



APPROVED October 26, 2009

**CITY OF ALBANY
PLANNING COMMISSION**
City Hall Council Chambers, 333 Broadalbin Street
Monday, July 27, 2009
5:15 p.m.

MINUTES

Planning Commissioners present: David Faller, Lolly Gibbs, Cordell Post, Dala Rouse, Michael Styler, and Larry Tomlin

Planning Commissioners absent: Paul Davis, Wayne Rackham and Scott Whitney

Staff present: Planning Manager Don Donovan, Transportation Systems Analyst Ron Irish, Civil Engineer III, P.E. Jeni Richardson and Administrative Assistant I Sheena Dodson

Others present:

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Faller called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF THE December 1, 2008, MINUTES

Commissioner Styler moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Rouse seconded the motion, which **passed** 5:0.

STAFF PRESENTATION ON THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN:

Chair Faller introduced Civil Engineer Jeni Richardson. Richardson handed out a notebook with the draft of the Transportation System Plan (TSP). She commented that a joint work session with City Council would take place in a month. She highlighted key information from the draft TSP. She commented that some of the maps and figures that are on 8x11 in the notebook may be too small to read and that it may be easier to view online or to print larger sizes from the website. She said that she and Transportation Analyst Ron Irish would be willing to meet with any Planning Commissioner unable to attend the joint session in August in order to share their comments at the meeting.

Chair Faller and Commissioner Gibbs stated that they would not be able to be at the joint meeting in August.

Richardson stated that the current TSP was adopted in 1997 with a Horizon Year of 2015. It was the first city wide transportation plan and has been an effective document to guide development. Irish noted that several developments had come to them in the past few years with problems and fixes that were identified in the TSP and other developments had capacity problems that couldn't be fixed. Richardson continued saying these were things that caused the need for an update to the TSP.

Richardson said that in 2006, Public Works embarked on the development of a new TSP with a horizon year of 2030. The City hired Kittelson and Associates and used Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) for modeling expertise and general guidance. Throughout the planning process, the City has worked with City Council and the public for input through open houses, a project web page, the media and various meetings.

Richardson noted that the cover photo on the draft TSP does not have to be the final product and that alternate photos from the PC or the public are welcome. The next step would be to ask questions at the joint work session with Council on August 27, 2009. Following that step they would distribute the TSP to the public and other agencies for comments and hold a public hearing.

Richardson directed the Commissioners to page ii, the table of contents, there are 8 sections that cover everything in the TSP. She described the requirements for developing a TSP, the public involvement process, the study area and the historic growth. Byrne stated that a lot of the TSP work including the vision and goals will be translated to the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Post arrived 5:29 p.m.

Richardson directed the PC to page 12 which is the inventory of existing road, pedestrian, transit, rail, airport and other items that are required to look at for TSP.

Irish commented that Figure 4-1, on page 28, is a picture of different signalized intersections and how they operate today. Figure 4-2 shows signals under ODOT jurisdiction. ODOT's performance standard uses volume-to-capacity ratios. ODOT regulations are stricter than the City's which is Level of Service (LOS) D. All the intersections listed meet the City's standards but three do not meet ODOT's standards; OR 99E and Queen Avenue, 1st Street and Lyons, Waverly and Highway 20. Faller asked Irish to explain in detail one of the intersections. Irish explained the calculations for the intersection on Waverly and Highway 20. Gibbs asked if pedestrian counts were incorporated into the intersections operations analysis. Irish explained that pedestrian count information is not available. Intersection operation analysis results do, however, assume pedestrian activity at a level that roughly corresponds to current levels of pedestrian activity. He explained with pedestrians there are more variables, such as the weather and season. Traffic only changes about 10 percent on weather, schools, etc. Gibbs expressed that pedestrian counts should be included as people are looking for alternate transportation.

Rouse asked if having intersections where a pedestrian can push a button and change the signal cause more problems for vehicles. Irish said it depended on the type of intersection and how the pedestrian signal is activated. For instance the intersection at Highway 20 and Waverly the pedestrian activation occurs during the same point where the through volume gets a green light, and as long as the through volume is getting enough green time to allow the pedestrians to cross there is little impact from the pedestrians crossing. On the other hand, at the intersection of 14th and Geary there is a situation when the pedestrian phase is only activated when the pedestrian hits the button. Normally there is not enough vehicles there to create green time for the pedestrians to go. He gave an example if a pedestrian was crossing Geary on the Safeway side to the apartment complexes on the westside; normally there is not a pedestrian phase unless someone causes it because it conflicts with the westbound left turn phase. He said that about 10 percent of all pedestrian accidents that happen in crosswalks occur at that location. The drivers were not yielding to pedestrians. One of the choices the City had was to make it a pedestrian only phase that would have caused volume-to-capacity (v/c) problems. Instead of doing that the City put in a lead pedestrian interval. This allows all the vehicles to be held up for 5 seconds before the green light. The pedestrian has been given the priority. It seems to not have the same affect on the v/c as if the City had given the signal a pedestrian-only phase.

Irish said the City will be switching out the “do not walk” signal to eventually a countdown head. Gibbs asked if countdown will be vocal. Irish said it is undecided. They may be adding some American with Disabilities Act (ADA) components to the signals.

Irish explained that at intersection 29 (Figure 4-2), the black tag shows LOS equals C. LOS is a delay standard, indicating the average delay for the drivers. LOS is divided into categories; A, B, C, D, E and F. LOS A equals free flow conditions and F equals a gridlock of traffic. The City standard currently is LOS D. He explained that generally when the v/c goes up the LOS does too but it cannot be said that a given v/c will equal a particular LOS.

Irish explained that the little black numbers and arrows going around intersection 29 are the volumes of the individual movements. At the top there are 3 numbers, 55, 345, and 110. There is a south bound left that says 110. There is a combined right and through arrow, where the through movement is 345 and the number on the outside is 55 for the right turn. These are peak volumes for that particular movement and give an idea if there is a shared lane or not. The weekday peak hour is pm peak and most intersections it falls between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. It usually centers around the morning and evening commute of an average 8 to 5 person going to or from work. There are some roads that have a higher am peak, such as Highway 20 and North Albany Road. Most intersections in the city are designed around the pm peak.

Irish pointed out on page 31, table 4-3, these are all intersections on the highway system. These are locations based on the ODOT accident database. The SPIS score is an ODOT ranking that corresponds with the severity of the problem on that corridor. The higher the SPIS score, the worse it is. The column with statewide ranking is how it ranks against every other corridor in the state. When table 4-3 came out it was based on 2004 data, which is what was available in 2006. At that time the worst section was Highway 99E (Pacific) and Hill Street, currently the worse one now is Pacific and Geary Street, which was the number 1 spot in the entire state but now has dropped to the number 3 spot.

Irish explained that the City tracks accidents on a weekly basis.

The accidents seem to cluster on the highway system as there are higher volumes of traffic and lots of driveways that increase the risks. This does not mean the City streets are safer. Gibbs asked about North Albany and Springhill that are under Benton County’s jurisdiction. Irish explained that the streets are in the City limits but under Benton and ODOT jurisdiction. He stated that at the Hwy 20 intersections with Springhill and North Albany Road, the accident rate was at the lower end of the crash rate segments. Data is available in the tech memo 3.

Tomlin asked if on page 30, Table 4-1 the total crash numbers were those of the City or ODOT numbers. Irish replied that whichever agency files a crash report it gets transferred to ODOT database. These numbers are those totals that have been submitted from City, County, and State police that ODOT has compiled. They are only the reported accidents; accidents that are not filed are usually low in threshold of damage.

Rouse asked if the data was only from 2003, and if the City was already that far behind. Irish explained that the existing condition data was based on counts from 2004. Some accident data is based on what was available to staff. Rouse asked if we were adopting it into the Comprehensive Plan when the data was already 5 years old. Irish explained that staff is using it in the TSP as a starting point to make projections to build where the City wants to go for the 2030 projections. He said that the 2009 SPIS data from ODOT came out last week and will be added to a table to the final document, but they cannot substitute it for the 2004 data because all the other tables are based on 2004 data.

Rouse asked about the population increase from 2004-2009 and if there were more people if it equaled more accidents. Irish said that in the past 10 years of looking at the accident data, accidents have ranged a consistent 500 to 600 for that period. One thing to note is that reporting has changed and the state wide accident report has been declining per capita. As population increase and the accident rate decrease the overall number of crashes per year has remained fairly consistent. Rouse commented that if we are not getting input from the police then it is not the same data. Irish said that the police department changed in 2005-06. Richardson emphasized that it was a snap shot in time when looking at existing conditions. When staff started projecting forward into the year 2030 they were able to get new counts and revalidate the base year model to 2006. Irish explained that it takes a long time to collect the data and build a traffic model.

Irish directed the PC to section 5 and forecast traffic conditions. The forecast model applied future land use and population to the calibrated model with existing land use and traffic volume. He commented that the planners were helpful in generating growth estimates and land use patterns. He said those are the projections that the future year model is based on. It is a combination of taking the existing traffic volumes and applying changes to land use where development will happen and changes to residential, commercial, employment, etc will occur.

Irish noted that staff had some choices to make, whether to follow precisely the current Comprehensive plan or to anticipate some changes. Staff chose to anticipate some changes outlined in table 5-3, page 37. One of the changes they looked at was the size of the regional commercial zoning district north of Knox Butte Road and west of Expo Parkway. Staff expanded the regional commercial site because it would not make sense to have a major collector go through residential land and be separated from the commercial site by residential land.

The second change was in the east I-5 area to include a hospital site or medical facility that would be located north of Highway 20 and east of Goldfish Farm Road. It was zoned for single family residential and the assumption is for office professional employment instead. The third change was to the corridor south where areas zoned urban residential reserve were assumed to be future light industrial and mixed use commercial zoning according to the Oak Creek plan. The Oak Creek plan is not adopted yet.

If these assumptions are correct it will make the model more accurate. Normally these zone changes would be subjected to a Transportation Planning Rule (TPR) analysis when submitted for future consideration. This is what the YMCA and the Ropp property had to do to show that the transportation system could accommodate the zone changes, as the changes were not anticipated in the 1997 TSP. Irish explained that the Ropp property is the now the Smartcenters site. By having the new TSP assume these zone changes, there will not be a need for a TPR analysis in the future.

Rouse asked to identify the difference between OR 99E/ Burkhart to Geary Street and Hwy 20/ Burkhart Street to Geary Street on page 38. Irish explained that these are the descriptions used for the cross roads at Geary and the Couplet. These links could have capacity problems if the City does nothing to them before the year 2030.

Irish continued explaining a distinction between the demand-to-capacity ratios for the roadway segments (Figure 5-2) and the volume-to-capacity ratios that were shown for the intersection data. They are different things. The volume-to-capacity ratio for intersections is based on the number of cars that can fit through an intersection. Demand-to-capacity ratio for segments is harder to calculate. The theoretical capacity for segments is taken from a table that lists capacity of arterial roads of a particular characteristic; driveway frequency, speed limit, etc. The same theoretical capacity can describe a wide variety of roads and is not nearly as precise as intersection capacity. The information in Figure 5-2 was used as a first cut to identify where there might be a problem. For any segment with a demand to capacity

higher than 0.9, staff looked at the intersections and how they operated to see if there was a problem. In some cases an intersection improvement fixed the problem and in others, additional segment capacity was required.

Irish directed the PC to chapter 6, page 44, Table 6, identifying modeled transportation alternatives. Staff selected three or four major improvements and modeled them one at a time to see the effect on the overall transportation network. Two new bridges crossing over the Willamette River in North Albany, one of them inside the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and one outside were modeled to see how they affected the street system. A crossing over to I-5 at 21st Avenue and a new interchange at Seven Mile Lane were also modeled. Staff saw that the Seven Mile Lane interchange and the I-5 crossing at 21st didn't have a significant impact on the street system. Staff found that the two bridge alternatives had a large impact on the street system; although widely divergent impacts from each other. Neither of the bridge models made it in the project list of the TSP. The City was told by ODOT that a new bridge couldn't be included for financial reasons. The TSP will include a project that will do a study on how to deal with the problems on Highway 20. The description of other modeled transportation improvement alternatives are in Table 6-1.

Richardson commented that alternative transportation facilities for bikes and pedestrians need to be safe, comfortable and convenient. They need to be addressed with urban upgrade and new road projects. In the alternatives chapter, types of pedestrian facilities looked at included sidewalks, crossings and esplanades. For bike alternatives staff looked at bike lanes, boulevards, sharrows (where the road is identified as being a shared lane for cars and bikes), and signage to guide the bicyclist. Multi-use trail system alternatives are also described.

Richardson said the transit plan will be a separate grant-funded project. The TSP includes a set of strategies important for the transit plan development and identifies pedestrian access issues near existing transit shelters and transit stops.

Richardson directed the PC to page 64 where a timeframe for project implementation is described. The first 10 years is divided into two phases; near term which is 0 to 5 years and mid-term which is 5 to 10 years. Irish said that staff identified the short term and midterm for projects likely to be initiated and funded by the City. This was to help City Council prioritize and schedule work. There are several projects that are development driven and shown as long term projects. It is possible that a long term project becomes a priority and occurs in the first 10-year period.

Rouse asked if Airport Road was still proposed to be closed. Irish replied that Figure 7-1, page 69, shows the planned auto improvements. There are circles around the highway interchanges where we don't know the ultimate design of the 2030 improvements. The design of the two I-5 interchanges, which includes the Airport Road intersection, is dependent on an ODOT study that is currently underway. ODOT finished a corridor study of I-5 in 2008. Due to the unknown impact of the study staff was instructed by ODOT to draw circles around the study area.

Rouse asked why the Century Drive improvements were shown. Irish said the relocation of Century Drive is also influenced to some degree on the design of the Knox Butte interchange, but that this relocation has to occur regardless of the interchange design when the regional commercial site develops.

Styler asked if ODOT had plans to finish their master plan on the Santiam and Pacific Highway Couplet. Irish replied that when the project was in the design stage an overpass or interchange was looked at but ended up being too costly. ODOT settled on the concept of the street design that is there today. There are a few projects in the TSP that are located along that corridor and involve minor tweaks to intersections. There is a project in the TSP that will extend Oak Street north of 9th and connect it to Pacific. He explained that there is also a safety project that ODOT has out to bid that will make some changes to

Pacific from Geary to Madison to attempt to address some of the accident problems at that location. The safety changes are to eliminate crossing movements.

Rouse asked why there was not a project for a signal at Salem Avenue and Geary Street. Irish replied that this intersection does not meet safety warrants today and it does not meet volume warrants in 2030. It may be a good idea to keep an eye on this intersection as growth occurs along Salem Avenue. The advantage of having a possible intersection project in the TSP is that it would provide an opportunity to fund, at least a portion of it, through SDC funds based on a growth component.

Irish pointed to Figure 7-4, page 74, a function classification map that breaks streets into collectors and arterials, both major and minor. He noted that there were a few small changes from the current function classification map. In four out of the five changes the road was downgraded slightly. Irish said Oak Street was bumped up to minor collector.

Irish noted that Figure 7-5 on page 79 is a map identifying locations of bicycle and pedestrian projects in the plan following the same concept shown for auto improvements. Richardson said that both improvement maps show the project number associated with the project tables and project information in Appendix E.

Styler asked if there were any studies of bicycle accidents for intersections. Irish replied that tech memo three had a safety analysis with crash rates by type, which highlighted where they were and the severity. Rouse commented that there seems to be a lot on Geary Street between 9th Avenue and 14th Avenue. Irish said they tend to occur more frequently on the busy roads and intersections. Styler commented that he has seen many on Geary and Hill with bicycles going the wrong way. Irish said statewide, the odds are 50/50 for fault but within Albany there is an identified need for bicyclist education and enforcement.

Irish pointed to page 81, and said that Council wants to make sure that the policies and decisions that come out of the TSP are implemented in the Development Code (DC). He noted that the TSP is adopted as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan. He commented that the PC has had Land Use decisions brought before them where the DC criteria does not conform to the Comprehensive Plan. On the bottom of page 81 is a short list of things that the Council wants to consider for inclusion in the DC.

Irish asked the PC to reflect on these and other transportation related updates to the DC that should be considered and discussed at the joint Work Session on August 27, 2009. Commissioners suggested that connectivity and narrow streets may also be potential topics.

Richardson said the final chapter is the Finance element, chapter 8. There is not a lot financial info that goes into a TSP and that a detailed financial analysis of revenues and expenditures will be done separately. Table 8-1 summarizes all the project costs and Table 8-2 summarizes historic revenues.

The draft TSP has been distributed to ODOT, DLCD and the CC. Staff does not want to wait too long to get out to the general public, likely sometime after the joint Work Session on August 27, 2009 (4-6 p.m.).

Rouse asked if there is a project at the Airport Road and Pacific Boulevard intersection. She has a problem with lane striping at that intersection. Irish explained if anything was to be done now it would be according to the 1997 TSP.

Faller expressed that he was impressed with the work put into the project.

ACTIVITY UPDATE

Byrne said about Council action on the recommendation the PC made to CC in regards to DC amendments was voted 5:1 at the last CC meeting. There was one nay vote to give another two weeks to read the amendments.

Besides the upcoming joint work session on the TSP there will also be a joint work session on Goal 5. The work session will be on August 18, 2009, from 4-6 pm.

There is a need to complete a Comprehensive Plan amendment, it is required by state law to complete by the end of the year. This is a joint agreement between the City and the school district. It gives the school district an opportunity to weigh in on the Comprehensive plan about their future need for school sites. Also an opportunity for the schools to look at the development review process, and see if there are any particular criteria they would like the City to look at. Hope to have the PC hearing in September, and the CC to act in November or December.

Donovan gave an update on Smartcenters. They hope to build next year. He gave an update on the Lowe's project, and a decision needs to be made by the end of November.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting of the Planning Commission is a joint work session with City Council on August 18, 2009.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair Faller adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Submitted by

Reviewed by

Signature on file

Signature on file

Sheena Dodson
Administrative Assistant I

Don Donovan
Planning Manager

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