

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



Robert Sanders
Commission Chair
trans@ci.moscow.id.us

Regular Meeting ~Minutes~

Cody Riddle
Staff Liaison
208.883.7027

<https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/556/Transportation-Commission>

**Thursday
August 11, 2022**

4:00 PM

**Council Chambers
206 E. Third Street**

Bacon called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Sanders, Chair; Erin Bacon, Randy Baukol, Ben Calabretta, Rebecca Couch, Mary DuPree, Joel Hamilton, Mike McGahan, Scott Sumner
OTHERS: Maureen Laflin, Mark Storey
STAFF: Scott Bontrager, Jennifer Fleischman, Tyler Palmer, Cody Riddle, Steve Schulte

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Approval of June 9, 2022 Minutes (ACTION ITEM)

Presentation of minutes for approval.

Hamilton moved for approval of the minutes as presented, seconded by Calabretta. Vote by Acclamation: Ayes: Bacon, Baukol, Calabretta, Couch, Hamilton, McGahan, Sumner (7). Nays: None. Abstentions: DuPree, Sanders (2). Motion carried.

2. Public Comment

Members of the public may speak to the Commission regarding matters NOT on the agenda or currently pending before the Commission. Please state your name and city of residence for the record and limit remarks to three (3) minutes.

None.

3. Regional Transportation Update – Mark Storey

Whitman County staff will provide a general planning update on some local projects, including a discussion about Sand Road.

Robert Sanders, Chair, arrived at 4:05PM and Mary DuPree arrived at 4:09PM.

Riddle introduced Mark Storey, Engineer for the Public Works Department of Whitman County, who spoke about Whitman County's long history of trying to improve Sand Road and the freight bypass study that is being pursued by Pullman. The proposed study's scope includes traffic flow through and around Pullman Downtown, as well as researching alternate routes such as Sand Road. He provided handouts of the draft study scope and a conceptual map of a Sand Road realignment.

There are two steep turns on the west side of Palouse River Drive, which are both in Idaho, that some residents have expressed concern with. The Peterson Bridge, which is directly west of the Idaho state line on Sand Road, was rebuilt around 2008. If a freight bypass route via Sand Road was selected after the study's completion, it would not include widening the road, providing bike lanes or a pathway system, but would have shoulder improvements. The furthest west end of Sand Road, where a proposed connection with Johnson Road and SR195, would need to be realigned, widened and developed further. Currently traffic moves from Sand Road to Johnson Road and then goes through Pullman.

Trucks that use Sand Road do not appear to be coming from the north, and residents on the road suggest that it is mostly farm trucks, straw trucks, and Swift trucks. Moscow's City Limit has moved west to incorporate one of the two bridges on West Palouse River Drive that was previously owned by Latah County. The proposed study could ultimately detect if any trucks could be diverted from Pullman or Moscow's Downtowns to an alternate route like Sand Road. Once Pullman publishes the transportation study results, the information would be helpful for both Moscow and Latah County. The study is estimated to be completed one year from the contraction date. There is another bypass route included in the proposed study, through downtown Pullman along the creek. There was more conversation about how a different route through Pullman could work and the distinct challenges associated with that.

Storey gave a brief update on the Airport Road Reconstruction Project, of which part is handled by the City of Pullman and the rest is being done by Whitman County. Airport Road is one of Whitman County's busiest roads, and the proposed improvements are projected to increase drivability and traffic safety. There are no plans to connect Airport Road with A Street, near Wal-mart in Moscow, but there might be a connecting road between the two in the far future. Airport Road gets too much traffic to connect with a smaller road such as A Street. Sand Road was rebuilt with Bituminous Surface Treatment (BST) in 2018 because it was the most feasible option at the time.

4. Update on Downtown Streetscape Design Project – Cody Riddle

Staff will provide an update on the project, including a preliminary schedule.

Seen as Agenda Item No. 5.

Riddle briefly reviewed the Commission on the Downtown Streetscape Design Study, inviting everyone to come to the Farmers Market to participate as citizens in providing input. The next Public Meeting is scheduled for October 18th at 5:30PM in Council Chambers. Staff will come back at a later date to procure a formal review and input from the Commissioners.

5. Review Updates to 2016 Bike Route and Facilities Plan (ACTION ITEM) – Cody Riddle, Tyler Palmer, and Steve Schulte

The City has received a number of requests for changes to the configuration of bike lanes in the community.

Staff will present a series of potential updates to the adopted plan.

Seen as Agenda Item No. 4.

Staff presented information about the Facilities Plan as described above, and explained the need for an updated plan to be recommended to City Council. Riddle went through each of the ten recommended changes for the Commissioners to review and provide input. Bike sharrows on Almon Street are proposed on both sides of the street instead of striped bike lanes, in conjunction with lowering the speed limit to 25 MPH. The bike striping process along White Avenue was recommended to be removed from the plan, as now there is a separate pedestrian multi-modal path that runs along the street to the Latah County Fairgrounds. The remainder of the pedestrian multi-modal path along White Avenue is estimated to be completed in the next several years. Blaine Street, north of Harold, is not currently on the Bike Route Plan, as the Greenway System runs parallel to Blaine Street one block to the east.

D Street, west of Mountain View Road near the Middle School, currently has sharrows that move to a multi-modal pathway and then converted to separated bike lanes, and Staff recommended that the whole length be focused on use of the expanded sidewalk. On F Street, near Eisenhower Street, the proposed configuration suggests installing bike lanes, sharrows, and then bike lanes again, and Staff recommends keeping sharrows for the last transition, all the way through to the pathway system towards Mountain View Park. Before the 2016 Bike Route and Facilities Plan was approved by City Council, it was sent out for public comment and review. The gravel section between the east end of F Street and the pathway system is difficult for inexperienced bicyclist to navigate. The Street Department will look into some paving options for that section to make that portion of the street safer for bicyclists.

Staff recommends extending the bike lanes along Mountain View Road from Public Avenue to Slonaker Drive, and then would convert to sharrows. Lanny Lane, between Slonaker Drive and Orchard Avenue, was originally planned to have a separated bike lane but Staff recommends modifying that to utilize the 10-foot wide pathway. This would have a dual benefit of opening up more parking spaces along the street for residential use, as Lanny Lane did not have bulb outs as part of the development. Orchard Avenue, near Virginia Avenue, currently has a section of sharrows that converts to a bike lane and then back to sharrows. This was intentionally done because there is a grade change that calls for a bike lane for slower moving bicyclist. The City's priority is to provide a safe route for bicyclists to traverse streets and pathways.

The Commission talked about the University of Idaho's participation with implementing the bike plan and the City has helped by providing striping when requested. Kids are commonly seen riding bicycles on the sidewalks where there are no bike facilities available, but the City would rather children be on the sidewalk of high-volume streets, or preferably use the alternate routes such as the Greenway System. The crosswalk from East City Park to First Street, across Hayes Street, was a cause of concern. There were some suggestions about how to make the crossing safer for children, such as a bulb-out at the southeast corner. Bike lanes at the corner of Mountain View Road and D Street will be rebuilt with the bulb-outs during the current Pedestrian Safety project. The City will look into adding more directional markings in the bike lanes along D Street between Mountain View Road and McDonald Elementary School. The Parks Department maintains the pathway system around Good Samaritan Society, and is scheduled for re-pavement in the next year or so.

DuPree moves to accept the proposed revisions and recommend approval of the Bike Route and Facilities Plan to City Council, seconded by Calabretta. Vote by Acclamation: Ayes: Unanimous (9). Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REPORTS

- Riddle gave a report on the proposed EV charging stations and discussed the various costs associated with building it. The City is planning to pursue various grants to supplement the development costs.
- The E-Scooter roll-out is behind schedule, but they are projected to be available for use around Labor Day weekend.

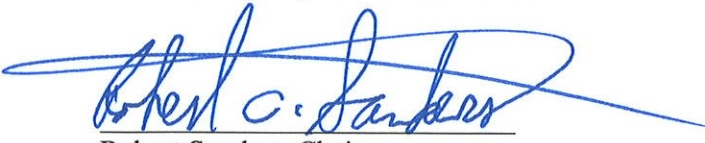
ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Smart Transit has published hiring for drivers and an Executive Director.
- The D Street and Mountain View Road intersection is scheduled to be opened before school starts, but will be closed to traffic August 18th & 19th. The Mountain View Road roundabout project is running behind schedule and will not be open before school starts at the end of August. The Sixth Street Bridge Replacement project has not yet begun construction. The South Main Street highway underpass project is moving as scheduled and the final easement paperwork from Identity has been drafted. Design for the underpass will begin fall of 2022.

UPCOMING EVENTS / MEETINGS

The next regularly scheduled Transportation Commission meeting is set for September 8, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM



Robert Sanders, Chair

Exhibit A

Pullman/Whitman County Freight Alternatives Study

Background

Pullman is the central hub for many businesses, commerce, industrial areas, higher education facilities, and interstate commerce in Whitman County and the region. The primary north-south highway is SR195, which bypasses Pullman to the west, and is served by a business route following SR27 through downtown Pullman. North-south commerce in nearby Idaho uses US95 that passes through Moscow, Idaho, only 8 miles to the east. The two major routes are connected by SR270 which also passes through the heart of downtown Pullman. Since downtown Pullman is geographically constrained by steep hills, and follows the main river channel through downtown, the highways route through the heart of downtown. This results in a significant number of heavy trucks, farm implements, tankers, and other heavy equipment have only one primary route through the downtown core.

For decades, the City of Pullman and Whitman County have recognized the safety and functional shortcomings of the downtown area as it relates to freight movement. Frequent heavy trucks, implements, tankers with flammable materials, chemical haulers, and other large/heavy freight movements represent a threat to both safety and a positive downtown business environment. Historically, the State, City and County have studied various ways to shift freight movements out of the downtown corridor, through capacity improvements (north and south bypass concepts). These capacity improvements generally come with a very high cost. Projecting trends into the future, the freight traffic through downtown will only continue to increase, unless practical and affordable solutions can be identified and funded.

What We Are Striving For

Downtown Pullman has historically been an area where a large variety (modes) of vehicular traffic and pedestrians conflict in a congested business area. This conflict includes pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, delivery trucks, heavy commercial truck, and freight traffic all competing for the same limited space. The downtown area, consequently, is less friendly to business and community development. Safety of multi-modes can be compromised when heavy traffic and pedestrians/bicyclists interact on the same busy streets. Pullman City Council has recognized that reduction of freight traffic downtown would be a significant benefit to the many active transportation users (primarily WSU Students), business sectors, and an improvement in overall quality of life and safety. The intent of the study is to determine various and innovative means of reducing heavy truck traffic and freight movement on the Downtown core while providing safe, reliable, and practical alternative route(s) for freight movements.

Purpose and Intent

The purpose and intent of the study is to examine various practical solutions to reduce regional freight movement within the Pullman downtown area. Reducing freight movement through the downtown area is more important than ever, as Pullman is launching a downtown revitalization project that is proposed to provide more "Complete Street" improvements. Maintaining a way to support freight

movements through the region, including east-west freight movement between SR195 and US95 in Idaho and local freight destinations within Pullman and WSU is also very important. The solutions identified will be of critical importance in informing the Pullman and Whitman County comprehensive land-use plans. Previous North and South capacity improvement corridor studies identified benefits for providing dedicated freight routes. The implementation of either of these routes is not currently considered a practical strategy without concurrent land use development due to the high cost to only address freight mobility issues. The city of Pullman maintains these routes as a part of the city's arterial street network in their comprehensive plan to provide land use development and serve as a mean to provide freight bypass of the Pullman downtown core. The study may analyze the use of these corridors as incrementally developed background corridors through the lens of practical solutions.

Study Approach and Alternatives

"Practical Solutions" are defined as performance based approaches to transportation decision-making. Practical Solutions require a data driven approach that uses tools such as Transportation Systems Management and operations solutions. The study will strive to collaboratively identify performance measures, to seek lower-cost approaches and efficiencies to address safety, freight mobility, multimodal interactions, the Pullman Downtown Revitalization Plan, and local planning efforts by providing a phased approach. The study effort will look at recently identified potential practical solutions along with others that have been derived through this collaborative planning process. The study will strive to find emerging practical strategies to planning level & cost estimates.

Community engagement is an important factor in helping to develop Practical Solutions. Practical Solutions are found when key stakeholders work together to identify approaches that are affordable, sustainable, and innovative. The community and other potential affected interests will be engaged throughout the study. To facilitate the analysis, we will seek to obtain regional traffic data and model the various potential solutions, as follows.

- Identify and research past studies that evaluated mitigation of freight mobility in downtown Pullman.
- Baseline assessment of existing conditions to be used in the development of an analysis of phased practical strategies. This will incorporate the City of Pullman's downtown modeling efforts, and any data available through the collaborating agencies (Palouse RTPO, WSDOT, Whitman County, etc.)
- Potential Practical Solutions: Central Pullman freight bypass route, Kirkendahl/Sand Road route, signage/routing/lane configurations/technology upgrades.

Existing Transportation Network and Conditions for Assessment

The following are potential elements to include in the analysis:

- Origin-destination data collection to support alternatives analysis, commonly referred to as "big data", from cell phone records and vehicle GPS (no personally identifying information will be obtained with the data)
- Model existing conditions and proposed traffic modification scenarios using "big data" to determine impacts of scenarios
- Existing freight movements, north-south, east-west

- Safety performance measures/features
- Managing congestion along the corridor
- Enhancing quality of life
- Multi-modal safety strategies

Targeted Study Outcomes

Outcomes for the study include a thorough understanding of freight movements in and around Pullman and some understanding of potential Practical Solutions to reduce freight in downtown Pullman. Pullman and Whitman County strive to understand the cost and benefit (effectiveness) characteristics of the various Practical Solutions to create a framework for future decision making by the community. The results would help inform future land use and funding decisions.

Study Guiding Principles/Elements

- Review City and County Comprehensive Plans
- Facilitate input from stakeholders
- Collaboratively develop a projected land use growth rate
- Acquire freight and traffic movement data
- Create model of transportation system performance analysis; capacity, operations, safety
- Identify proposed transportation improvements
- Assess interactions between various transportation modes
- Incorporate the Pullman Downtown Revitalization Plan “Complete Streets” proposed geometrics within the analysis
- Research, Identify and evaluate potential practical strategies in collaboration with partnering agencies. Develop primary emerging practical strategies to planning level & cost estimates
- Model transportation system performance analysis using Practical Solutions options
- Develop ranking of effectiveness (benefit) for the potential Practical Solutions and previous capacity solutions
- Develop “order of magnitude” Practical Solutions including a cost metric to evaluate emerging strategies
- Assess short and long-term solutions rankings and buildability
- Prepare single sheet summaries for each alternative for community presentation and future funding requests
- Prepare a summary report of preliminary findings

Technical Advisory Group

The study impacts several regional agencies. Coordination of a technical advisory group (TAG) is required by the consultant to solicit ideas, coordinate agency and interagency priorities, affirm designs/standards, and discuss funding strategies and opportunity. The TAG would include the following agencies:

- WSDOT
- Whitman County
- Palouse RTPO

- City of Pullman

Community Engagement

The consultant shall implement a process to engage and solicit feedback from the City of Pullman and Whitman County community. The consultant will develop a public engagement program upon selection, subject to approval of the TAG and local agency.

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