



Highway 93S Corridor Steering Committee

Meeting #25 Minutes

April 12, 2021

2:00 pm, WebEx Virtual Meeting

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Mark Pascoli, June Hanson, John Muhlfeld, Marilyn Nelson, Ryan Hennen, Steve Kane, Scott Freudenberger (Roger Sherman, Justin Lawrence absent)

Staff: Dave Taylor, Hilary Lindh

Public: Rhonda Fitzgerald, Mayre Flowers

- A. Meeting called to order at 2:00 pm**
- B. Approved February 11, 2021 meeting minutes**
- C. M. Nelson Comments**

Marilyn read an email she had sent to the committee prior to the meeting (attached). The committee asked for more information and background to her comments and decided to discuss more at the end of the meeting.

D. Future Steering Committee Meetings – Committee decided future meetings will be held in person rather than remotely

E. Review of Full Draft Plan by Chapter

Hilary summarized the changes to the draft chapters in response to committee and public comments on those chapters received at Steering Committee meetings between August 2020 and February 2021.

Chapters 1-3

Mark noted the narrative that was added to the tourism and lodging section on page 27 might already need updating based on the surge in advanced summer lodging reservations experienced at his business in the past month.

Steve said he has learned more about roundabouts since he commented on them previously and now has more comfort with the concept of one at the Highway 40 intersection; he takes back his doubts.

Public Comment

Rhonda agreed with Mark about the forecast for visitation changing rapidly. She suggested the existing language is too specific and the only thing we know is that the visitation season is short, cyclical, and unpredictable. She also agreed that roundabouts are a good idea. In Chapter 3, she asked that stronger language be used to describe that the downtown almost died when the Mountain Mall opened. She said it was the availability of sewer and water that led to further annexations, not annexation of the highway right-of-way. Rhonda noted that the Growth Policy calls for development of corridor plans to achieve the goals of the Growth Policy and wanted to make sure the corridor plan reinforces the goals of the Growth Policy, not subvert it. On page 24 she asked that the road diagram from the Downtown Master Plan also be included. On page 31 she said the future traffic projections from the 2009 Transportation Plan are wrong and should not be used.

Mayre compared the Chapter 2 summary of main themes that came out of the public process to the Chapter 7 implementation items and their timeline. She questioned the ability to implement or accomplish the main themes with the given long timeline of some of the recommended actions.

Mayre also questioned the tools described for expanding the transportation network. Congestion reduction is one of the main goals and the committee should hear from the consultant who are working on the Transportation Plan update whether the action items in this plan will achieve what is desired. She noted that concurrency is a main goal of the Growth Policy but did not think it is addressed in the corridor plan and asked if it could be added.

Chapter 4

John asked for clarification on the statement about how far south city services could be extended. He wanted to make sure the plan does not commit the city to extending them a set distance.

Public Comment

Rhonda suggested the phrase “*as far as*” Blanchard Lake Road be added to the statement about how far south city services could be extended, to leave it open as to how far they should be extended. She also suggested that each time street trees are mentioned in the plan, “*canopy*” also be included to clarify the trees are to provide shade. On page 43 she thought the diagram showing bikers on the highway is not accurate. On page 45 she requested the extension of 7th Street across the river be a separate bullet point from extending 7th Street between Spokane and Kalispell Avenues. In the vision statement on page 53 she was not sure where the “*diversity of businesses*” language came from and thought it should be removed. She said the 25-foot setback from the highway should be larger. And she said the language talking about pockets of less dense uses should be changed to just say more open space. She stated that the annexation language on page 61 only pertains to those properties that request annexation.

Mayre agreed that a greater than 25-foot setback would be good. She said the plan needs to add a goal/objective about working with MDT on use of the highway right-of-way (ROW) for landscaping. She said “web – or tech-based offices” are not defined in the city code and wanted to know what they are. She also said the economic analysis report in the appendices has inaccuracies and did not think the plan should refer to it or that it should be included as an appendix.

Mark asked about how to convey minor edits that do not necessarily need committee discussion. Anyone with edits can send them to Hilary, who will compile them and share with committee before next meeting. She will make simple changes and the committee can discuss any that require more consideration.

Chapter 5

John brought up that the depth of lots varies in the WB-2 and asked if there is a way to make the setback scaled or proportional to the depth rather than just a standard setback. Dave explained that the code is designed to be applied equally to all properties within a district and noted that no parking is allowed between the highway right-of-way and the building, regardless of how far back it is set. John asked for and received confirmation that projects seeking conditional use permits could have an added condition of approval for an increased setback.

Public Comment

Mayre asked where the front setback is measured from (the property line) and about the landscaping in the highway ROW. Dave described the City’s agreement with MDT for maintenance of the landscaping in the ROW and acknowledged it may need to be updated to include areas south of Highway 40 should City policy regarding annexations in that area change.

Rhonda stated the Town Pump setback was not big enough. She said the signage district described on page 71-2 should include both Baker and Spokane Avenues. She stated the language about administrative CUPs and the public’s ability to comment is inconsistent.



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Chapter 6

John asked about requiring a CUP for any new buildings in the Segment C Highway Transitional Zone, regardless of size, or greater than 7,500 square feet (sf) instead of 10,000 sf. Dave explained the proposed threshold of 10,000 sf was based on the current county B-4 zoning which requires a CUP for buildings larger than 15,000 sf and our adjacent WB-2 zoning which requires a CUP for buildings larger than 10,000 sf. A lower threshold may unnecessarily discourage owners from petitioning for annexation.

Public Comment

Rhonda spoke about the goal/objective regarding use of native and drought-resistant species in commercial landscaping. She thought it should reference "some" native species but not require all native species. Under Goal B.1 she recommended switching the order of Objectives 1 and 2 and delete "attract pedestrian activity" from Obj 1 since it is not the main purpose. She noted the potential Segment C transitional zone does not have to extend all the way to Blanchard Lake Road or to the southern extent of the County B-4 zoning; it could be applied just to the properties directly surrounding the Highway 40 intersection.

Mayre stated, regarding Rhonda's native species comment, we do not want a corridor characterized by non-native plants, so native plants should be emphasized. She agreed a lower building size threshold for a CUP in a potential Segment C transitional zone should be further discussed. And she noted MDT just approved a new roundabout on US 2 and a roundabout should continue to be considered for the Highway 40 intersection.

Chapter 7

Mark asked about existing standards that require parking to the rear of buildings. Hilary described the Mixed-Use and Non-Residential Development standards that were adopted in 2020 and have not had sufficient time to produce results.

Public Comment

Mayre said there needs to be a goal to work with the three cities in the County on corridor standards. She suggested a search of all mentions of administrative CUPs in the document and committee review of all.

June asked about the goal for three cities. Hilary pointed out an existing action item describing coordination with the cities and the county on transportation planning. June suggested adding a sentence about also looking specifically at corridors outside city limits.

Marilyn's Comments

Marilyn clarified that her comments were made in the hope that the plan is an opportunity to empower decision makers to be able to say no to developers if their proposals are not consistent with the community vision. June liked Mayre's suggestion for review of the plan by the Transportation Plan consultants, MDT, and Bruce Boody or other landscape architects. Dave said once we have a public draft ready, we will send it to the agencies and others like the Transportation Plan consultant or landscape architect, but with the number of projects going on right now no one has very much time. Marilyn

stated if money is the only limit to having consultants review the plan, there are people in the community who might be willing to fund that effort.

Mark asked again for the impetus for the comments and for information about the City Council work session mentioned by the Mayor. Dave described the recent work session, which was held because of recent inquiries from property owners around the Highway 40 intersection about annexation and city services. The City Council directed staff to bring a draft revision of the Urban Growth Boundary in the Extension of Services Plan to a City Council public hearing so they could hear from a range of people in the community on the idea. That Council meeting has not yet been scheduled but is in the works.

F. Next Meeting

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 3 at 2pm. It will be held in person in the Council Chambers. A link to attend via WebEx may be provided if requested.

G. Adjournment – 4:40 pm