

Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Meeting #5

DATE: June 8, 2009

ATTENDEES: Mark Labhart, Claudine Rehn, Mark Elston, Tom Weber, Shirley Kalkhoven, David Mattison, Larry McKinley, Norm Myers, Norm Rauscher, Shawn Reiersgaard, Jan Stewart, Tom Conaughton, Doug Henson, Tony Snyder, Ingrid Weisenbach, Norm Rauscher, Liane Welsh, Joanna Ridgway, Marshall Doaks, Kristin Hull, Linda Girard

GUESTS: Gus Meyer, Alene Allen, Gary Hanakrat, George Langlois

LOCATION: Tillamook Library, 1716 3rd Street

Welcome and Introductions

Kristin Hull welcomed the group and asked for self-introductions. She briefly summarized the agenda which will include reviewing the lane widening options and discussing the pros and cons of each option. The meeting summary from the fourth meeting was approved with no corrections or additions.

Kristin also referred to the ODOT memo in everyone's packets titled the Downtown Tillamook Traffic Signal System. One committee member noted that there is no light on 2nd and Main and questioned whether pedestrians at that intersection have been factored into the conclusions of the memo. Larry also mentioned that in the Governor's Transportation Bill, for the first time in recent history, the legislature has earmarked dollars for specific projects and \$27 million has been designated for this project.

Public Comment

George Langlois commented that he felt the intersection of 2nd Street and Pacific is a very dangerous one as there is no traffic signal and the potential for conflict between pedestrians and vehicles hurrying to make the lights at 1st and 3rd Streets is high.

Lane Widening Options

Kristin introduced three options for widening travel lanes which have been developed to respond to the problem of lanes too narrow to comfortably accommodate trucks. She said that since this part of Tillamook is in a Special Transportation Area (STA) there is some design flexibility. Doug Henson expressed concern that the introduction of these options was premature as business people have not had a chance to weigh in. Kristin responded that we are

having a special meeting with the business community and noted that two of the three options do not remove any parking. Furthermore, this is the beginning of a lengthy decision process, followed by the environmental process, a public hearing, and, eventually, a Record of Decision. Throughout those processes, there will be many opportunities for input.

Option 1 depicts removing parking from the west side of Main Ave. and east side of Pacific Ave. although different perspectives could be applied on each. It also includes a bike lane, and construction duration would be the shortest of the three. Option 2 narrows sidewalks on west side of Main Ave. and east side of Pacific Ave. and maintains parking on both sides. Option 3 narrows sidewalks on both sides of Main Ave. and Pacific Ave., maintains parking on both sides, and would have the longest construction period. Because of basements underneath the sidewalks there is some confusion about who holds the Right of Way and there will be further discussion amongst the affected agencies to determine that.

Discussion of Options

Alene Allen asked if parking were taken off streets could ODOT mitigate with off-system parking elsewhere. Larry McKinley said that couldn't happen as ODOT is prohibited from spending gas tax dollars to mitigate parking losses. Sidewalk widths were discussed and it was noted that anything smaller than 10 feet would need an exception and that a 10 foot sidewalk would keep the downtown "walkable." Travel lanes south of 4th Street would be 11 feet but the transition from 12 feet to 11 feet would be imperceptible.

David Mattison said the need to maintain a town center feeling led him to believe Option 2 was the best and asked about widening on Pacific but not Main. Doug Henson said he felt the 3rd option, by far, makes the most sense and that removing parking sabotages attempts to revitalize the downtown area. Tom Conaughton said that the perception of a parking problem is the consumers' problem and that it can affect the economic vitality of a community. Tillamook is unique because it has a well-defined downtown core and one of the elements contributing to this is parking. He likes Option 2 or Option 3.

Larry observed that there are small communities in Oregon where parking has been removed and off-street parking created that have been successful and no economic downturn was observed. Doug responded that it has been very difficult for downtown businesses to stay in business and they need connectivity as well as some additional anchors for the downtown.

Tony Snyder noted that construction does have intense impacts on the surrounding areas but Liane Welsh added that businesses in downtown Portland during the recent construction remained viable, for the most part, due to good signage and other efforts made by the Bureau of Transportation. Mark Labhart suggested that the committee develop some criteria to evaluate which option would have the least impact on businesses and explore mitigation strategies such as night work.

One member expressed concerns about speed but was told that on street parking actually calms traffic and another said that twenty years ago ODOT proposed taking parking off Main Street as the only choice and that it was nice to have options here.

Committee members asked a number of related questions and offered observations:

- Who will make the final decision about this project? (The City Council, County Commission and the Oregon Transportation Commission).
- Traveling southbound on Main one is presented with a rather disjointed downtown – is there any money to improve the aesthetics? (Usually an agreement is reached between ODOT and the City and if the improvements can be done at the same time as the transportation upgrades it is much more efficient).
- If widening the road to one side does a certain side make a difference? (Yes – we would want to avoid the entrance to the hotel).
- Would this project be eligible for the 1% for art funding? (No)
- What are the cons of narrower sidewalks? (They impact outside activities in front of businesses).
- What is the timeframe for spending the money? (It is bonded so it is not subject to the requirement that it be spent within two years).
- There hasn't been a pedestrian "issue" in Tillamook for years.
- Very pleased to hear business owners talk about connectivity. Would like to have models demonstrating how much difference 1 foot and/or 2 feet make.
- Would hate to see people who don't have as much ownership weigh as strongly as people most affected.
- If there are bulb-outs at the corners, sidewalk reduction wouldn't seem as apparent visually.
- There is the potential for some very positive outcomes for downtown – new sidewalks, moving traffic, etc.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Conclusion and Next Steps

We will host a booth at the Farmers' Market on Saturday, June 13 where we will present the lane widening options, and alternatives C3 and C4 and solicit public input.

Additional next steps include a meeting with downtown business and property owners, with the City Council, and then a report back to this committee.

We will poll the committee about the best date for the next meeting to be held in mid July.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.