



# Highway 93S Corridor Steering Committee

## Meeting #20 Minutes

October 19, 2020

2:00 pm, WebEx Virtual Meeting

### **In Attendance:**

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

Staff: Dave Taylor, Hilary Lindh

### **A. Meeting called to order at 2:06 pm**

### **B. Introduction of new Planning Board representative to committee, Scott Freudenberger**

### **C. Approved motion for Steering Committee to meet remotely, as needed**

### **D. Approved August 17, 2020 meeting minutes**

### **E. Committee Review Draft Plan Chapters 4 and 5**

M. Nelson was concerned about the issue identified on page 50 about the lack of small lease spaces for starter businesses. She wonders what type of businesses need small lease spaces given the WB-2 zoning intent and the permitted uses in the district. She thinks if this is an identified issue it might encourage developers to build multi-tenant buildings that then cannot be filled or will be filled with non-conforming uses. She believes some of the tools listed in Chapter 5 seem to imply the desire for a second retail district in the corridor. Staff clarified that the issue of small lease spaces came from the economic development report. The types of businesses that might benefit from smaller lease spaces in multi-tenant buildings are places to grab lunch and bank or financial type services where an employee in the corridor could run some errands and have a meal without necessarily having to drive somewhere else to do that. Independent restaurant start-ups or coffee shops need multi-tenant space whereas formula restaurants usually build single tenant spaces. M. Nelson recommended explicitly stating those are the types of businesses that would be potential tenants of the small lease spaces.

S. Kane appreciates the renderings included in the chapter because they help him visualize what the corridor could look like. Staff provided some public comments received by phone about the Segment A rendering including that it should depict a bridge where Spokane Avenue crosses the river, the existing businesses should be shown where they are, and a second northbound driving lane should not be shown. A discussion followed in which several committee members expressed concern that the renderings are of known places, but existing businesses are not acknowledged. The location of existing buildings is unlikely to change in the next 20 years, so if the renderings are specific to a place, they should show buildings as they are now. Options to rectify are to make the captions more generic so as to not tie the renderings to a specific location, or change the renderings to show actual buildings and focus on the more realistic improvements that could be made such as adding boulevard trees and curb protected bike lanes. D. Taylor added the renderings were only meant to show how best practices would look over time. They were expensive so we would need to look at the budget before any changes could be made to the drawings.

J. Hanson commented on the density of development shown on the Segment B rendering without much green space. S. Freudenberg noted that any development would have the green space and landscaping required by the WB-2 zoning. D. Taylor stated that 30% open space would be required if developed with a PUD, the types of development allowed are what is permitted in the WB-2 zoning district, and the rendering doesn't really show the planned extension of Whitefish Avenue to Greenwood.

M. Nelson mentioned that the bridge treatments could include flowers for the gateways. Heart of Whitefish or a south corridor business community could take on the responsibility of maintaining that component. She will send photos of ideas that could be included in the bridge sidebar.

S. Kane suggested adding bullets under Transportation Opportunities in both Segments A and B to combine highway accesses, etc.

M. Pascoli suggested the Vision statement for each segment be located completely at the end or else at the start of each segment section. Committee members like the idea and staff will play with what that might look like.

The committee then discussed the Segment C section of the chapter. Regarding the opportunity to purchase property around the Highway 40 intersection for preservation purposes, S. Kane suggested acknowledging the development happening in the northeast corner of the intersection. Under the annexation bullet, he suggested including the limitations to how far City water and sewer could be extended in the future, since that is the main reason property owners would request annexation. Given that Segment C is outside the City's jurisdiction, M. Nelson asked that we focus on what we can do. Include a call to action to the community regarding land acquisition. This will be included in Chapter 6, which has the goals, objectives, and implementation actions.

Committee Review of Chapter 5 postponed to next meeting.

#### **F. Public Comment**

R. Fitzgerald stated that in the 2010 Urban Corridor Study, MDT did not prefer the Modified Alternative C (Offset), it was one of two options. That alternative was only carried forward due to the cost of a new bridge at 7<sup>th</sup> Street. She also commented that the statement the MDT has said a two-way cycle track along Spokane Avenue is unsafe is misleading and there are ways to make it safer. It is a matter of signage and the plan should not empower that opinion. She noted the Downtown Master Plan reason for not supporting two northbound driving lanes is due to the potential bottleneck it would create at Second Street. She pointed out the park concept on page 46, which she likes, would be affected by a new bridge at 7<sup>th</sup> Street if constructed. On page 47 under Transportation Opportunities, the first bullet that says there is an opportunity to have three driving lanes while retaining or adding more street trees is not true. The Segment A rendering is counter productive and easily misunderstood. It should not show a third driving lane, which is not consistent with the Downtown Master Plan. She agrees existing buildings should be shown as is. A completely different rendering near the river crossing showing a new bridge would be a better option. In Segment B there is a statement about several multi-family developments adjacent to the highway; she says there are few and they are set back from the highway. She sees the small lease space issue as inconsistent with the intent of the WB-2 zoning. She pointed out light manufacturing was recently changed to be an administrative CUP and the bullet about it should be



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revised. The opportunity for landscaped medians should be moved to the top of the list. Finally, she agrees there should be a call to action for Segment C, and it should include the City's demand that the County enforce its zoning.

M. Flowers was unable to sign on to the meeting initially and she thinks there should be another meeting to discuss the chapter. She agrees that in Segment C, if the City has an adopted plan, the County is supposed to take it into consideration. The plan needs bold statements. She thinks the Transportation Plan update, which just began its process, should inform the corridor plan with technical information and the Corridor Plan should wait until that is done. And she would like to see the City use some meeting platform other than WebEx. It was generally agreed that everyone had some issues with WebEx.

Emails from two of online attendees indicated they were unable to raise their hand to comment during the public comment period. Comments from J. Burks and P. Mormino submitted after the meeting are attached.

### **G. Next Meeting**

Staff will send out Doodle poll to determine best date. The intent is to meet sooner than a month out.

### **H. Adjournment – 4:20 pm**