

ASHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
January 26, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

Graf called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

Commissioners Present: Joe Graf, Danielle Amarotico, Dominic Barth, Sue Newberry Corinne Viéville, and David Young

Council Liaison Present: Stef Seffinger

SOU Liaison Absent: Janelle Wilson

Staff Present: Scott Fleury, Mike Faught, and Kyndra Irigoyen

Staff Present: Steve Mac Lennan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of December 15, 2016 minutes

The minutes were approved as amended.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC FORUM

Ted Hall 210 E Nevada St

He gave the commission briefing books for the East Nevada Street Bridge project. He met with Faught last week and gave him a briefing book as well. He said he would like the Commission to take a look at the options in the books.

Katelyn Carey 2000 Tolman Cr Rd

She said Bellview School traffic is backed up. The church across the street blocked off their parking lot, so parents cannot park there and pick up their children. The traffic backs up in both directions, extending past the stop light on Siskiyou. About 10-20 cars are backed up at one time. This is creating a dangerous situation for the children walking around and blocks emergency vehicles from getting through. She asked for police presence for a few days to direct traffic and to not let people hold up traffic trying to pull into the school.

Spike Breon 295 E Nevada St

He hopes the Commission will consider a pedestrian bridge that will handle emergency vehicles. He read from his attached letter.

NEW BUSINESS

Post Road Diet Analysis

Faught said we have started seeing some longer delays in the morning and asked Parducci to do some analysis. He wants to remind everyone that this was a multi-modal project that benefited bicycles, pedestrians, and automobiles. The road diet was not created for just bicyclists, it is for all modes of travel.

Parducci said they have been monitoring the road diet since 2013. She gathered data on the three busiest months of the year: June, August, October, and some in September. She said they have seen increased congestion and longer queue lengths, but overall not any significant changes in terms of how it is operating. They looked at crash data; there was a significant decrease in crashes the first year. Crashes have continually increased since then. Now we are seeing a lot more rear-end collisions, whereas before they were angle collisions. The collisions are less severe now. There has been an increase in pedestrian traffic. There has not been an increase in cyclist traffic. The road diet was installed to improve safety and better serve pedestrians and cyclists. She said from that perspective, the road

diet is doing that. Corridor travel time is about a second longer from Valley View to Helman St. There is a misconception that it takes longer, but people are getting stuck in these peak traffic times. The study is done during peak hours from 4:30-5:30 pm and 3:30-4:30 pm. She bases her studies off of the Kittleson study parameters. Intersection level of service has stayed relatively the same since 2013. Hersey/Wimer intersection has improved from an 'F' rating to a 'D' rating. There was a big jump in corridor queuing in 2016. Maple St has been the biggest issue for corridor queuing during the AM and the PM peak hours. Amarotico said the big change has been the change in school starting times, the high school starts at 8:30 am instead of 8 am. The high school gets out later now at 3:30 pm instead of 2:45pm. Graf said the majority of classes at SOU only meet Monday through Thursday, so that will make a difference in traffic.

Recommendations:

1. Removing the Helman St/N Main St signal and restriping N Main St to transition sooner into the road-diet
2. Restriping N Main St at Bush St to include a center two-way-left-turn lane
3. Adding a pedestrian island and crosswalk on N Main St at Van Ness Ave
4. Adding a pedestrian crosswalk on N Main St at Nursery St with RRFB's
5. Upgrading the traffic signal at Laurel St
6. Improving sight distance from Hersey St and Wimer St approaches

Parducci also recommends continuing to monitor the road diet on N Main St with an AM peak period evaluation.

Don Stone 395 Kearney St

He said his input is from personal perception. There has been increased congestion, increase in pedestrians, not much of an increase in bicyclists. He thought the road diet was nonsense when it was put in and has not changed his mind since. If you are driving 10-15 MPH, the sense is that you are in a traffic jam, which creates tension. He thinks that the road diet is something that should be put back to the way it was, with four lanes. He recommends that it be put back to four lanes and increase the speed limit to 30 MPH.

George Kramer 386 N Laurel

He has lived on N Laurel for almost 40 years. He thought it was a bad idea when the road diet was adopted. There is one route to the west and one way to get in and out. He asked how many of the commissioners live up or down the hill from N Main St on the road diet and have to interact with it. Most of the data is about through traffic, which makes sense for traffic engineers. He said it is difficult to get on and off of it for people who live close to the road diet. He relies on the kindness of strangers to let him on and off N Main St. It is worse during tourism season. There has not been a big increase in bike and pedestrian traffic; we should complete the bike path and go back to four lanes on N Main St. He would like the commission to consider the people who have to merge on and off the road diet, not just the people who go through it. He agrees with updating the light at Laurel St. He has never met anyone who lives where he lives that thinks the road diet was a good idea. Seffinger asked if there was increase of traffic on side streets. Kramer said he thinks there is and uses alternate routes in the neighborhoods to avoid going on the road diet when going downtown.

Barbara Comnes 444 Park Ridge Pl

Her impression is that the traffic on Hersey has increased since the road diet. Traffic has been diverted onto Hersey to avoid going downtown. Parducci said they have not seen an increase of turning on and off Hersey but that does not mean further down it has not increased. Graf said it could also be because there are more homes on Mountain Ave, west of Mountain Meadows. Combs said it has been helpful having the center turn lane on N Main S to turn onto Hersey.

N. Main Hersey/Wimer Signal Analysis and Crosswalk Analysis

Parducci said if all traffic on Hersey is counted, five of the nine traffic signal warrants are met. She does not recommend that a traffic signal be installed at Hersey and Wimer St because of the queues it would create if a signal was placed there. Graf said this Commission has already approved putting in two crosswalks. We wanted to see if the light would work better opposed to crosswalks. He is worried the crosswalks may create a mess too. Parducci said crosswalks will randomly stop traffic, but not as long as the signal would. Parducci recommends that the crosswalks be installed.

Brian Comnes 444 Park Ridge Pl

Crossing N Main between Maple and Hersey is very difficult. He encourages crosswalks at Hersey with flashing lights. He opposes a traffic light there, unless there is a protected left turn light. He thinks it would be worse with a light.

Young said we do not want a light at Wimer St. The recommendations for the crosswalk are at Nursery because there is too much going on at Hersey and Wimer St. Comnes said that would be ok, as long as there is some protected way to get across N Main. Parducci said we recommended a crosswalk at Nursery with flashers.

Young recommends we do not move forward with the traffic light. Commission agrees. Graf reminded the Commission that they already approved putting in crosswalks; they just have to instruct staff to move it forward.

Newberry asked if there would be any improvements for lighting up the crosswalk. Most of the lights on the streets light up for cars but not for pedestrians. Parducci said in order to put sidewalks in they would have to meet our list of requirements and lighting is one of the most important.

Viéville m/s Barth recommend implementing two crosswalks with flashers at the locations recommended by the traffic engineer, with no light at Hersey and Wimer St. All in favor.

Faught said we need a recommendation to the City Council to continue with the road diet as Parducci has recommended it. He recommends notifying citizens about removing the traffic signal at Helman St for a public hearing, before recommending it to Council. At this public hearing, he recommends discussing the super sharrows concept so citizens can see how it all works together within the system and the road diet.

Newberry m/s Young to direct the Public Works Department to move forward with primary designs on altering the Helman St signal and restriping N Main at Bush St, so we have the materials necessary to have an informative public hearing that would be held before any approval was made or recommendations to the City Council. All in favor.

Viéville m/s Barth in favor of upgrading the traffic signal at Laurel and improving sight distance from Hersey St and Wimer St approaches. All in favor.

Transportation Commission Council Update

Graf said if anyone has anything to tell Council let himself or Fleury know.

TASK LIST

Discuss current action item list

None.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

CMAQ Grant Application-Chip Seal Project

Fleury said we received \$480,000, which will become available in October 2018.

Intersection Repair

None.

Vegetation Maintenance Program

None.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Transportation System Plan Request for Qualifications (including transit feasibility study)

Fleury said if the Commission has anything to add he will need it by next week. Newberry said when we talk about transit we have to talk about pedestrians and when we talk about pedestrians we have to talk about ADA. She thinks those terms need to be mentioned in a transit RFP because the ridership is only going to be as good as the connectivity that takes people to get there.

Action Summary

None.

Accident Report

Mac Lennan said Bellview School has been an issue for several years; it does not have anything to do with the access to the church parking lot, although it has probably increased because of the church blocking access to their parking lot. During school, the inbound and outbound traffic is backed up. Mac Lennan said he does not have an issue with this, but the Commission can look at it. Viéville asked if it poses danger to the kids. Mac Lennan said no, because the cars are stopped. Newberry asked if there was any safe routes to school planning done to setup a better drop off and pick up. Faught said there are not, but we should talk to the superintendent of the school district about this issue. Newberry asked to talk to Faught about safe routes to school sometime.

Mac Lennan said he does not understand the peak times that were referenced in the post road diet analysis. He has spent hundreds of hours on N Main and there is no rhyme or reason why traffic backs up. He has seen it back up at 5 pm 5:30 pm, and at 9 pm. He is not sure there is a peak time.

Making an Impact Newsletter (December)

None.

COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

Graf reminded the Commission that the next meeting has the Nevada Street Bridge project on the agenda.

FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

TSP update process
Nevada St Bridge (February)
CIP Budgeting

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kyndra Irigoyen
Public Works Administrative Assistant*

Spike Breon

From the 2005 Comprehensive plan
“Transportation Element”

...allow us to move towards a less auto-dependent community.

“Cut-through” traffic in established neighborhoods disrupts life and erodes the neighborhood’s integrity.

...automotive transportation is replaced by pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit. Ashland’s carrying capacity would dramatically increase and the quality of life would benefit.

But if Ashland is to retain and improve the quality of life, we must rethink our efforts towards transportation planning. Our past focus on accommodating the automobile must now be replaced by concerted efforts toward equally accommodating all modes of travel.

a need to change our transportation planning policies from auto-oriented to multi-modal,

Through measures designed to reduce reliance

on the automobile, ...avoid the air pollution, traffic and livability problems faced by other areas of the country.

It was believed that improved livability would result from easier car movement, but as we have experienced, the opposite has tended to occur.

The focus of the transportation system will not be limited to the automobile, but in addition, transportation options will be created where the number and length of trips can be reduced, and walking, biking, and transit become viable options for daily travel.

Ashland must ensure future livability by reducing dependence on the automobile and encouraging the use of other travel modes.

Transportation modeling professionals began to consider non-auto modes in response to passage of the Federal Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and the Oregon Transportation Planning Rule.