a significant impact on the corridor. The plan evaluates alternative scenarios for each area and identifies preferred development characteristics/outcomes.
- The West Edgewood key development area compares traditional commercial development to mixed-use commercial. The Committee suggested that that the text specifically states that the preferred alternative is the mixed use PUD. It was noted that the consultant still needs to contact the property owner to update them on plan recommendations.
- The Skyles/Wisconsin Ave. key development area includes 26 parcels and 23 are under common ownership. There is no change in recommended land use for this parcel and it is anticipated that it will redevelop at higher density. The plan describes preferred development outcomes for this parcel including developing the site under a unified development plan that preserves trees, provides buffers, includes transit oriented design and incorporates the topography as an amenity.
- The Steering Committee reviewed the Gravel Pit key development area at the last meeting. There was consensus that the mixed use planned development was the preferred development alternative.
- There was significant discussion regarding the Big Mountain Development area:
  - The consultants conducted an analysis comparing development that could occur under the existing zoning compared to a lodge/cabin development as presented at previous meetings by Mr. Grieve (representing land owner Joe Gregory). Current zoning would allow 9 single-family lakefront homes and multi-family units that could number between 160 and 200 units.
  - The alternative scenario was for a unified development that would include a 100 room lodge, 80 resort residential (short term rental) units and 26,000 sq. ft. of commercial.
  - Kate McMahon explained that under the current zoning, the single-family development could occur in the county and there would be no review of storm water drainage. This could have significant impacts on water quality. Additionally, residential multi-family development can occur under existing zoning and could contribute to traffic congestion.
  - If a planned development is proposed there would be engineering to mitigate storm water impacts. Also, with the planned development scenario, the city may be able to negotiate for traffic improvements, contribution of land for a satellite fire station and other amenities. The corridor plan should provide guidance to the developer and city officials on what types of amenities/improvements would be needed to offset any impacts.
  - The draft Future Land Use map in Chapter 4 indicates the lakeshore property as “Resort Commercial” and the properties at the northwest/northeast corner of Big Mountain and
Wisconsin as “Resort Residential”. There was discussion about the impacts of the “Resort Commercial” designation on water quality, traffic and character.

- Kent Taylor questioned if there were other land use designations that could be done as a planned development and have less impact.
- Kate McMahon said that there could be additional analysis on traffic generation and that she can also provide analysis on other development scenarios.

- The steering committee had the following comments on how to proceed with a decision on the “Big Mountain Key Development Area”.
  - Ryan Brown – He was concerned about the traffic impacts on the Big Mountain Road intersection
  - Tom Tornow – He thought the “Big Mountain Key Development” merited a stand-alone meeting and should involve the property owner as well as give the public a chance to weigh in.
  - Carol Atkinson – She noted that the property owner has a right to develop the property and the corridor plan should provide guidance to make sure the proposal for the area fits in with what the community wants.
  - Pam Barberis – The city needs to think about how the various improvements for transportation and emergency services will be paid for and this is an important consideration for development of this area. She agreed that a separate meeting to discuss this area is necessary.
  - Rebecca Norton – She was surprised by the amount of density that would be allowed under existing zoning. She thought discussion of this area should be continued at another meeting and that we should respect the public process.
  - Mary Person – It is hard to predict how the area might develop and the plan needs to provide guidance on what is best for the city. A holistic concept for all the property at the intersection would be best. The Committee needs to hear from both the neighbors and the property owner before they make a decision.
  - Reeves Stanwood – He agreed that another meeting is needed to discuss this development area.
  - Tim Hinderman – He thought the Committee needed more information to understand the impacts before they make a recommendations.
  - Toby Scott – He agreed that the Committee should have another meeting to discuss development concepts and that the property owner should be involved so they are not just speculating on future developments.
  - Kent Taylor – He agreed that there should be another meeting to discuss development concepts.

- It was agreed to schedule a tentative meeting for May 2nd in the evening to consider key development concepts for the Big Mountain Road Key Development Area. Kate will confirm the availability of meeting space at city hall and will coordinate with Dave Taylor on the meeting agenda. An alternate meeting date could be May 16.

3. **Chapter 5 – Implementation**

- Kate McMahon noted that much of the plan will be implemented by incorporating goals and policies into development review decisions, future planning initiatives and capital improvement plans. She reviewed the action items in the Implementation Chapter.

4. **Chapter 3 – Planning Framework**

- Kate McMahon reviewed the economic performance section of this Chapter. She noted the growth trends in visitation. The policies generally promote a balanced mix of uses to accommodate this growth and complement growth in the downtown. Amenities should add to the economic performance. Policies also promote establishing a corridor identity through streetscape design and branding efforts.
• It was noted that the visitation numbers in 2016 might have been influenced by the 100th year anniversary of Glacier National Park and may not be as high in 2017.
• Kate McMahon distributed some language to address the concerns that have been raised by potential new marinas along the Lakeshore. The handout includes data from the Whitefish Lake regarding effects on water quality from motorized watercraft. This data indicates that this area of the lake has the highest concentration of docks and motorized use. The handout notes that the lakeshore protection regulations do have some standards for docks/marinas and that commercial marinas are a conditional use under city zoning. The handout also notes that the marina industry and Glacier National Park have established best practices for “clean marinas” to minimize impacts on water quality. Kate recommended that this information be added to Chapter 3 along with a policy that any new marinas would limit motorized use and adopt “clean marina” guidelines. The Steering Committee agreed with this suggestion.

5. Public Comment
• Marcia Sheffels commented that there is aggressive work being done at the lakeshore property that Mr. Gregory owned and asked what was going on. It was noted that this property is located in the county and that lakeshore permits for the city are no longer under city jurisdiction.
• Brian Averill commented that development concepts for the Big Mountain key development area should be evaluated on the basis of what is best for the community overall.
• Charlie Abell commented that the north part of the corridor is single-family in character and there is enough commercial areas in the community. It is better to keep more intense uses near downtown.
• Tracie Coppedge said she is representing Joe Gregory. BJ Grieve has taken another job and will no longer be involved in the project. She is attending the meeting to listen and learn about the corridor plan.
• Tom Abshire lives in the corridor study area and has submitted comments on-line.

6. Future Meetings
The tentative schedule for future meetings is:
• May 2 – Steering Committee meeting in the evening at old city hall to discuss development concepts for the Big Mountain Road area. (Pending availability of room and developer’s rep.)
• May 23 – Public open house at new City hall
• June 6 – Steering Committee meeting to finalize draft

(Note: These dates are subject to change based on room availability and confirmation of the schedule with key parties.)