

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT
February 29, 2012 1:05 – 2:00 PM
City Council Chambers

Members Present: Jason Wiener (chair), Ed Childers, Dick Haines, Bob Jaffe, Dave Strohmaier, Jon Wilkins, Adam Hertz, Alex Taft, Caitlin Copple, Mike O'Herron

Members Absent: Cynthia Wolken, Marilyn Marler

Others Present: Steve King, Gregg Wood, Kevin Slovarp Shane Stack, Ellen Buchanan, Phil Smith, Ed Toaus, John Weber, Scott Randall, Jeff Key

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

- A. Approval of the minutes of – February 15, 2012 & February 22, 2012 – Approved as Submitted
- B. Announcements – Gregg Wood, Project Development Coordinator, announced that the Rattlesnake Creek/Broadway Pedestrian Crossing (RUX) meeting would be taking place tonight in Council Chambers at 6:00 p.m.
- C. Public Comment on Non-Agenda items – None

II. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. Approve the construction agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) for the Arthur Avenue Pavement Preservation Project (memo). – Regular Agenda (Kevin Slovarp) (Referred to committee: 02/27/12) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the construction agreement, upon City Attorney approval, with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) for the Arthur Avenue Pavement Preservation Project.

- 2. Approve the construction agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) for the Main Street Pavement Preservation Project (memo). – Regular Agenda (Kevin Slovarp) (Referred to committee: 02/27/12) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the construction agreement, upon City Attorney approval, with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) for the Main Street Pavement Preservation Project.

- 3. Approve the construction agreement with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) for the South Avenue Pavement Preservation Project (memo). – Regular Agenda (Kevin Slovarp) (Referred to committee: 02/27/12) (REMOVE FROM AGENDA)

Motion: The committee recommends the City Council approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the construction agreement, upon City Attorney approval, with the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) for the South Avenue Pavement Preservation Project.

Kevin Slovarp requested that Committee recommend that City Council approve and authorize the mayor to sign the three construction agreements as presented.

Bob Jaffe made the motion to approve all three construction agreements. He then asked,

whether there were any opportunities for change regarding bike lanes or parking alignment? Kevin Slovarp responded that there are currently bike lanes on South and Arthur. Also the Main Street project, which is planned for a two way Front/ Main conversion, was looked at for the potential of combining some work with this project and it cannot be done. A flyer was sent out to business owners regarding changing parking configurations from front end angle parking to back end angle parking on Main Street and it wasn't supported. Nothing on any of these projects would substantially change anything you currently see. Alex commented that Complete Streets policy should be used and staff should review and track changes in reconstruction and explain any changes to Council. Kevin Slovarp commented ADA has to be updated each time and all ADA will be made current w/ these projects. Shane Stack of MDT said no discussion was made with transit, or related transit facilities, and with preservation projects it is just the upgrading of driving surfaces and ADA upgrades.

Alex referred to Complete Streets Policy, and the need to have discussion with transit system. As Mountain Line is currently looking at what kind of improvements they can do through out the city, Jason requested a report back on contact with Mountain Line. Bob Jaffee commented when projects are done they should always try to piggy back and coordinate changes for efficiency. Shane let the committee know these are pavement preservation projects; the focus is on pavement and ADA improvements. MDT feels this is more of a maintenance project than a reconstruct and there is concern of how far do you go with pavement preservation and maintenance type money going into upgrading some of these facilities.

Jason Wiener asked for public comment, and none was given.
The motion carried unanimously.

III. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

1. Discussion of the Safety Audit prepared by the Montana Department of Transportation on the stretch of roadway on Brooks Street (Hwy 93) from Dore Lane to Buckhouse Bridge ([memo](#)). – Regular Agenda (Steve King) (Referred to committee: 02/27/12) **(REMOVE FROM AGENDA)**

Steve King, Public Works Director commented on the importance of the Safety Audit due to the high number of fatalities on this corridor. Steve introduced Jeff Key and Scott Randall, consultants from Robert Peccia and Associates. They presented a power point [presentation](#) on the Safety Audit.

Committee Discussion on the presentation was as follows:

- Response time from the City was quick, getting the speed sign mounted trailers out within 24 hours shows the public we can be responsive.
- More emphasis needs to be put on the behavioral aspects of resolving the crashes. Campaigns could be started that go towards that aspect.
- Steve King, Public Works Director, stated that over 2012 some of the smaller recommendations will be implemented by signing and striping some of these types of items. Whereas, the raised medians, lighting, traffic signals and paying for these bigger items will need to be part of the Long Range Transportation Plans and Urban Renewal District consideration. Federal funding may be appropriate for some of the larger safety mitigation items. Education on driving while intoxicated, transit services and behavioral items are not engineering items and we will need to collaborate with police, transit, schools and other agencies to move forward on that aspect.
- It was recommended by several members that the first thing that should happen is speed limits should be lowered.
- The impact of Old Highway 93 by the golf course and the intersections at either end should be taken into consideration; this should be part of discussion. A study should be done on the impacts of this road on the corridor.
- Planning should be done strategically because of fatalities; changes need to be immediate, need the speed of the roadway dropped with traffic signage whether it's permanent flashing

lights or larger speed limit signs. Creating solutions and dropping speeds needs to happen quickly.

- Jeff Key commented that the roadside environment out by Blue Mountain gives the appearance of a higher speed rural highway and posting lower speed signs alone would not accomplish the drop in speed, possibly in tandem with other things.
- A speed zone study will be completed some time this summer.
- Jeff Key and Scott Randall commented that the crash rate is a function of the number of crashes to the traffic volume and in this corridor, it is slightly lower than the Montana trend but the severity is higher.
- Kevin Slovarp, City Engineer, commented on a measure already taken, which was 3 or 4 years ago, the state completed a corridor speed study for the section of road between Buckhouse Bridge and Miller Creek Road. The State studied the speed limit all the way down to Lolo. Basically the recommendation and change was a lowering of the speed limit from 55 mph to 45 mph from south of Miller Creek Road to south of Buckhouse bridge.
- The mobile high speed indicator is helpful in reducing speeds, should flashing lights and more permanent items be implemented? Jeff Key commented on the need to be careful where permanent traffic control devices are placed and then have them eventually be ignored.
- Scott Randall stated that the parameters on the study included age and sex, data does not show origin or destination. Showed high rate of young people in crashes.
- The Miller Creek EIS and the future geometry of that intersection and its effects on the corridor were considered. At the intersection of Miller Creek Road and Brooks, yes this reconstruction would be beneficial to help mitigate some of these crashes.
- The EIS preferred alternative was to split and diffuse traffic volumes, it was intended to relieve congestion, and reduce queuing at Brooks and Reserve. This might help to reduce some of the rear end crashes. Traffic should be calmer and less congested.
- Ellen Buchanan of MRA commented on sidewalk projects in District 2 and District 3. An Infrastructure Sidewalk Needs Assessment has been put together by WGM Group for District 3; it will be the topic of a workshop that their board will participate in on March 9th. They will be looking at all the recommendations in that assessment. Some of these recommendations are enhancing the pedestrian realm by placing raised medians, protected crossings, and curb extensions. Another aspect was to create connectivity between the Brooks corridor and other parts of the city.
- There is nothing to delineate moving from a rural high speed highway situation to a more urban part of the city, do we need something as extreme as a traffic circle or roundabout, something that definitively says you have entered a new place. Jeff Key responded that there has been no discussion regarding placement of roundabouts
- What is the priority of this area in looking for speeders? John Weber, City Police responded: It is a priority. But the design and speed on the road are what leads to the severity of the accidents. The design of the road leads to the feeling that you can safely exceed the speed limit. The visual aspect of a patrol car does help slow traffic down. The design needs to make the driver feel justified in going the speed limit, examples: school zones, narrow road, and medians.
- Improvement on the ability to bike from Miller Creek to the University needs to improve, which would help reduce car traffic.
- Follow up on this study will require a point person like Steve or Kevin to continue to update the committee with the short, medium and long term solutions.

Jason Weiner asked for public comment, and none was given.

IV. HELD AND ONGOING AGENDA ITEMS

1. Resolution to change the speed limit on Reserve Street between Brooks and 39th Street. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Wayne Gravatt) (Referred to committee: 01/24/2011)
2. Discuss the timing of various traffic lights around the city. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 09/26/2011)

3. Discuss the school speed zones. ([memo](#))—Regular Agenda (Bob Jaffe) (Referred to committee: 09/26/11)

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jane Plummer, Secretary
City Public Works Department