



**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION AGENDA
REMOTELY VIA WEBEX
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2021
6:15 TO 7:00 PM**

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Review Whitefish Transportation Plan Update – Project Overview with Wade Kline, PTP of KLJ Engineering
- 3) Public Comment
- 4) Direction to City Manager
- 5) Adjourn

To attend the meeting, and provide live comment via WebEx on your computer, tablet or smartphone, residents and other attendees should go to the following web address. **REGISTRATION IS NOT REQUIRED.** For best participation experience, participants should download the [Webex App](#) to their desktop.

Meeting Link:

<https://cityofwhitefish.webex.com/cityofwhitefish/j.php?MTID=mb25e2f9dd4cfc a6f059e2a73be0b545a>

Meeting Number: 146 877 1864

Password:

- **Join by video system**
- Dial: 1468771864@cityofwhitefish.webex.com
- Or
- Dial: **173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number**
- **For the Audio Conference Call option:** call the number below and enter the access code.
- United States Toll: **+1-408-418-9388**
- United States Toll Free: (From a land line phone) **1-844-992-4726**
- **Access code: 146 877 1864**
- We encourage individuals to provide written public comment; to the City Clerk, Michelle Howke at mhowke@cityofwhitefish.org. or deliver by **4:00 p.m.** February 1, 2021, at City Hall in the Utility Drop Box. Written comments should include name, address, should be short and concise, courteous, and polite.
- Public comment by those attending the meeting "live" via WebEx will be limited to three minutes per individual.



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Memorandum

Date: 1/25/2021
To: Whitefish City Council
Cc: Karin, Hilding, P.E., Senior Project Engineer
From: Wade Kline, PTP
RE: Whitefish Transportation Plan Update – Project Overview

Plan Introduction & Overview

The City of Whitefish is currently developing an update to its current 2010 Transportation Plan. The update will evaluate system needs and strategies to support transportation decision making based on both existing and projected conditions to the year 2040. The Transportation Plan update is being led by KLJ Engineering and focuses on a balanced approach to meet future transportation demands and improve sustainable transportation options such as active transportation and public transit.

The Plan will be developed in a multiphase approach. Phase I is complete and gathered public input, documented existing conditions, and delivered a summary of key issues and needs. The planning process has now entered Phase II and will build an analysis and evaluation of issues and needs identified in Phase I.

The project manager from KLJ Engineering will present a detailed update on the Whitefish Transportation plan at your meeting on February 1st. In the interim, this memorandum provides a simplified overview on the development of the Whitefish Transportation Plan update.

Responding to Local & Regional Conditions

The transportation plan update is responsive to population and economic trends within the project study area, including the balance of the Flathead Valley. Localized conditions coupled with regional trends have combined to impact transportation within the City of Whitefish. The Whitefish Transportation Plan has a 20-year planning horizon evaluating growth to the year 2040. Year 2040 projections show continued growth and development within Whitefish and throughout the Flathead valley. An Existing Conditions Report has been prepared to support the updated Whitefish Transportation Plan. This report is available at <http://whitefish.transportationplan.net/resources/>.

Synchronize

Several current transportation related plans and studies will be integrated into the Whitefish Transportation Plan. These plans represent a series of issues such as parking, transit, downtown development and safe routes to school. The Whitefish Transportation Plan will pull forward a coordinated framework of relevant and strategic initiatives from these plans. The Whitefish Transportation Plan will integrate outcomes from ongoing planning for both the *Highway 93 South Corridor Plan* and the *Downtown Whitefish Highway Study*, both will have a dramatic impact on future growth and development of the community.



Solutions

The Whitefish Transportation Plan will evaluate a full range of needed improvements to meet transportation demands. The Plan will establish a set of recommended goals, initiatives and projects to address projected needs facing the City of Whitefish. The Whitefish Transportation Plan is rooted in supporting a diversification of transportation options and choices to ensure a balanced approach to meeting future transportation demands through sustainable transportation options such as active transportation and public transit. The Whitefish Transportation Plan will include a recommended list of affordable and sustainable transportation solutions.

Public Engagement

Phase I of the Transportation Plan update was critical in establishing a set of existing issues and needs. Interested persons were encouraged to participate in an Issues and Needs survey available through the project web page. The survey allowed for an interactive discussion of transportation issues and needs within the study area.

Phase I was supported through a comprehensive public engagement process to provide residents an opportunity to get involved and have their voices heard. A series of virtual Listening Sessions were held in October to gather feedback from residents and key stakeholder. Each session started with a presentation on the planning process, included interactive survey work and an opportunity for public comment.

A summary memorandum of the Phase I Listening Sessions and the results of the Issues and Needs is available on the project website at <http://whitefish.transportationplan.net/resources/>.

Projected Conditions

The Transportation Plan update is being aided using a travel demand model (TDM) developed in cooperation with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT). The model allows the project team to evaluate projected 2040 transportation conditions on the surface street network. These conditions will be used to evaluate a range of potential future project needs.

Streetlight Data Analysis

The Transportation Plan update is also supported using Streetlight data. Streetlight data is anonymized location-based data pulled from smart phones and navigational devices in connected cars and trucks. The data provides for anonymous evaluation of a large sample of origin-destinations and a range of travel diagnostics for a given study area.

Streetlight Data was acquired for a geographic area slightly larger than the Whitefish Transportation Plan study area. We were able to make benefit of a data set which allows for detailed analysis of origin-destination patterns within most of the Flathead valley, including Columbia Falls and Kalispell. The data is being used to get a better handle on corridor level diagnostics within the project study. Additionally, we are currently using the regional level data to evaluate transportation demand opportunities which benefit traffic conditions in Whitefish such as improvement of public transit and development of park-n-ride lots.

Project Identification - Focus Areas

Roadway Systems

The Transportation Plan is initiating the development of a set of strategic roadway investments. The focus is on developing a set of short to midterm transportation projects which make critical connections and push forward with key extensions of existing corridors within the Whitefish



transportation network. Improving buildout and improving connectivity of the existing system is a key focus of the project identification process.

Multimodal Systems

The update of the Whitefish Transportation Plan will focus closely on integrating a series of multimodal elements, including recent policy directives regarding sustainable transportation. The transportation plan is focused on identifying a range of multimodal improvements in several specific areas.

Transit

The updated transportation plan will outline a more detailed set of potential service options which respond to travel conditions within both the Whitefish Study Area, but also the larger Flathead valley. This includes support for continued cooperation and potential integration between S.N.O.W. Bus and Mountain Climber (formerly Eagle Transit). The plan will explore the city's potential role in the transition of the Mountain Climber transit service to a 21st century on-demand transit system.

Park-n-Ride

Previous transportation planning in the Whitefish area has identified a need for park-n-rides to support the transportation system. The transportation plan update is evaluating a series of specific operational concepts that will add more detail to the potential location and operation of park-n-rides throughout the study area.

Active Transportation Systems

The Whitefish Transportation Plan update will pull forward the bike/pedestrian system analysis included in Connect Whitefish. As with the roadway system, the focus will be to zero in on a strategic list of short-range priority projects to improve the pedestrian/bicycling systems. This will include a more defined strategy for improving access to/from schools.