

**ASHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 26, 2015**

CALL TO ORDER: Chair David Young called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street.

Commissioners Present: Joe Graf, Alan Bender, Corinne Viéville, Shawn Kampmann and David Young

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Scott Fleury, Tami De Mille-Campos, and Carolyn Augsburger

Council Liaison Present: Michael Morris

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of Minutes – September and November 2014

Approved by unanimous consent.

PUBLIC FORUM

Joanna Niemen; 31 West Hersey St. She is concerned about the pedestrian way across the railroad tracks on Oak Street and feels it is very unsafe, particularly at night when it's not lit, to get across. She understands the railroad has agreed to move forward on a safe pedestrian crossing, but wondered if something could be done in the meantime. Her second point is regarding the new park on Hersey Street. She stressed her concern for pedestrians needing to cross the busy street without a crosswalk, and that the cars coming from Oak Street and Helman Street are driving very fast. Her third and final concern is in regards to her husband, who bikes to work at SOU daily, and has been doing so for the past seven years. She said he is frustrated with street lights where the sensors are triggered by cars but not by bicycles, and finds himself waiting for uncomfortable periods of time for a car to come so he is able to continue his route. She specified the street lights from Mountain Street to cross Siskiyou Boulevard, and the intersection at Sherman Street.

Hules Gutchen; 2253 Highway 99. He presented his understanding of transportation, which he divided into four components: transportation, recreation, exercise, and socialize. Transportation as way of getting safely from point A to point B; recreation being when one feels good and wants to coordinate an activity; exercise is a discipline; and socialize, being a social activity, whether in a vehicle or while walking or biking. He expressed concern regarding the comparable safety.

Colin Swales; 95 Coolidge St. He briefly mentioned some of the ideas presented at the last meeting (bicycle lane through downtown, removing the traffic lights on Helman Street), which he really liked. He expressed his concern for two more traffic lights at Oak Street. He said he has been following traffic counts and has seen a reduction in vehicular traffic, and feels we could eliminate all the traffic lights in the downtown. He added now that the road diet is working well, we should look at mini roundabouts again, as an option at Wimer and Hersey, and possibly at Maple, to ensure safe flow of traffic.

NEW BUSINESS

N. Main Crosswalk Discussion

Kim Parducci, Professional Traffic Operations Engineer with Southern Oregon Transportation Engineering, handed out two packet replacement sheets (see attached) and spoke regarding the two proposed locations for crosswalks on North Main Street: one at Van Ness Avenue, and one at Nursery Street. At Van Ness Avenue she is proposing a crosswalk with continental striping, considered one of the safer crosswalk markings, with a ten foot wide median and two foot buffer on both sides of the median. Additionally, there will be a detectable warning for the visually impaired on each side of the median. She is proposing the islands be at street grade instead of ramped because it is better for wheelchair accessibility, and easier for visually impaired to maneuver. She elaborated on the island, and stated she will also be proposing curbs around the island, so the visually impaired can not only feel as the texture changes from the roadway to the island, but can also use the curb as a guide. Flashing lights are not being proposed for this location because there is good sight distance in both directions, and she has found that the flashing lights can disrupt traffic. Kampmann, Viéville, and Chair Young all expressed positive feelings about the median. Councilor Morris expressed his concern about the apron on the sidewalk.

Kim went on to discuss the Nursery Street proposal. She said unlike the Van Ness Avenue crosswalk, Nursery Street will have the flashing lights. She briefly outlined the problem with the Nursery Street crosswalk, explaining when she lined up the crosswalk across Nursery Street, it conflicted with the southern wing of the circular driveway at the bed and breakfast on the east side of North Main Street, which will make it tough for ramping up and down. From the design standpoint, it may not be doable. Chair Young asked if the crosswalk could be moved to the north side, to which Kim responded that the same problem still exists at that location. Viéville asked if the crosswalk could be mid-block rather than on the corner. Kim replied it could be an option, however the reason they did not propose that is that it would lead to more congestion. Kim added if there is an issue with the crosswalk at Nursery Street, they will instead propose putting the flashing lights at Van Ness Avenue and have a protective crossing there with all the enhancements. Chair Young expressed the need for some kind of safe crossing between Maple Street and Van Ness Avenue because the stretch is too long; crossings at Nursery Street and Van Ness Avenue were the compromise. Kim said Brad Barber is helping with the layout of the crosswalk and will look into what can be done. Graf asked whether there was a Plan B and Kim said if the crosswalk at Nursery Street doesn't work, they will probably look at doing a mid-block crossing. Kampmann replied he does not feel there is a need for a crosswalk at Nursery Street, nor does he think a mid-block crosswalk would be a good idea. Chair Young reiterated his concern about the length of the stretch of road without crosswalks.

Noel Chatroux; 75 Nursery St. He addressed the crosswalk at Nursery Street, stating that his wife, whose office is at 400 West Hersey Street, used to walk across the street to her office, until she had several scary experiences. He no longer felt comfortable with her crossing North Main Street and then asked her to drive. Up until the road diet, she drove to work. Since the road diet, she has started walking to work again. However, she still has scary, close calls; she spends a lot of time waiting, and sometimes will grow impatient and cross before it is safe. Chair Young asked how Noel felt about the alternative, for example if there could not be a crossing at Nursery Street, but there was a crossing at Van Ness Avenue. Noel replied that any crossing between Maple and Laurel Street would be an improvement and will improve foot traffic in the neighborhood. He added he is in favor of multimodal transportation and feels having so many blocks without a safe way to cross a major arterial highway discourages pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Kampmann followed up with a question of whether Noel feels two blocks is too far to walk to cross a major arterial highway. Noel responded that two blocks is not 'too far' for him to walk, however he does not think he would walk two blocks one way, and two blocks back in order to cross the street. He then suggested putting the crosswalk at Nursery Street at a slight angle to accommodate the driveway in front of the bed and breakfast, which Kim said would be possible, though it would make the crosswalk a little bit longer. Viéville expressed her agreement with Noel, stating once a crosswalk is there people will come out of the woodwork and use it.

Colin Swales; 95 Coolidge St. He suggested staggered crosswalks with a median in the middle. Chair Young explained the design decision had been made against medians due to evacuation routes. Kampmann added another issue with medians along that stretch is that they would block driveways. Colin recommended mini roundabouts along North Main Street and added that crosswalks should be better lit for nighttime safety crossing. Kim echoed Colin's appreciation of roundabouts, and said she thinks a roundabout at Wimer and Hersey Street in lieu of a signal would be better. She mentioned the design constraints with roundabouts, and also said trucks typically don't like roundabouts, though doing a roundabout is still an option. Kim clarified that because North Main Street is an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) roadway, it will need to be done to ODOT standards.

Kim went on to explain the proposal for the Helman Street signal, in which a crosswalk with an island and flashing lights were proposed, and the signalized lights will be taken out; Helman Street will have a stop sign, and cars will have a lane to pull into in the center of the road when turning left on Main Street. This will provide the necessary room for an arterial bike lane, connecting from North Main Street to Siskiyou Boulevard. Kampmann asked how traffic will come out of Helman Street onto Main Street, and feels this will pose problems for cars trying to turn left. Kim explained cars turning left from Helman Street will only need to wait for a gap in one direction before pulling across into the center lane. She pointed out the advantage to this is there will be room for a continuous bike lane, and will eliminate congestion at that particular signal. The signal at Oak Street is being proposed because of the many turning conflicts which is due in large part to the many pedestrians crossing at that location. Morris asked if there would be any consideration to closing Oak Street to which Kim replied it is a definite possibility. Fleury mentioned the traffic model Kim had shown him, which he found very helpful; Chair Young asked if the commission could see it sometime. Colin spoke to Kampmann's previous comment with which he disagreed, stating that he finds it interesting that when we talk about multi-modal equity, cars always have priority, while pedestrians and bicycles come second. He emphasized sometimes there's an inconvenience, but an inconvenience to a car is less of a problem than an inconvenience to a pedestrian or cyclist. Morris asked about the purpose of the crosswalk onto the island that then stops, in front of the Bard's Inn. Kim suggested it be proposed further down, at Church Street, while Morris asked if it could be eliminated altogether. Kim explained the crosswalk at the bottom of that island is the only crosswalk to the center businesses, further south.

Pedestrian Network Prioritization

Fleury presented the current TSP Pedestrian Network Project list for discussion about prioritization. He recommended the commission focus on two highest priority projects for budgeting purposes in the current biennium cycle.

The commission decided to go down the list one by one and decide on whether the project was high priority or low priority. The commission agreed streets have a sidewalk on one side will be lower priority than streets without any sidewalks.

The committee agreed the projects listed below are highest priority.

- 1-Glenn St./Orange Ave. (P5)**
- 2-Garfield St. from Iowa to Siskiyou Blvd. on one side of the street only (P59)**
- 3-Park St. (Ashland St. to Siskiyou Blvd.) one side only (P70)**
- 4-Faith Ave. (Ashland St. to Siskiyou Blvd.) one side only (P65)**
- 5-Dianne St. (Jaquelyn to Tolman) (P66)**
- 6-Beaver Slide (P17)**
- 7-Ashland St. (S. Mountain to Morton) (28)**

Transportation Commission Update to Council

Fleury asked for a volunteer to do the yearly update to the City Council on Transportation Commission issues on Tuesday, March 3rd. Chair Young, Kampann, Viéville, and Bender are all unavailable. Graf will update the City Council.

OLD BUSINESS

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

Audible Pedestrian Signals

Fleury stated ODOT has installed two Audible Pedestrian Signals (APS) at Lithia Way and Pioneer Street. They have not installed the ones at Walker Street and Siskiyou Boulevard; he is placing an order to complete the intersection so that all four corners have APS buttons. He was not sure about the status of the one at East Main Street.

Speed Zone-Ashland St.

Fleury said at the recommendation of the state traffic engineer, the speed limit will be changed from 35 to 30 from the fire station to the overpass at Faith Street.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Graf gave a brief update on the SDC and Downtown Committee.

Traffic Crash Mapping

Action Summary

Traffic Crash Summary

Oregon Impact January Newsletter

COMMISSION OPEN DISCUSSION

FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

Public Outreach/Education

Normal Ave. Neighborhood Plan Discussion

Traffic Control Resolution Update

Traffic Crash Summary PD letter

Siskiyou Blvd. Corridor Study

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Augsburger, Administrative Assistant