****ATTENTION****

Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, the format of the City Council meeting will be held in a virtual videoconferencing environment. In order to honor the Right of Participation and the Right to Know in Article II, sections 8 and 9, of the Montana Constitution, the City of Billings and City Council are making every effort to meet the requirements of the open meeting laws:

- The Agenda Packet is available for viewing on the City's website at: Agenda Packet
- Councilmembers will attend the meeting via a remote location, using a virtual meeting method. City Hall and the Council Chambers will be closed during the meeting.
- The Public may view the meeting on the Community 7 TV - Channel 7 or Channel 507 – Spectrum Cable. The Public may also view online at www.comm7tv.com and click on the "Watch Live" icon. Community 7 also has links to their Facebook page and YouTube channel in which to view the meeting.
- Public comment will be taken only during the Public Comment periods as indicated on the agenda. Comments may be sent to Council via email before 3:00 PM on Monday, April 20th, at: https://ci.billings.mt.us/1538/City-Council-E-mail-Messages
- Emails received after 3:00 PM and prior to 5:00 PM, may be read during the meeting.
- The Public may call in during specific Public Comment periods at **406.237.6196**. All callers will be in a queued system and are asked to remain on hold and be patient. Calls will be taken in the order in which they are received. Callers will be restricted to 3 minutes of testimony as is customary.

Future delivery methods may be explored as best practice is learned.

Please contact Gavin Woltjer, woltjerg@billingsmt.gov, with any questions.

CITY OF BILLINGS

CITY OF BILLINGS VISION STATEMENT:

"THE MAGIC CITY: A DIVERSE, WELCOMING COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE PROSPER AND BUSINESS SUCCEEDS."

WORK SESSION AGENDA

Council Chambers are Closed. The meeting will be held remotely via virtual meeting room. Please see coversheet for details and instructions for viewing and participation.

April 20, 2020 **5:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Cole

1. **COVID-19 Update by Unified Incident Command (UIC)**
   - Public Comment

2. **Project ReCode Update**
   (Presented by Nicole Cromwell, Zoning Coordinator and Wyeth Friday, Planning Director)
   - Public Comment

3. **Downtown District Extension and Project Opportunity: N. 29th and N. 30th Two Way Street Conversion**
   (Presented by Debi Meling, City Engineer; Andy Zoeller, Finance Director and Katy Easton, Downtown Billings Alliance)
   - Public Comment

4. **Aviation and Transit Operations during Covid-19 Update**
   (Presented by Kevin Ploehn, Aviation and Transit Director)
   - Public Comment

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

PUBLIC COMMENT on "NON-AGENDA ITEMS". Speaker Sign-in required. (*Restricted to ONLY items not on this printed agenda. Comments are limited to 3 minutes or as set by the Mayor. Please sign the roster at the cart located at the back of the Council chambers or at the podium.)*

ADJOURN:

Note:

- This meeting is an “informal” meeting of the City Council. The content of the Agenda is subject to change at the meeting.
- In the event there is a Closed Executive Session at the end of a Work Session, the sole purpose is to discuss litigation strategy. The other parties to the case(s) discussed are not public bodies or associations as described in Section 2-3-203(1) and (2), MCA. The meeting is closed, as allowed by Section 2-3-203(4)(a), MCA, “to discuss a strategy to be followed with respect to litigation when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the litigating position” of the City of Billings.
- Council meetings may be viewed at any time by accessing Community 7 Television online at www.comm7tv.com and clicking on archived programs.

Council Work Session **2.**

Meeting Date: 04/20/2020

TITLE: Project Re: Code Update

Department: Planning & Community Services

Presentation: Yes

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT

Project Re: Code, first initiated in 2017, has been a collective effort of over 32 volunteers serving on the project Steering Committee and/or Working Groups, logging more than 6,300 hours of review and work on the draft code. Three VISTA members have put in over 6,100 hours since January 2018. The City Council was last updated on the zoning code at its January 6 and January 21 Work Sessions, where many topics and specific areas of the draft code were reviewed.

At the time of the January Work Sessions, staff discussed a preliminary Public Review schedule for public hearings before the Zoning Commission and City Council for March and April. Between some delays in the complete draft code being ready for review in late February and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, staff is waiting to reset a public hearing schedule. Given the complexity and significance of this code change, staff believes reliance only on virtual meetings is not sufficient opportunity for public input. Written comments are always acceptable, but some in-person engagement is vital to achieving the best code for the City.

The big news for the Work Session is all of the major code Public Review drafts are now posted on-line at https://project-recode.com/code-outline. This public posting and the delay in the public meeting process will give the Council and interested citizens an unprecedented opportunity to review, comment and discuss the code prior to any future public hearings.

Project Re: Code Website Resources

Planning staff will re-introduce the Project Re: Code webpages at the Council Work Session. Here are a few items to be aware of as Council reviews the final draft code:

- Staff encourages the Council to review the code “as a whole” since all of the sections work together to make sense of the zoning across the City. Some sections appear to stand alone but all sections are inter-connected and adjustments must be carefully considered since changes to one part of the code will necessarily and inevitably effect other code sections.
- As part of the review, it is important to look back to the Guiding Principles adopted by the Project Re: Code Steering Committee in January 2018 (attached). The Guiding Principles were intended to help the Working Groups, staff and the consultant team through the drafting, review and revision process that ensued. We can now step back and see how we have effectively implemented and held true to these Guiding Principles.
- Familiarize yourself with the elements of the Project Re: Code webpage.
    - Home Page:
        - About
        - Links to Maps
        - Links to Fact Sheets
        - Links to Working Groups

    - Time Line
    - Sign up for Updates
    - Link to Billings Pattern Guide
- Project Page:
    - Brief Description
    - Links to Documents
    - Links to Map
- Code Outline Page:
    - Code Outline for City and County Code Sections 27-100 through 27-1800

Outreach and Education Efforts
Planning staff, prior to the Stay-At-Home directive, was presenting educational information on the new code to interest groups, neighborhood task forces and was engaged with the development community on the proposed new code. This contact has continued online, via email and phone, and has been especially active with the development community. Planning staff has already heard from more than 2 dozen land owners, developers, real estate businesses, marketers and professional consultants about development plans in the works for Billings and Yellowstone County based on the proposed zoning code. Staff is also in contact with property owners as they understand the new zoning districts and the options it will give them for their existing land uses and future plans for their property.

Stakeholders and citizens across the community are learning the new code will help improve the quality of in fill development as well as provide the type of flexibility needed for new city neighborhoods from the Heights to the Westend and the Southwest Corridor. The new administrative processes will encourage and support the engagement of neighbors and interested citizens in the places where Billings is growing and changing.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff encourages the City Council in the upcoming weeks to review the code “as a whole” since all of the sections work together to make sense of the zoning across the City. Some sections appear to stand alone, but all sections are inter-connected. Adjustments must be carefully considered since changes to one part of the code will necessarily and inevitably effect other code sections.

Attachments

Project Re: Code Progress Chart
Re: Code Guiding Principals

PROJECT RE:CODE
PROGRESS REPORT

WWW.PROJECT-RECODE.COM

CODE PROGRESS APRIL 2020

32 Volunteer Steering Committee/Working Group Members

2

Over 2 years of effort with over **90 working group and public meetings**

6,300+ volunteer hours since August 2017

Project Re:Code

Billings I Yellowstone County

Mission Statement – To create a zoning code that allows for efficient and intelligent growth while meeting the goals of the community today and into tomorrow. As the Steering Committee, working groups, City & County staff review, revise and draft new zoning regulations, we will adhere to the following Guiding Principles:

- **CLARIFY AND SIMPLIFY** - All new regulations will be written in Plain English to maximize readers' ability to find what they need, understand what they find, and use what they find to meet their needs.
- **REGULATE WHAT MATTERS** - The regulations will have a clear alignment with community goals today while allowing for changing goals in the future.
- **PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF OWNERS AND RESIDENTS** - The regulations will recognize and incorporate clear and well defined processes that uphold property rights and access to housing choices.
- **PREVENT CONFLICTS** - The regulations will be internally consistent and will not create direct or un-reconcilable conflicts.
- **OPTIONS AND CONTEXT** - The regulations will provide a range of site development options with clear criteria and guidelines for allowing alternatives to future development as well as changes to existing neighborhoods as the community's goals change.
- **MAINTAIN WHAT WE CARE ABOUT** - The regulations will encourage stability of existing neighborhoods while allowing for changes over time.
- **FILL THE VOID** – The regulations will consider and include land uses and combinations of land uses that have been overlooked or not considered in the current code and methods for accommodating new use options.
- **PROSPERITY** – The regulations will serve to support the community's need and desire to remain regionally competitive in the recruitment of businesses, expansion of existing business, and private investment in the economy, all to promote job creation.

Council Work Session **3.**

Meeting Date: 04/20/2020

TITLE: Downtown TIF Extension Project: N. 29th and N. 30th Two Way Street Conversion

Department: Public Works

Presentation: Yes

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT

The City has been considering the conversion of the one way streets in downtown Billings to two way streets. In 2019, the City hired a consultant to study the effects of the conversion as well as providing cost estimates for the work. There is an opportunity to fund the conversion of one of the projects that was studied, N. 29th and N. 30th, through bonding a project through the Downtown TIF. City staff will present the bonding plan and how it will affect the district, the process required to move the project forward, the design issues, and the impacts to Downtown Billings. Stimulating Downtown Revitalization is one of the City Council's adopted 2020 Priorities, which also includes implementing the Downtown Traffic Study's one-way to two-way street conversion plan. The council will be asked to approve three items related to this project in May and June. The council action items are a modification to the Long Range Transportation Plan, a construction bid award, and a bond sale to fund the road conversion project and extend the life of the Downtown TIF District.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is being provided to the City Council for informational purposes and for the Council to provide staff with direction to bring items back for action at later business meetings.

Attachments

Information Summary

Council Work Session Presentation

Mayor and City Council Informational Summary

Extending Life of Downtown Urban Renewal District Brings Significant Opportunity

Overview

City staff and Downtown Billings Partnership staff have been researching the City's opportunity to extend the life of the Downtown Urban Renewal District (URD) to maximize the benefits to the City and community. Further detail on this District life extension is outlined later in this summary, but the key to extend the District's life is to sell bonds for a project within the Downtown URD before July 1, 2020 to meet the statutory requirements of a District extension. Stimulating Downtown Revitalization is one of the City Council's adopted 2020 Priorities, which also includes implementing the Downtown Traffic Study's one-way to two-way street conversion plan. This prompted staff to review the recently completed Downtown Area Traffic and Circulation Study findings to select a viable and beneficial project that could be designed, bonded and constructed in time to meet the District extension requirements.

The staff selected one-way to two-way street conversion projects for North 29th Street and North 30th Street between 6th Avenue North and Montana Avenue, an existing couplet in downtown Billings identified in the Downtown Area Traffic and Circulation Study. Since the Montana Department of Transportation also identifies North 29th Street and North 30th Street as Urban Routes, action by the Montana Transportation Commission is required to approve City construction on these roadways. To complete this approval at the State level, the Billings Metropolitan Planning Organization must amend its Billings Long Range Transportation Plan to ensure these roadway projects are properly identified in the Plan.

The wheels are already turning to get these many steps done through City Finance, Downtown Billings Partnership, City Engineering, City-County Planning and MDT. The following bullets provide more detail on the opportunities and challenges involved in the City Council completing this process.

- **Downtown Urban Renewal District Life Extension**

Currently, the Tax Increment revenue within the Downtown URD is around $3 million dollars per year. This money is used to pay for projects that benefit the public. If the District life is not extended to the full length allowed under statue, the City of Billings

will lose an opportunity to invest an additional $15 million into our downtown core. This is a very conservative estimate assuming no growth over the 19 remaining years in the District with the extension. City Finance staff is confident the amount of investment the community would forego if it did not extend the District's life is far greater than $15 million dollars, but staff is hesitant to make any specific assumption as to what that amount may actually be.

Investments in our Downtown that boost our tax base as a community are likely to have some of the best Returns on Investment when compared to other parts of our community. The taxable value per acre in our downtown core is greater than nearly any other area of the City, so the importance of supporting and facilitating downtown development and redevelopment is critical to the entire economic stability of the community.

- **District Bonding to Extend Life Funds North 29th Street and North 30th Street 2-way Conversions**

The City Council would need to take action to approve a bond sale before June 30, 2020, to ensure the Downtown URD life extension would occur. Staff has begun the initial work to complete this process by working on design, project cost estimates and the bonding financing process to bring the process to City Council in time this spring. After bringing this overall package of steps to the City Council Work Session on April 20, and if Council provides direction to complete the effort, staff will set a schedule and prepare the materials for Council action in June.

One-way to Two-Way Street Conversion Benefits

Since the Downtown Area Traffic and Circulation Study was completed in 2019, the DBP staff has completed research on the benefits of converting downtown one-way streets to two-way streets. According to a study of street conversions by Clemson University, two-way streets offer important advantages in commercial corridors:

- They facilitate an appropriate amount of traffic
- Provide a safe environment for pedestrians
- Support a good location for small business
- Property values tend to rise at a faster rate on two-way streets than one-way streets

It is on these slower paced, two-way commercial streets that pedestrian shoppers, diners, and downtown visitors feel the safest and most comfortable.

- **Design of North 29th Street and North 30th Street 2-way Conversions**

Given the time constraints of completing this multi-part process, City Engineering is moving ahead to design the street conversion projects, develop costs and be prepared to use City approved bonding (extending the life of the District) to build the projects.

The Downtown Area Traffic and Circulation Study investigated a number of projects within the Downtown and determined their feasibility in relation to one another. The projects analyzed included eliminating travel lanes, closing certain streets, converting the east-west streets to two-way traffic, and converting the north-south streets to two-way traffic. When the opportunity to implement one of the alternatives was discussed, it was determined the best project to start with is the conversion of N. 29th and N. 30th to two way streets between Montana Avenue and 6th St North. The one-way to two-way conversion of 29th and 30th Streets moves toward a consistent network of two-way streets within downtown Billings, increasing accessibility for all users. The anticipated cost of the conversion is $1.9 million.

- **Montana Department of Transportation Jurisdiction of North 29th Street and North 30th Street Requires Billings Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment and Highway Commission Action**

Since MDT identifies North 29th and North 30th as Urban Routes, it takes an action by the Montana Transportation Commission to approve City construction work on those roadways. To receive approval from the Commission, the Billings MPO must amend its 2018 Billings Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to properly identify these two roadway projects in the Plan. To amend the LRTP, MPO staff will follow its standard process for plan updates or adoptions, bringing the amendment to the City Council, Yellowstone County Board of Planning, Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners and, ultimately, the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) for local approval of the amendment. The Transportation Commission would then take action at its June 25 Meeting. Communication between MPO staff and MDT is ongoing and both agencies are clear and supportive of the process.

Extending Life of Downtown Urban Renewal District Brings Opportunity:

North 29th & 30th Streets Two-Way Conversion

City Council Meeting

April 20th, 2020

TIF District Extension

- **Process**
  - Extend District Life by Bonding Project
  - Bond by June 30, 2020
- **Project Options**
  - Two-Way Street Conversion Selected
  - 29th & 30th Two-Way Conversion Project

District Life Timeline

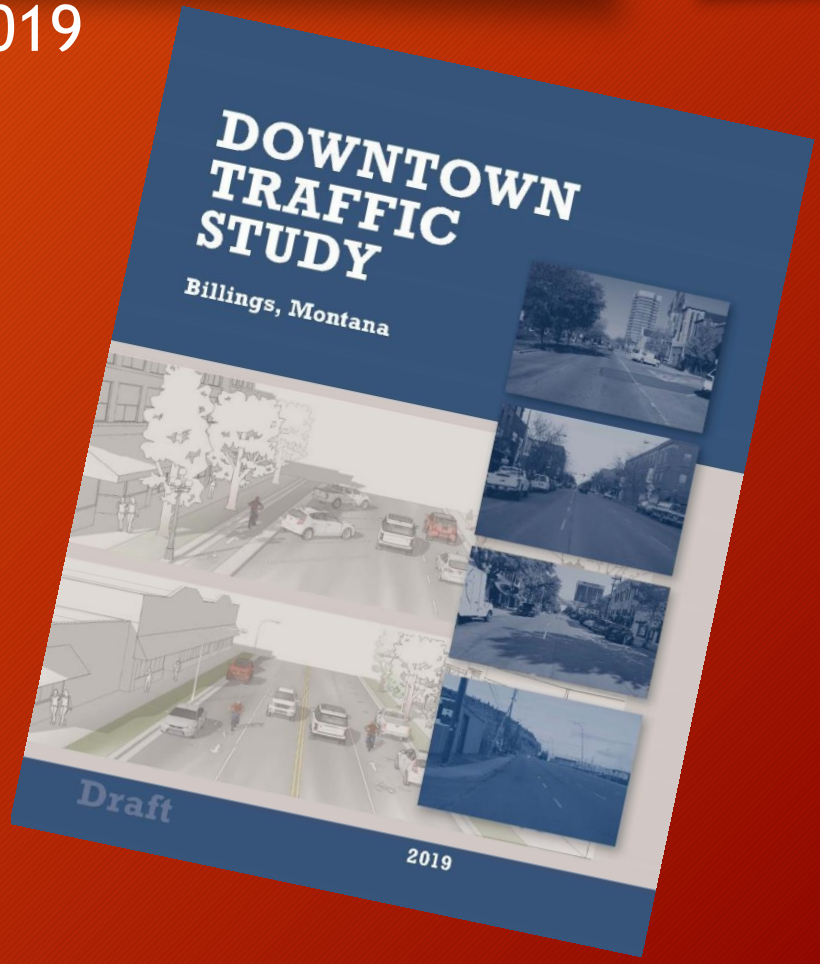
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17 -33	34	35	36	37	38	39
Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022-2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044
Initial Life of a District																							
Empire Bonds/Current District Life																							
Potential Life of the District																							

Two-Way Street Conversion Benefits

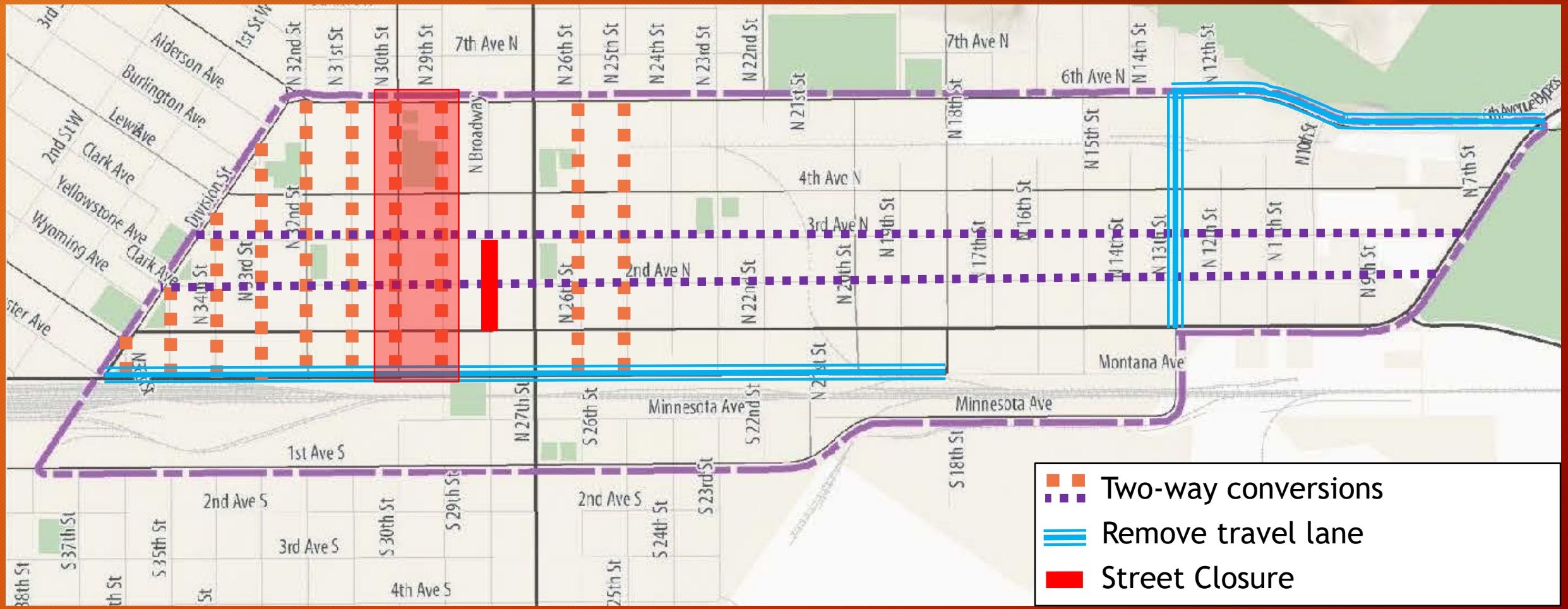
- **Two-way streets offer important advantages in commercial corridors:**
  - They facilitate an appropriate amount of traffic
  - Provide a safe environment for pedestrians
  - Support a good location for small business
  - Property values tend to rise at a faster rate on two-way streets than one-way streets
  - It is on these slower paced, two-way commercial streets that pedestrian shoppers, diners, and downtown visitors feel the safest and most comfortable.

Downtown Traffic Study recap

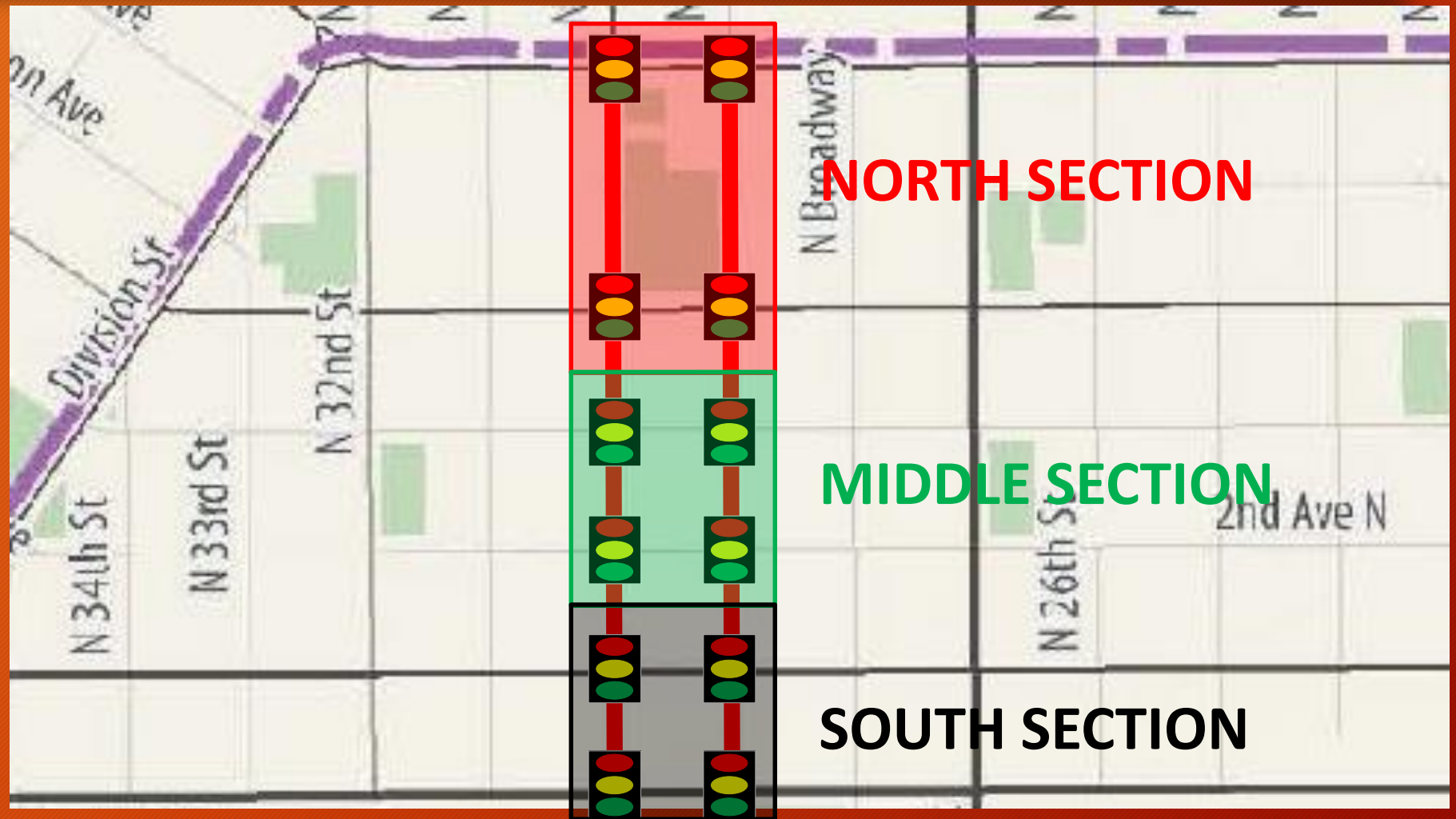
- Published and Presented to Council in Sept. 2019
- City Council Goal Adopted March 2020
- Analyzed 6 alternatives
  - N/S Two-way Conversions
  - E/W Two-way Conversions
  - 6th Avenue North lane reduction
  - Montana Avenue lane reduction
  - N. 13th Street lane reduction
  - Broadway closure to traffic
- All projects feasible singly or overlapped
- Allows us to move quickly as funding becomes available



DTS Alternatives



29th/30th Project Limits



North Section Comments

- City owned & operated
- Old signal poles – complete reconstruction needed
- Parking impacts – particularly at Lincoln Center
  - 29th: Added one spot on west side
  - 30th: 5 on east side (at Lincoln Ctr), 1 on west side

North Section Comments

Middle Section Comments

- City owned & Operated
- New Signals, easy conversion
  - Rebuilt in 2010
  - Planned for future conversions
- Parking impacts
  - 29th: No impact
  - 30th: 4 lost on west side, one gained on east side

South Section Comments

- MDT Involvement
  - Montana Avenue
  - 1st Avenue North
  - Design review/system impacts
  - Coordination is underway (Trans. Plan Amendment and Commission process)
- New signals
  - Rebuilt last year
  - No plans for conversion
- Minimal parking impacts
  - 29th: Two lost on east side, but one gained on west side
  - 30th: No impact

Next Steps

- Design review under way for MDT signals
- Design completed in May provides estimate for District bonding
- Bring Trans. Plan Amendment through local process
- Prepare bonding process for action in June
- Open Bids on June 9th and Award June 22nd
- Receive MT Transportation Commission approval in June
- Long lead-time on signal poles/equipment, 4+ months from award
- Construction not likely until Spring 2021
- Allows us to schedule with 2021 Chip Seal

QUESTIONS?

Council Work Session **4.**

Meeting Date: 04/20/2020

TITLE: Update of Aviation and Transit Operations during COVID-9

Department: Airport

Presentation: Yes

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT

Presentation will reflect the operations at the Airport and MET and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION

No recommendation needed. Informational only.

Attachments

A&T Operations Impacts

AVIATION & TRANSIT DEPARTMENT

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS COVID-19

APRIL 2020

BIL

BILLINGS LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

RECAP INDUSTRY IMPACTS

- 95% Reduction in Traffic
- Airlines and Airports, and Other Travel Industries Have Decimated Revenues

LAYOFFS

DELTA
35K

AMERICAN
17.5K

UNITED
STILL
LOOKING AT

WHEN WILL THINGS RETURN TO NORMAL?

EARLIEST - MID 2021

PROBABLY LONGER

WHY SO LONG?

- Fear
- Social Distancing/Isolation
- Recession

FINANCIALLY, AIRLINES ARE IN TROUBLE.

WILL BE A SMALLER INDUSTRY WHEN IT DOES RECOVER.

FINANCIALLY, OUR AIRPORT IS LOOKING AT AN ANNUAL REVENUE SHORTFALL OF 4 – 5 MILLION.

CONCESSIONS AND AIRLINE REVENUES MOSTLY.

FEDERAL HELP FROM CARES ACT

$12.7 MILLION

How has Airport Shed Costs:

- Moved Two Airport Police Officers to Transit
- Have Custodial Staff Working at MET Facilities
- No Seasonal Help - All In House Staff
- Very Little Capital Unless Supported by Grant Funds

Continuing Challenges - Social Changes:

- More Video Teleconferences
- Less Flights
- Fares Could Rise
- Recession - Less Discretionary Funds for Travel
- Possible Resurgence of COVID-19 in Six to Eight Months

MET TRANSIT

MARCH RIDERSHIP DOWN 31%

—

MAJORITY STUDENTS

STILL HAVE 600 TO 700 PASSENGERS/DAY

–

TRANSIT DEPENDENTS

FARE IMPACT AT $48,000 FOR APRIL

–

FREE FARES WILL CONTINUE INTO MAY

FARES ONLY ACCOUNT FOR 10% OF REVENUES

BALANCE OF REVENUES STILL IN PLACE

—

GRANT AND TAX REVENUES

EXISTING 5303 FUNDS GO FROM 50/50 TO 80/20 FOR COVID-19 RELATED ITEMS

ADDITIONALLY, MET RECEIVED $5.3 MILLION FROM CARES ACT

- Can be Used 100% for Operating, or
- Can be Used for Bus Purchases
- Does Not Expire

- Using to Cover Two Airport Police Officers Operating at Transfer Centers, and
- Airport Custodian Staff Cleaning MET Facilities

MET
IS FINANCIALLY SOLID
FOR
NEXT FEW YEARS

QUESTIONS