



Highway 93S Corridor Steering Committee

Meeting #19 Minutes

August 17, 2020

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

In Attendance:

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

Staff: Dave Taylor, Hilary Lindh

Public: Rhonda Fitzgerald, Mayre Flowers, Don Kaltschmidt

A. Meeting called to order at 2:30 pm

B. Approval of January 21, 2020 meeting minutes

C. Appointment of New Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Previous Chair John Middleton resigned from his Planning Board position and committee membership in July. June Hanson was elected Chair in his place, and Mark Pascoli was elected Vice Chair.

D. Review Draft Plan Chapters 1-3 (Committee Discussion with Public Comment)

M. Pascoli asked about the plan's target audience and suggested inclusion of a glossary of terms used that might be unfamiliar to lay people.

M. Nelson submitted her comments via email (attached to minutes) and thought there needs to be some acknowledgement or consideration of the fact that the background statistics related to employment, economic diversity and vitality, tourism and visitor spending, permanent versus seasonal residents, etc. have all been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in ways that we can't measure now and may not know for some time.

M. Pascoli, with agreement from J. Hanson and S. Kane, suggested the narrative acknowledge the uncertainty in how the past economic trends will relate to the future and include some caveats.

In Chapter 1, S. Kane thought while the writing style could use some edits, the chapter covers everything it should.

M. Pascoli thought there might be some leading language regarding, for example, the description of the 5-lane corridor with "no medians to soften the expanse of asphalt". Suggests removing such language and sticking with what is there.

In Chapter 2, J. Hanson and the committee thought the quote about roundabouts used on page 10 was not appropriate and should be replaced with something more neutral.

In Chapter 3, more narrative should be included in the Growth Policy and Downtown Master Plan summaries to capture the desired relationship between the downtown business center and the corridor.

J. Hanson also thought some context should be included to illustrate how the Growth Policy, the Corridor Plan and the Downtown Master Plan are related to each other. This may also be appropriate to add to Chapter 1.

S. Kane thought that the transportation facilities write up and associated photos are good.

M. Pascoli noted some cut-off text in the pie charts on page 11.

S. Kane asked about the lack of discussion of climate action in the plan. He suggested, and the committee agreed, the goals of the City-adopted Climate Action Plan could be better incorporated into this plan.

E. Timeline and Next Steps

H. Lindh reviewed an optimistic path to completing the plan and City Council adoption.

F. Next Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for September 21, but a Doodle Poll will be circulated to determine the day most committee members can attend.

G. Public Comment

M. Flowers had questions about the Transportation Plan update the City is undertaking. Will it inform this plan, or will this plan inform it? She thinks the consultants developing the Transportation Plan could be used to identify tools and alternatives to installing medians, for example. And she asked for the scope of the consultant's work. She noted two Planning Board items this week (zoning text amendments) will affect the corridor and do not have Steering Committee input. She asked about the goals and policies on the plan website and wanted to know when they had been updated. She asked that the economic report completed as part of the Corridor Plan process and a referenced report by the Jobs for Whitefish Task Force be made available on the website. She said that public comment during the Steering Committee meeting, and not just at the end, should be allowed. She suggested that a quote from the online survey about roundabouts be balanced with some useful information about roundabouts. She agreed that the description of the Downtown Master Plan and its relatedness to this and other plans be strengthened. She agreed the climate issues should be better integrated. She asked for tools the city can use to implement an expanded road network be included as part of the Plan. She would appreciate an option to attend the Steering Committee remotely, by phone or web.

D. Kaltschmidt asked that any plan for adding medians be reconsidered given the need for semi-truck access to his property (Don K) and adjacent Wright's Furniture. He asked about the Baker Avenue extension to JP Road and potential zoning along it through the Eagle Enterprises property.

During the committee discussion, R. Fitzgerald emphasized the long-held wishes of the community for the corridor aesthetic have not changed, but the economic trends and the types of businesses the community has the capacity to support have all changed. She thought maybe the whole economic section should be removed from the plan. She also agreed the hierarchy of plans should be discussed and noted that the 2006 Downtown Master Plan (replaced with the 2015 update) included areas within Segment A of the Corridor Plan.

During public comment R. Fitzgerald reiterated the Planning Board items M. Flowers mentioned do reference this Committee's work, so the Committee should see them. In the Public Involvement chapter, she suggested that the main themes identified by the public should be called out and emphasized more clearly. For example, there is a great deal of support for removing the Whitefish River culverts and replacing with a bridge to improve the visibility of and access to the river; there is a desire for protected bikeways and pedestrian ways; and there is a need to emphasize the natural environment, increase the tree canopy, and improve landscaping in the corridor. She also asked about the inclusion of light



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assembly/light manufacturing in the zoning text amendments going before Planning Board this week, as she thought the feedback on that topic from the Steering Committee was that use should continue to be a conditional use.

H. Adjournment – 4:05pm