

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) Agenda



Meeting #1: June 27, 2019 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
MetraPark, Yellowstone Room

www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/blgairportmain

PROJECT GOALS

- Improve safety and mobility for all users
- Reduce congestion
- Improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment
- Have an open, honest, and transparent decision-making process with two-way communication between the project team, CAC, and the broader public, and stakeholders

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide input on the intersection alternatives with both a local and regional perspective
- Serve as liaisons for neighbors and organizations and report back to the committee any issues and concerns
- Be solution-oriented

MEETING GROUND RULES

- Be respectful of a range of opinions and listen with an open mind
- Participate in the group conversation; avoid side conversations
- When discussing the past, constructively link it to the current discussion
- Put cell phones on silent mode



AGENDA

1) Welcome & Introductions

- a) Name
- b) Affiliation

2) Overview of Roles and Responsibilities

3) Airport & Main – The Big Picture

a) Who does it serve: Regional and Local Importance

- i) High traffic volumes on Main Street today: ADT 49,300 to 52,200
- ii) Critical Freight Route – The Camino Real International Trade Corridor.
- iii) Pedestrians & Bicyclists
- iv) Events
- v) Local businesses

b) Problems to Be Solved: Balancing Local Needs with Community Needs

- i) Already congested and traffic will continue to increase
- ii) Serving adjacent business access and traffic traveling through the intersection
- iii) Minimizing impacts to properties
- iv) Safety
- v) Coordination with other transportation projects

4) From your Perspective

- a) What works well?
- b) What could be improved?

5) Moving Forward – Concepts

- a) Evaluation Criteria
- b) Past Concepts
- c) Concept Work Session/Discussion

6) Next Steps & Meeting Date

Meeting Summary

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM MEETING

- Review Meeting Summary and provide comments by July 19, 2019. If no comments received, summary will be considered approved - CAC and Project Team
- Post meeting materials on website – Project Team
- Schedule next CAC Meeting, Week of July 22 from 3 to 5 PM at MetraPark Yellowstone Room or Billings Library depending on availability – Project Team
- Evaluate the following concepts for next meeting: Two Eastbound Left Turns, Three Eastbound Left Turns, and modifications to the Southwest Quadrant Loop.
- Have answers to the following questions at next meeting – from the “Parking Lot” – Project Team
 - What are the traffic counts at Airport & Main without the By-Pass Project?
 - How many pedestrians and bicyclist crashes are there in the study area?
 - What is the general crash data for U-turns?
 - How much truck traffic will use the By-Pass/Belt Loop?
 - What are traffic counts on Bench Boulevard?
 - What is the status of the floodplain in the study area?

INTRODUCTIONS

As part of the introductions, CAC representatives were asked what how they would define “project success.”

Define Project Success

As Commuter	As Business/Property Owner
Improved operations	Improved operations
Balanced impacts	Balanced impacts
No phone calls (people complaining about the intersection)	Convenient
Improved safety X 5	Ease of access x 4
Good travel experience	Customers coming into businesses
Faster and safer from the Heights	Non-intrusive, aesthetically pleasing
Efficient	Improved sense of place/community
Improved sense of place/community	Safety x 2
Welcoming to bicyclists and pedestrians	
Improved Heights connectivity	
Avoids negative issues	
Applies lessons learned from bigger cities, Billings won't always be small	
Improved mobility for all users	
Solution meets project goals	

AIRPORT & MAIN – THE BIG PICTURE

Existing and future conditions were presented (The full presentation is posted on the project website). After the project overview, CAC representatives were asked to identify what works well at the intersection and what could be improved.

What Works Well and What Could Be Improved

CAC members agreed that there is room for improvement at this intersection.

What Works Well

Traffic flows well during off-peak times.

Everyone knows the intersection – it is a good “landmark.”

Not a great deal of positive – Off peak travel is pretty good.

Not really anything good.

Easy access from Bench Boulevard to Main Street– Never have to wait more than 2 signal cycles.

Aronson Avenue re-route is good but don’t want trucks to be diverted onto Aronson Avenue.

Related to events – Bench Boulevard connector is a success.

- Less vandalism and crime in area with Bench Boulevard
- Getting out of MetraPark

What Could be Improved

Drivers use the Creative Vinyl driveway/parking lot to make U-turns - both directions up to 15 a day. These movements conflict with business operations and this project could help address this issue

Bicycle and pedestrian experience/connectivity along the north side of Airport Way. Could they be routed behind Creative Vinyl?

Signal timing at Lake Elmo Drive and Airport Road East onto Main Street. Have to wait multiple cycles.

Rush hour (AM/PM) flows – Emergency response vehicles experience delayed response times and have to run in opposing lanes which is not ideal.

Congestion on Main Street in both directions – drivers get frustrated.

Look from Hilltop to Interstate for ways to eliminate signals – love roundabouts.

Snow removal on Main Street Hill.

Terrifying for bicyclists and pedestrians x2.

Better pedestrian facilities - very little foot traffic into Cenex now.

Can’t get into left lane at Aronson Avenue.

Trucks run yellows and reds to get through signals.

Bench Boulevard now becoming congested.

People avoiding intersection in AM/PM.

Bottlenecks at Bench Boulevard/Airport Road/Main Street.

Event versus non-event traffic. If event traffic is managed so it moves quickly, it slows all other traffic resulting in frustration for non-event traffic.

MOVING FORWARD – CONCEPTS

The Project Team reviewed other on-going projects in the area, the Airport/Main planning history and how the Preferred Alternative, Southwest Quadrant Loop, was selected. The following concepts from the initial planning study were then presented to the CAC for feedback. With modifications, these concepts merit a second look to determine if they can meet project goals.

- Southwest Quadrant Loop
- Two Eastbound Left Turns
- Three Eastbound Left Turns
- Displaced Northbound Left Turn Lanes

The discussion of alternatives/concepts is summarized below. There was consensus that the Two and Three Eastbound Left Concepts merited further evaluation to see if they can meet the project goals.

General Comments

- Easy access to businesses is extremely important – some property owners may be willing to give up some property if it means maximizing access
- Other projects should be prioritized first
- Redirect through traffic off Main Street
- Should MDT pay for a “patch” job or invest in a long-term solution
- Improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities must be part of the solution

Southwest Quadrant Loop

- Will a right turn off Main Street be possible to Airport Road East
- How much traffic does Bench Boulevard pull off Main Street
- 4th Avenue north is a positive change
- Turning from southbound Main Street to East Airport Road – If you eliminate left turn, how do you get from south Main Street to East Airport Road with RV/Trailer/Semi.
- Changes could result in cut-through traffic using businesses which could create incompatible uses/conflicts

Two and three Eastbound Left Turns

- Consider left-turn only green arrow or flashing yellow (Airport Road to Main Street northbound)
- Improve signal timing with left turn arrow from Main Street to Airport Road
- Need two right turn lanes from Airport Road to Main Street
- Need two through lanes on Airport Road East, west bound to accommodate events

Displaced Left Turn

- Would like more information on displaced left turns and grade separated - under Main street to Aronson Avenue