

Transportation Commission
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 4th, 2016
7:30 a.m. – 3rd Floor Training Room #302

1. Attendance & Receipt of Minutes:

Commissioners Present: Lee Barger, Mike Fowler, Sandy Lowell, Shelley Kaup

City Council Liaisons: Mike Gamba, Kathy Trauger

City Staff: Terri Partch, City Engineer; Tanya Allen, Transportation Manager

2. Major discussion topics for the upcoming joint Council and Transportation Commission meeting (discussion regarding parking, traffic calming and circulation on Colorado, Pitkin and Cooper Streets and the reconfiguration of 27th Street and signal retiming for the upcoming 8th Street Bridge closure:

Terri announced that there is a short agenda today. We have had a number of residents come in and start to complain about increased traffic on Colorado and Pitkin. The residents are worried that when the 8th Street extension comes through they will see increased traffic and increased speeds. I think there is a fair possibility of that. We are going to set our traffic counters out this week (the first week of October) to get a baseline count before the road opens or before we completely close the bridge. I asked Matt Langhorst to help think about what we could do in terms of additional parking and potentially traffic calming. I was thinking that we could put additional parking spaces out there; we might narrow the corridor and slow people down somewhat. Matt did a layout, one that is pretty close to existing conditions, one with a two way configuration. Several residents who live off of Pitkin Avenue are concerned about the increase in traffic and they would like to see calming two lanes to take some of the increase because Colorado is one way headed southbound. I did put some thought into that. Colorado and Cooper were originally set up to be a couplet and I don't know that the couplet really ever functioned well because of the lack of a signal at 13th and you don't have a clear crossing. The one thing that it does do for those residents out there is to reduce the amount of traffic that's in front of their house with the one way configuration; I think less people really do use that road. Opening it up to two way traffic would increase the volume. The Commission in agreed.

Mike Gamba added, that when it was originally striped (Colorado), it was striped as two lanes. Terri stated she has seen/heard of people passing on the one way, around 10th/11th Streets. There were recent editorials about the lack of parking and who was taking the parking; there are concerns about parking in general. The editorial implied people were parking early, commuting somewhere and picking up in the afternoon hours. Kathryn stated she thought the Vaudeville is having an impact in that area too because they don't have their own parking. Terri added that we have tried to lay out a few different configurations to see what we could generate in terms of parking and reduce the amount of space out there to slow people down on Colorado. Mike Gamba questioned how many existing driveways are off of that, because obviously we need to not park by residential driveways. Terri stated that these are existing conditions going block to block; two way traffic from 8th to 9th a comparison of parking stalls. Matt used our current parking regulations; they are generally accepted standards

and are not anything unusual. One thing to note, in Matt's drawings, he had to lay out a 30 degree stall as opposed to a 45 degree stalls in order to make it work. In our current condition, we don't stripe the stalls at all. The idea has been that if you don't stripe them, you can fit more people in there because they will just wedge themselves in wherever they fit. It's not a perfect system, but if we were to try and stripe this in, some of our best configurations are actually with 30 degree stalls. Mike Gamba stated that his office is above the post office, and he has seen a few fender bender type accidents. Especially in the winter time with snow on the ground, he has seen a RFTA bus hit a parked truck, although there are not a lot of accidents in general. Terri stated that when the 8th Street Bridge opens on October 18th (tentatively), we will probably see a number of residents in the Council Chambers complaining about the increased traffic and increased speeds, so if there is something we could do out there in terms of either restriping and adding traffic calming, it would be a good idea to slow people down. Mike Gamba added, one thing that has been discussed is making a four way stop at 10th Street and Pitkin; a lot of kids use it. Terri agreed and said she is willing to consider it. It might be worth trying because there will be an impact to these residents. My only concern about stop signs is if people feel like they are unwarranted, and there's not really a safety issue, they will start to go through them, creating a false sense of security for pedestrians trying to cross. Kathryn questioned if we can reduce speeds on the side streets to 20 mph? Terri answered; it's very hard to enforce even 25 mph. Mike Gamba announced, he would like everyone to know a couple of years ago when we built the parking garage, it took forever to decide to make that one block of Cooper two ways (and costed \$60K), the study talked about making Colorado a two way street at that time we had a few people from that block of Cooper, between 9th and 10th Streets come in and talk negatively about the two way street. Terri stated a Pitkin Street resident came to her and stated they "see tons of speeding, tons of traffic, can we share this traffic with Colorado/split traffic to Colorado". Also, we would see a lot of political pressure to convert the street to two ways. It is a city goal to have the street pushed thru. When 8th Street comes through, it will change the flow around the downtown area significantly. 7th Street becomes more of a pedestrian way, 8th Street takes the most traffic, but our signal at 8th Street and State Highway 82 has always been a problem with the timing; people can see the backup now all the way from the bridge. We will have people peel off of 8th on to Pitkin, if they think that School's faster, they will take School Street and try to get through. Mike Gamba stated that one more stop sign on Pitkin will be warranted, maybe do it every block, at the very least 11th needs a new stop sign. Most of the time driving at peak hours, I don't really see a big problem. Diagonal parking would help slow traffic down at 30 degree stalls, tighten the streets so they are not so wide with 13 diagonal (41 feet wide, when people aren't parked on either side, it's very wide; schedule a striping for 16 foot width). We are planning to do some striping with the grand opening of the 14th Street pedestrian bridge, in the spring time. Also, more striping has some costs; maybe a permanent traffic calming solution, and or permanent medians that narrow the road, with speed humps. Mike Gamba stated we need to add a reminder to put something at 10th and Cooper and asked Terri to get an estimate from Rick from the Streets Department.

The Grand Avenue Bridge (GAB) team is trying to divert as much traffic as they can to 116; the people that do come through on the 114 will end up at 27th Street here because there is no other way to get across. We are anticipating that the roundabout at 27th and Midland will be a real problem. Terry Wilson is going to be out there on the first commuting day, that Monday to help observe first and then if he has to control the traffic at the roundabout, he will. We have been concerned about the turn restriction in place right now that keeps you from turning onto South Grand, but then we were loading the intersection at 27th and State Highway 82 and we were only getting about 7-8 vehicles through on a green light. There is no dedicated turn signal right now. CDOT acknowledges that that is a problem. They put together a plan for a dedicated left turning lane from 27th onto SH 82 and they agreed to alter the signal a little bit. Currently we have about 32 seconds to turn into the left lane. They are lowering it and trying to take time from the east-west movement to allow this; this would be a 27 second double left turn lane onto SH82, 5 seconds less. CDOT is going to put in another dedicated left turn lane

here and a split left turn for RFTA on the other side, and hope that we can take enough traffic from Midland through this intersection. They are taking a little bit of time out of the SH 82 signal to allow for a pedestrian activation. The pedestrian phase will be on the north leg of the intersection, and will happen around when RFTA gets their lights. Kathryn questioned will CDOT start their signaling changes as soon as they stripe? Terri answered, yes with striping first and then they will be working on the signal changes. We are coordinating these two signals. Jan stated she has a question regarding the pedestrian signals on Grand Avenue; can we increase the “beep and chirp” signals going up Grand? I know that is a CDOT thing. Terri stated that she will ask about that. Mike Gamba added, one thought about additional traffic control in the downtown area that will be important is, and it will have to change when we close the GAB, right here on 8th and Pitkin, we are going to have a similar situation that we had at 7th and Colorado, with the three way stop. People trying to turn left out of Pitkin are not going to be able to do it because there will be too much traffic on 8th.

The 8th Street Design Project is still in progress; it is a priority for Council. “I had a conversation with Dan Blankenship about the idea of leaving the vertical alignment of 8th Street pretty much the way it’s being built right now, our permanent design solution was going to be the deep cut but putting in the abutments for the future railroad bridge and not putting in the actual railroad bridge embanking some money for the railroad bridge. The discussion I had with Dan is what if we come up with a number to deepen that road at some point 20, 30, 40, 50 years into the future at today’s dollars, construction value or the cost of construction for today what would that cost us to take this road that we are going to have out here in another two weeks and drop it down to the deep cut (That number might be 3.5-4 million). So instead of banking the half a million for the railroad bridge, we bank 3.5-4 million for the road. Dan said, and he’s only speaking for himself, he thinks that makes a lot of sense and would be willing to look at that”. Sandy stated that it makes a lot of sense for society and believes, in 10-20 years, when we get this ROW thing, that in order to buy all the private sections on the railroad ROW so that we can get rid of the rail banking and then we get our money back, we get the 3.5 million dollars back because we are never going to do that. Terri asked if we don’t use the money in 20 years, then it comes back to the city? Mike Gamba answered, whenever we no longer need to maintain the railroad for heavy freight, and then we get our money back, and that makes a lot of sense. Sandy stated, so we never lose our money? We are doing this A & I tax, for 30 years or something and so it’s just like we have the money in the bank and it’s going to take us 10-20 years to figure out how to get it back. Mike Gamba added that Dan from RFTA is open to that, he also said that even if we do put a commuter rail in this, there is no reason it needs to go north of 8th Street. We could put a multimodal facility on the south side of 8th Street right here and that could be the end of the line, in Glenwood. Dan stated that RFTA and the RFTA board want to preserve the railroad corridor, and right now rail banking is the vehicle by which or the strategy by which they are preserving the railroad corridor and rail banking requires us to preserve it for heavy freight but no one, he admitted, no one has any intention of ever putting heavy freight back on that line. Sandy asked, but they are preserving it because they think they will use it for commuter rail sometime even though it has nothing to do with the current situation? Mike Gamba answered, right. Terri added, the City of Aspen has openly advocated for some sort of a rail line from Glenwood to Aspen. Mike Gamba agreed that a commuter rail through Glenwood it wouldn’t be bad but once you get through Basalt, there wouldn’t be any place to put one; it doesn’t make sense past Carbondale. Terri stated to Mike Gamba, “One thing when you’re in those discussions with Dan, the State wrote a letter exactly like that. They did not put any money towards actually lowering the highway for the Wingo Junction Bridge and it did pass a legal challenge. They said in the future if this needs to be lowered the State will participate in lowering it. Maybe we can give them a letter?” Mike Gamba agreed; because then we are not tying up any money. I believe the plan had been that we somehow put away half a million dollars for that future rail bridge. Terri stated I am not sure about putting money away for that, Karl works on those agreements. But we definitely were putting in the abutments with the idea of lowering the road. So really the only thing that would need to be paid for would be the bridge; I think we were going to do a split on the bridge.

The bridge itself wasn't the largest expense. I think the largest expense was the cut and the utilities. Mike Gamba added so we are building a road to accommodate a railroad that in the next 50 years will probably never happen. Sandy stated that the money in the bank, with this A & I tax fund, we are going to pass and then put out a bond we are going to have 50 million dollars in the bank, but that's for the next 30 years. Mike Gamba added I would like to try and pursue the approach that CDOT did with Wingo Junction first, and see if that would be acceptable.

Mike Gamba said, there was a pretty big error in The P.I.'s article. He asked if there were other properties we need to buy to build 14th Street? I said no, this is it. Then The P.I. said "we have to get all sorts of other properties to in order to build 14th Street". Mike Gamba stated, I did not say that. I spoke with Karl and Debra and asked if I should correct John. They said don't worry about it. Sandy added we should correct him on the commuter rail too. On the next page he said that the railroad corridor is being preserved for commuter rail.

Sandy said, so when are we going to review the long-term transportation plan? What do we need to start—theoretically from the website; it's been getting fed ideas. Terri answered yes, so we tried to set up a webpage but it was really never maintained. So I don't know if that exists out there still, it's probably something we should look into. I think from an idea and a group priority or stand point; it would be a good idea to do it in January. We are running a really tight street tax budget and the money that I had set aside to try and make a long-term transportation plan website, maybe do a more interaction webpage, and was cut from the budget. Currently we haven't gotten a final budget yet. I would say that we are probably going to have to do it by hand through this group as opposed to any other help. The Commission agreed.

Mike Gamba stated, about a month ago, Terri and I met with several representatives at a Holy Cross Energy meeting to discuss the idea of bringing County Road 154 through the Holy Cross Campus and tying it into the South Bridge alignment so that it would eliminate the Buffalo Valley light traffic signal all together. It would be a much more efficient connection, and safer. It obviously impacts the Holy Cross Campus out there pretty significantly. One representative was not at all encouraging to the extent of we were almost unable to even get an audience with the Holy Cross Board but we have a meeting coming up with them in a couple of weeks. We are hopeful we can convince them, and there will be some costs associated with this as it is going to bisect their campus. Things that they are talking about are that we want an underpass, if you are familiar with the South Bridge design as its approaching HW 82, between the Roaring Fork River and 82; it's actually up on a big fill section. Right now we are building them a driveway and that's going to have 15-20 feet of fill on it, so you could actually put a concrete box covert underpass under that. There are things we may be affecting. For example, they have a water storage tank for fire protection there, we can extend city water out there to provide fire protection; some things like that. There will be some cost component to it, but we trying to move that forward. It is really championed by CDOT and the County Commissioners because it's not an intersection issue that's in the City of Glenwood. The Commission agreed. Terri added, that it's kind of the last step that we wanted to take before we finalize the E.A. project and depending on Holy Cross and interactions at the meeting we will either try to decide to add this element into the project or we will say we are not going to do it finalize the E.A., and hopefully begin our preliminary 30% design in our right away acquisition. From then on, we would need to find ways to fund it. The County seems to be interested. If we are able to get this done, it would make a huge safety and access improvement for that whole area. I am hoping CDOT will come up with some funding for the interchange, maybe for the connection of CR 154. Mike Gamba added, RFTA should also come up with some funding because that will actually eliminate one crossing. The Commission agreed. So, hopefully when and if the A & I tax has passed, that will give us a little more money towards trying to get the pieces of South Bridge built and create partnerships. The County has requested a presentation to the County Commissioners. Debra has asked me to give a presentation to the Council on October 20th regarding South Bridge and the contract renewal for Jacobs. Shortly after, I will go in front of the County Commissioners and

ask for their participation in that agreement as well because in the past they've given us a percentage of the federal match requirements. All of that is in the works.

4. Other:

Sandy stated, that sounds good. Ok, if you guys agree, I will come up with a plan on The Long Range Transportation Plan on how we are going to review it, on an annual basis. I will collaborate with Tanya. Tanya agreed. Yes, we can make something like a matrix, showing here's what we have, here's what we need, updates and changes, etc.

5. Adjournment:

The Commission agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9:03am.