

Meeting Minutes

Informational Meeting – Number 1

MEETING DETAILS

Location: Great Falls Civic Center, Gibson Room
2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT

Date: January 21, 2016

Time: 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

MEETING NOTIFICATION AND OUTREACH

A press release for the meeting was released to area media outlets on January 13, 2016. Display ads were printed in the Great Falls Tribune on January 3rd and January 17th. Information about the meeting was posted to the study website: www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/riverdrive. A study newsletter was distributed to identified stakeholders and adjacent landowners prior to the meeting.

Meeting minutes are intended to capture the general content of meeting discussions and to document comments made by attendees. Meeting minutes may include opinions provided by attendees; no guarantees are made as to the accuracy of these statements and no fact checking of specific statements is provided or implied from the publishing of final meeting minutes.

ATTENDANCE

Approximately 23 people attended the meeting, 15 of which signed the sign in sheet (see attached). The following Advisory Committee Members attended the meeting:

- Dave Hand (MDT Great Falls)
- Steve Prinzing (MDT Great Falls)
- Christie Mcomber (MDT Great Falls)
- Jerilee Weibel (MDT Great Falls)
- Corrina Collins (MDT)
- Dave Dobbs (Great Falls)
- Andrew Finch (Great Falls)
- Scott Randall (RPA)
- Jeff Key (RPA)

AGENDA

The first informational meeting for the River Drive Corridor Study was held on Thursday, January 21, 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to inform interested parties about the scope and purpose of the planning study, to solicit input on the existing conditions, and to understand roadway concerns within the study area that may be relevant to the planning effort. The meeting began at 6:00 PM and concluded at 7:30 PM.

INFORMATIONAL MEETING #1

Scott Randall provided a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation focused on the purposes of a corridor planning study and the existing and projected conditions analysis of the study area. A discussion period was held following the presentation. Attendees were asked for questions and comments on the presentation. In addition, comment sheets were available for all member of the audience. A summary of the comments and questions received during the meeting is presented below:

Traffic and Non-motorized

- Curious about the traffic projections. Where did the 1% growth come from? Is this from a singular study or a combination of other reports? *Scott explained that we looked back at the historical growth over 20 years, but also had the benefit of the recent LRTP Travel Demand Model. All indications pointed to a 1% growth being quite realistic and legitimate.*
- Lots of use at the scenic pull-out. It might be worth looking at an additional access from the golf course directly across the pull-out. Maybe even a tunnel for pedestrians to access the Trail. The tunnel would have to be ADA accessible if under the roadway.
- Don't forget about pedestrian needs throughout the corridor.
- Truly hope that the alternatives developed look at a bigger vision for the community and not just what can be fit within the physical constraints as they are now. Also see an important need to accommodate non-motorized uses both across the roadway and along the roadway. With improvements to the 25th Street N pedestrian network, we will be dumping pedestrians at the intersection of 25th Street N and River Drive N, and then where do they go?

Freight and Rail

- Just last week the train blocked the roadway well over an hour. Blockages of 15 to 30 minutes are routine.
- With the AgriTech Park to the northeast, and the eventual construction of Walmart on the east end of town, the roadway will experience much higher traffic volumes. This needs to be incorporated into your traffic projections and operational analysis. *Scott explained that those influences are captured in the regional Travel Demand Model prepared for the Long Range Transportation Plan; which is how we arrived at our growth projections.*
- The slope (i.e. grade) of the roadway west of 25th Street N is a big safety concern; especially when it is icy and trucks are having to decelerate (to stop) or accelerate (to get up the hill).

Access / Right-of-way

- Pulling out of businesses is very difficult. Much easier to take a right out of business approaches than try to turn left out of the approaches. There are no stop lights on the corridor that could give "gaps" for turning traffic who have to deal with the steady traffic stream from the east. Traffic from the west not so bad because there are gaps introduced at the 15th Street N signal.
- There is narrow right-of-way in front of Service Master and Irrigation Company. He has had it surveyed in the past and the right-of-way is generally at the fire hydrants

Lighting

- Last Spring, the overhead lights were turned off. Instantly made the road dangerous in her opinion; now very dark. Not sure why they were shut down – rumor was nobody

wanted to pay to keep the lights on. *A clarification was made that the lights were removed and not shut off.*

Environment

- The deer population has exploded over the last few years. We have at least a dozen on any given day in the golf shop area.
- Concerned about erosion on the north side of the roadway. During especially wet springs, water seeps out of the north face and carries silt and debris down on the Rivers Edge Trail. Seems fairly random based on precipitation, but there are some areas that flow coincident to watering activities at the golf course. This points to maintenance concerns on the trail, but also long-term stability of the roadway itself if erosion continues to occur on the north side. Will send pictures to RPA Project Manager by email.

Other

- Space is constrained. Have you thought about using the abandoned railroad track for perhaps a one-way couplet (i.e. westbound on River Drive N and eastbound on abandoned railroad track)? *Christie Mcomber explained as part of a graduate student thesis analysis the abandoned railroad was examined for possible use, but there were numerous hurdles identified that included ownership patterns, the ability to tie roadways together at intersections and other physical constraints.*
- Just want to thank MDT and the City for embarking on this study process. It's been a long time coming and am glad that some progress is being made.

After concluding the question/answer portion of the meeting, the attendees were invited to review the displays and ask any further questions. The meeting concluded at 7:30 PM.

