

POLICY COORDINATING COMMITTEE

MINUTES –FEBRUARY 19, 2019

APPROVED MAY 2019

Members Present: Chairman Bill Cole, Mayor, City of Billings; Denis Pitman, Vice Chairman, Board of County Commissioners; Rod Nelson, Director, MDT District Office; Planning Board President Darell Tunnicliff, Yellowstone County Planning Board

Staff Present: Monica Plecker, Planning Division Manager, Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator, Planning & Community Services Department; Lora Mattox, Transportation Planner; Tammy Deines, Planning Clerk

Others Present: Denis Pitman, Board of County Commissioners; Yuri Merezczak, Kittelson & Associates, and Andy Daleiden, Kittelson & Associates; Wade Salyards, MDT

Conference Call: Due to technical difficulties, there were no MDT participants.

1. Call to Order: Commissioner Ostlund called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m., Board of County Commissioners Board Room, 316 N 26 St, Room 310, Stillwater Building, and welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. Communication from the Audience: Comments on items not on the agenda and requests to add items to future agendas. Comments on items on the nonpublic agenda items.

3. Minutes of January 15, 2019

Motion

Darell Tunnicliff made a motion and it was seconded by Mayor Bill Cole to approve the minutes of January 15, 2019. The motion carried with a unanimous voice vote.

5. Old Business: There is no *Old Business*.

4. New Business:

4a Presentation/Discussion. Roadway Design Plan. Main Street/Airport Road Intersection Project Concept. Yuri Merezczak, Kittelson and Associates, presenting. Scott Walker, Transportation Coordinator, introduced Yuri Merezczak, Consultant Project Manager; Kittelson & Associates, who opened with a brief introduction and presentation. The Montana Department of Transportation will have an Open House Public Meeting from 5 to 7 PM at the Billings Public Library in the Community Room, 510 North Broadway, Billings, MT.

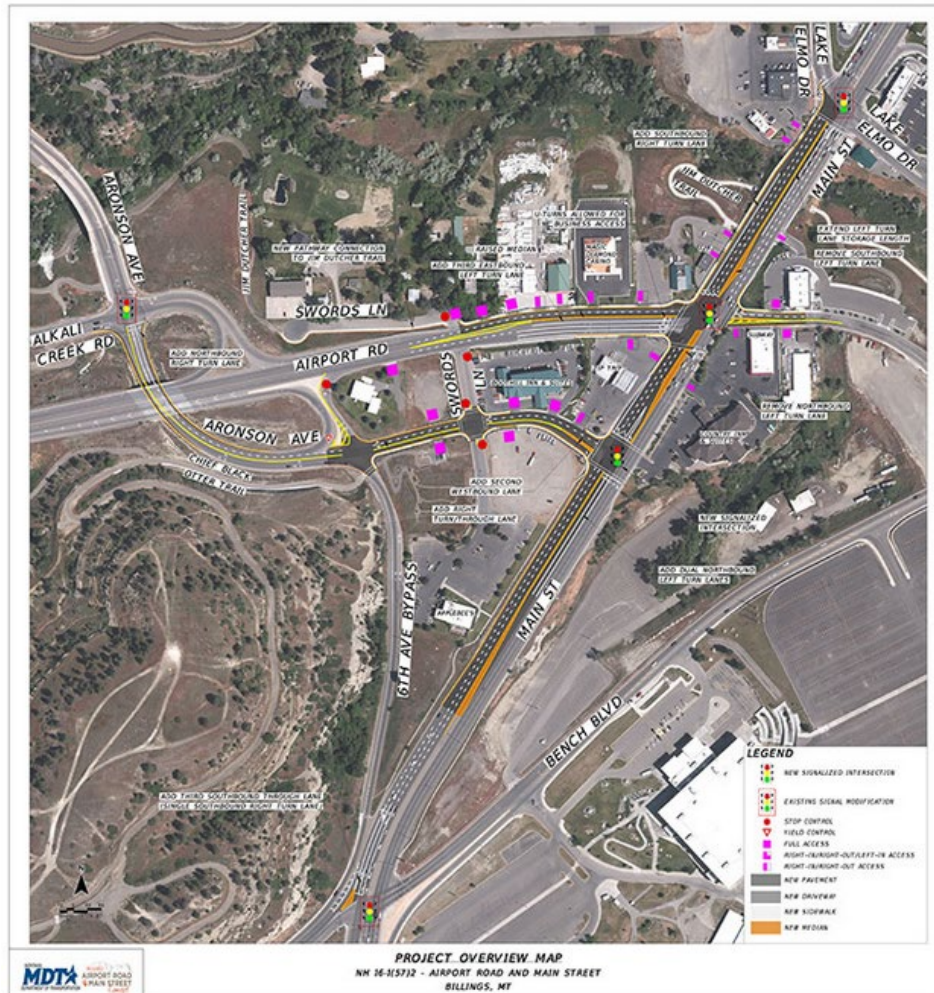
STUDY AREA

The Airport Road and Main Street intersection is located two miles northeast of downtown Billings, just north of Metra Park. The intersection's location is a critical junction for commuter, regional, and freight trips along the Airport Road and Main Street corridors.

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STUDY PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Airport Road and Main Street Concept Study is to identify the need, type, location, and feasibility of a transportation project at the Airport Road and Main Street intersection in the City of Billings, Montana. Key elements of the study include:

- Identifying the existing and future deficiencies
- Identifying a list of intersection alternatives
- Evaluating and screening the intersection alternatives
- Identifying a preferred alternative for the intersection.

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Ongoing and Planned Projects -providing alternate routes throughout the area. The design team is considering the need to provide alternate routes throughout the area. The Study effort was initiated in April 2015, and completed with consideration for Phase 2 development in July 2016.

Phase 1 Concept Study (2016) MDT conducted a transportation study that identified a proposed project for design and construction. This has been an exhaustive evaluation process of 20 alternatives being narrowed to seven refined alternatives to the three recommended alternatives.

The Signalized Southwest Quadrant alternative is being carried forward to the design phase based upon the analysis completed and public input received during Phase 1.

Phase 2 Design & Construction: (2019-2024) Additional traffic study; Environmental Studies, Development of construction plans; Right-of-way and utility impacts, and additional Public Involvement and Outreach. Improvements include lane modifications, roadway widening, median work, minor realignments and upgrades to curb, gutter, Americans with Disabilities Act facilities, pavement, lighting, pavement markings, signing and signalized intersections.

Project Schedule: Design completed 2021; ROW and utility negotiations (2022-2023); Construction 2024.

Signalized Southwest Quadrant Intersection

- Take advantage of additional capacity on Aronson Avenue
- Removal of north and south bound left turn.
- New signal at Aronson Street
- Bench Boulevard west bound on east leg as a through movement
- Will modify the truck route that will be routed through the Aronson Avenue route
- Added third east bound left turn off on Main to Airport Road
- Address south bound right turn lane to go west on Airport Road
- Extending north bound left turn storage lane to Lake Elmo
- New pedestrian crossings

Benefits and Cost: Improved safety & mobility for all users; Reduced construction; Improved connections and crossings for pedestrians & bicyclists; \$8.3M Estimate Design + Construction Cost

Key Changes Since Concept Study:

- Addition of second westbound lane existing Metra Park to improve operational performance during Metra Park events; which provides additional pavement width between raised median & north curb
- Jim Dutcher Trail Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection: 8-ft wide continuous pathway to improve connection
- Continuity of three southbound through lanes at 6th Ave/Main Street-Proposed configuration.

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Next Steps

- Public open house tonight! Billings Public Library Community Room (510 N Broadway)
 - 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM (Business/Property Owners)
 - 5:00 – 7:00 PM (General Public)
- Future public open houses & TAC/PCC updates
 - Fall 2019-as announced by MDT when set.
 - Summer 2020-as announced by MDT when set.
- Feedback from public and stakeholders welcome throughout design process
- Preliminary design & environmental evaluation
 - Scope of Work Approval – end of 2019

PUBLIC OUTREACH--PROJECT WEBSITE

A project website was developed and hosted by MDT throughout the duration of the project. The site is located on MDT's project page with an address of:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/blgairportmain/pub-involve.shtml>

Discussion (Responses by Yuri Merezczak, Kittelson & Associates, and Andy Daleiden, Kittelson & Associates; Wade Salvards, MDT)

Planning Board President Darell Tunnicliff: asked Mr. Daleiden if they envision a traffic increase on Bench Boulevard. Mr. Daleiden responded they expect less than 5% as the best opportunity for access will be on Aronson Avenue. He noted that the Bench Boulevard findings show it will carry a fair amount of traffic and a 5-lane traffic section will be needed in the future. He stated that at this point, there are no changes projected for Bench Boulevard.

Mayor Bill Cole: asked regarding pedestrian access and commented this a highly used area for bike-pedestrian use. It was pointed out that the trails that come to Aronson and continue on the east side of Main Street have a gap in access to Jim Dutcher Trail along the creek should the landowners be brought into the planning process.

Mr. Daleiden stated it is not under consideration but they are looking at an 8-ft wide sidewalk along Main Street and adding a pathway along Swords Lane to the Jim Dutcher Trail Connection. Mayor Cole asked how long construction will take and commented on the disruption to adjacent property owners. Mr. Salvards said he guesses this will be a single season construction effort. He said there would be a significant amount of utility moves but he hopes this is addressed prior to construction. He stated they do not

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foresee exceptional inconveniences to landowners outside of ordinary construction. There are no plans to close any routes but there may be lane reductions.

Planning Board President Darell Tunnickliff: commented on the traffic congestion issue at the intersection of Main Street and 1st Ave North moving toward Lockwood. Yuri Merezczak said MDT is beginning a study on this section with a kickoff meeting tomorrow morning. Mr. Tunnickliff said there is a tremendous amount of growth in Lockwood necessitating a significant increase in traffic. He asked if the study could be integrated with this project. Wade Salyards said the studies will not be coordinated but will work in tandem. He stated MDT is relying on Kittelson's expertise to focus on this intersection. Mr. Tunnickliff commented this intersection is a huge first impression opportunity on the community.

Commissioner Denis Pitman asked for the construction timeframe with an allowance for planning. Wade Salyards explained this is contingent on the intersection solution brought forward through the tiered study process. He said the stakeholders and public will be involved in the decision making process. Rod Nelson explained MDT has a five-year plan for funding and 2024 will be the earliest opportunity for funding for this project.

Mayor Bill Cole asked for a 50-year outlook on the benefits of these projects. Wade Salyards said he feels this would be over capacity in 50 years but it is difficult to predict.

Commissioner Denis Pitman noted that no left turn access to Metra Park would be available to vehicles traveling down Main Street from north heading south.

Councilman Ewalt commented on the amount traffic flow and delays. He said this plan is not adding additional lanes north bound but taking away a left turn phase from the intersection. Yuri Merezczak said this is due to concerns with more traffic on Aronson. He said a new traffic signal would be installed. Councilman Ewalt replied this would slow traffic. Mr. Merezczak said signals would be coordinated to allow traffic to progress. Councilman Ewalt asked what percentage of truck traffic is making the left hand turn movement. Mr. Merezczak stated truck traffic is 5% of that specific movement. He noted the study has considered the freight corridor. Councilman Ewalt asked about having a double turn lane and a green arrow only. Andy Daleiden said they tested this as a conventional intersection and it did not perform. He continued and explained the advantages of signalization at Aronson.

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Councilman Ewalt asked if a boulevard walk could be installed instead of sidewalk. Comment was made that the Transportation Advisory Committee suggested building sidewalks where there will be new or rebuilt sidewalks, especially along Main Street and Aronson Avenue to provide separation for snow storage. Councilman Ewalt voiced safety concerns for those that use the bus system. Mayor Cole commented on the pedestrian-bike experience along a busy thoroughfare.

Planning Board President Darell Tunncliff: asked if they expect the demographics to change due to the extended timeline. Wade Salyards said they have forecasted to year 2040. Yuri Merezczak said there are several factors and surrounding projects must be taken into account. Initially the two projects will make an improvement. Normal growth patterns are taken into consideration.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Long Range Transportation Plan: Lora Mattox stated this plan is posted online on the City of Billings website.

ADJOURNMENT:

Future Agenda Items: No items were announced.

ADJOURNMENT: 12:11 p.m.

Approved by a motion May 21, 2019

