

CITY OF ELKO
PLANNING COMMISSION
SPECIAL WORKSHOP MINUTES
6:00 P.M., P.D.S.T., TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2010
ELKO CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
1751 COLLEGE AVENUE, ELKO, NEVADA

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Thompson.

ROLL CALL

Present: Jeff Thompson, Rich Perry, Reece Keener, John Anderson, Doug Owen, Alene Sutherland (arrived at 6:15 p.m.)

Absent/Excused: Brent Elmore

City Staff: Curtis Calder, City Manager
Delmo Andreozzi, Assistant City Manager
Ed Wynes, City Planner
Scott Wilkinson, Development Manager
Jeremy Draper, Civil Engineer
Eric Howes, Parks and Recreation Director

Others Present: Jim Connor, City Councilman
Laura Hanson, CRSA
Donald Buaku, CRSA
Katy Cole, Fehr & Peers

I. WORKSHOP

This workshop is being held to review a draft of the Master Plan update. Discussion will include updates to the goals and objectives and existing conditions analysis. Specific focus will be given to the Transportation element of the Master Plan at this meeting. All Draft Plan materials to be discussed are available for public review on the project website at www.envisionelko.com. **DISCUSSION ITEM ONLY, NO ACTION REQUIRED.**

Ms. Hanson said we have two pieces to our presentation tonight. We conducted a community input survey. This was mailed randomly to 10% of the addresses within the city. We received, I think, about 97 back, and we tallied all of that. We also posted the survey on our project website which is www.envisionelko.com if you're interested, so you can print off a copy, fill it out and share your ideas.

The Survey Results portion of the PowerPoint presentation was reviewed.

Ms. Hanson said there are three or four different community events calendars on various websites within the city. Everybody kind of maintains separate lists. It might be nice to bring all of those together, so that would be a recommendation that would come out of the Arts and Culture portion of the Plan.

Commissioner Perry asked what the sample size for the questionnaires was.

Ms. Hanson said I believe we got about a 10% response back. She noted the survey results were posted on the project website so they can be looked at in more detail.

Mr. Wilkinson asked if all the results were in.

Ms. Hanson said I just got handed about five more surveys so we have a few more to add in, but 95% of them are.

The Master Plan Process slide of the PowerPoint presentation was reviewed.

Ms. Cole mentioned the Draft Projects List of the Transportation section is a work in progress and that it's there to give a taste of some of the things that were in the previous Master Plan, things that have been provided in different city documents and then some of the public input received.

The Existing Conditions slide of the PowerPoint presentation was reviewed which summarizes Tables 2 and 3 of the Transportation section of the draft Master Plan.

Ms. Cole said we did go through and update traffic volumes, which was received from NDOT for most of the major facilities throughout the city. In general you want to maintain a Level of Service (LOS) of D or better. That means that your roadways are operating well with minimal congestion. You may have some congestion during peak times.

Lina Blohm said I noticed that these numbers were through 2008. You don't have anything more current than that? I think our numbers are up significantly from what we had in 2008.

Ms. Cole said NDOT publishes information on an annual basis. They just recently, after I completed the tables, published 2009. Doing a quick look, there have not been a lot of changes, but we will include that information and recalculate some of the percentages.

The Goals and Objectives and Best Practices portions of the PowerPoint presentation and Transportation section of the draft Master Plan were reviewed.

Ms. Cole said the goal essentially came from the existing Master Plan. She explained the photos of the Wells Avenue Road Diet Rehabilitation Project in Reno, NV which are in the "Complete Streets" portion of Best Practices. The project basically took four through lanes down to three, incorporating a turn lane, widening sidewalks and adding bike lanes, etc. She then said this has been a really successful project. It's been in place for about four years and you do see a lot more walking and biking activity. The street actually carries about 20,000 daily vehicles. During peak

times we have received some information from citizens that getting onto the street can be a little difficult, so that's something you have to consider, but for the most part this has been really well received, and in fact the City of Reno has actually done about a dozen of these in the last three years. Whenever they do a rehab project they see if they can make this kind of change. A popular Angled Parking technique is Back and Angled Parking. Arizona uses this quite a bit. There is a learning curve and the spaces have to be a little bit bigger, but from a driver's viewpoint perspective as they're pulling out of the spot, the visibility is a lot better. One thing we are going to add is more information on Off-street Parking; the need to provide it for developments, code requirements for number of parking spaces for different land uses, etc.

John Carpenter mentioned it looked like there was no on-street parking after the Wells Avenue Road Diet Rehabilitation project took place.

Ms. Cole said this actually does have parking on the street. It's consolidated into different areas with curb returns so you'll see the curb comes out and there are a couple parking spaces. There was a reduction in on-street parking with this project though. This type of treatment can be successful if you have on-street parking and there are ways to not eliminate the parking completely. You get enough room to do the bike lanes just by taking away that fourth through lane.

Mr. Carpenter said if you did something like that with Idaho Street it would do away with the parking right?

Ms. Cole said you could keep most of the parking with a treatment like this.

Mr. Carpenter said how do you do that?

There was more discussion about the photos and parking.

Mr. Andreozzi said as part of the Redevelopment Plan there are some concepts for that type of thing where you would reduce the amount of through traffic and still allow for on-street parking. It would be somewhat difficult to accomplish at this point in time until we had another route going east and west because Idaho Street does pack a lot of traffic. Whether or not we could actually do a road diet in our current situation on Idaho Street would be pretty unlikely.

There was continued discussion about the photos and parking.

Ms. Blohm said Level of Service depends upon the number of cars coming down that particular corridor and these types of configurations then are possible only with certain types of usage or the amount of traffic in a particular corridor.

Ms. Cole said right. One of the things we consider when you're deciding to do a road diet is how that's actually going to affect your vehicle flows. One of the really nice things about a road diet is that you pick up the left turn lane which can actually add capacity to your roadway because in the previous condition, if somebody was turning left they blocked everybody else that was trying to go through from the inside lane. They would just have to sit there and wait until the person

could make the left turn. In the road diet situation, you've now provided them the space that they move into to make a left turn and people can keep flowing next to them but there is definitely a consideration of traffic. You have to make sure that your road can still accommodate the traffic volume that is there.

Mr. Andreozzi said another example of something we did recently is the 5th Street reconstruction project. If you recall, it was a double yellow line and there was on-street parking. We didn't have a dedicated turn lane except at Cedar Street, so people would pull up at a street to take a left and people would be going around the end or turning right. When someone stopped to make a left hand turn movement it might back traffic all the way for a couple of blocks. With the new configuration we put the center turn lane there to get that turning vehicle, because the turning vehicle has to wait for an open spot to make a turn, out of the travel lane so that the travel lane could run unencumbered. The difference with 5th Street is we didn't quite have enough room to fit bicycle lanes because we have impingement points at the I-80 overpass and where the Pine Street wall is. Otherwise we might have considered putting in bike lanes, but we neck down at those two locations. That was an example of what we did to try to improve the traffic circulation. Whenever you can get that turning traffic out of the way of through traffic, it makes it a lot more efficient.

Ms. Cole said I think the reason the letters for Level of Service are a little confusing is in school when you get a D it's not really great. When you're talking about traffic it's a little bit different though. If you have Level of Service A throughout your entire day, it means you've built the road too big. Level of Service A is the easiest to drive, but it's also the most expensive to maintain. Levels of Service E and F basically mean the road is at capacity and you can't put more cars on there: people are not moving and you're waiting through several green lights to finally be able to go. That's not comfortable for people and not something you want to promote. We recommend Levels of Service C or D.

Mr. Andreozzi said in the draft Plan there are also the tables where you've cross referenced the current traffic analysis and then applied the Level of Service rating. That's based off the average daily traffic and essentially how many through lanes we have.

Ms. Cole said the Federal Highway Administration has done a lot of research on access and access management, so that's where some of these numbers come from. For driveway spacing, sometimes there are parcels of land that don't even have that amount of frontage, so there are provisions that you have to make for developers, but the numbers represent what gets you the best capacity on your roadway. A lot of the transit information is done by the Northern Nevada Transit Coalition which operates the NEAT bus. They're basically federally funded. NDOT acts as a funneling source to rural transit agencies. Something to think about is actually working with them to develop a short range transit plan. Currently there is fixed route service operated by the NEAT bus that's pretty limited. They also provide demand responsive service which is basically the elderly or disabled can call them to get a ride to a certain place. They only have so much funding so they're really trying to figure out where to put that. Usually their funding is very focused, specifically to the elderly and disabled kind of population categories. My understanding is that the Northern Nevada Transit Coalition actually has plans for somewhat of a transit center out on Lamoille Highway, but there are still some opportunities to look at a potential downtown

location for a transit center. Some of the locations I think about for Objective 4 are places like the intersection of Mountain City Highway and Idaho Street, and then on the other side of town down by Jennings Way or somewhere in that area, even right out here is kind of a gateway into a civic area and into the downtown area. You're already using the banner technique but it could be expanded.

Mr. Wilkinson said could you elaborate on what you mean by pedestrian scale street lighting?

Ms. Cole said often times we have street lights that are really focused on the roadway itself. Pedestrian scale street lighting would be something that focuses the light more on the sidewalk. A lot of times they're real decorative fixtures. The Wells Avenue Road Diet Rehabilitation Project picture actually had some good examples that you could see. Reno actually used this same fixture throughout their city.

Ms. Hanson said in the Sugar House neighborhood in Salt Lake City they have a light pole that has two different lights on it; one that shines over the street and then another one that's a little bit lower and shines over the sidewalk.

Ms. Cole said usually places will use signage as kind of a branding for their city, so if there's a certain feel you're trying to give like incorporating some of the old west or history in mining, you can brand your signs so they all look the exact same. One thing we talked about with City Staff is that we'd want to include the sidewalk, curb and gutter within this maintenance program. A lot of times places have a scale, so they rate pavement on a scale of like 0 to 100, and they determine whether or not they want to just do preventative maintenance if the pavement is above 70, or whatever the number is, and if it's below that then they need to do reconstruction.

Mr. Carpenter said I know in prior sessions of the legislature we used to get matching money from the State. Last time we couldn't get any, but I noticed the transit system is still operating and maybe operating more than it did, so are they getting more federal money that's going to last?

Ms. Cole said I don't know if it's going to last. I do believe they got more federal money to operate their current system. My understanding is as part of the Federal Stimulus Package they actually were able to purchase several new buses, I think it was 8, but that was kind of a one time thing. I can't speak specifically to what their future funding sources look like I don't think they have a good feel for it. Right now I think they're basically operating on more of a one time influx of some money. They do apply every year for several grant programs. They're primarily through the Federal Transit Administration which primarily provides service for the disabled, elderly and the low-income populations. My understanding is they're not expecting to get additional funding for an additional fixed route, kind of general population service.

A member of the audience said can you request from the NDOT to check the traffic in a specific area or do they pick them?

Ms. Cole said NDOT only has jurisdiction over a few roadways within Elko; Mountain City Highway down to the intersection of Idaho Street, Idaho Street from that intersection over to 5th

Street, South 5th Street and Lamoille Highway. They do check traffic volumes on other Elko roadways, but those are not their roads to maintain or do any kind of improvements on.

The same audience member said we use Mountain City Highway and it seems over the last few years it has gotten extremely difficult to make a left hand turn. Thinking about a truck route then Silver Street would not be NDOT, so if we want to make that a truck route it's on our dollar.

Ms. Cole said plus trucks tear up the road more than cars do.

Mr. Andreozzi said it's one of those things for the community that is a necessary evil. Silver Street obviously is designed to carry a little more traffic than a residential road. We are a little bit landlocked because we have topography on the north side of Idaho Street, and the river and railroad tracks to our south. We don't have a whole lot of options to disburse that traffic. There is quite a bit of truck traffic that goes over to the Spring Creek area and delivering goods and services within the Elko area. I don't see a whole lot of truck traffic that's passing through because we don't have a truck stop here, so most of the truck traffic that we have in the Elko area is really destination oriented. Those are things you want to factor for when designing roads. NDOT does provide traffic counts for the City of Elko. A lot of the data that's provided is from the NDOT website. They've done it for years. They do it on certain roads. As we go through this process, we're really looking at the function classification of all our roads. We want to update that and get it to NDOT so that perhaps they could do some more traffic counts on some of those other roads as well. We also have a traffic counter. We use that if a citizen mentions there may be problems in certain areas. We can also see how fast vehicles are traveling to see if we have speeding problems and things like that. There are a couple things we've done on Mountain City Highway to try to improve that circulation; adding that right hand turn lane at Spruce, we also did an interconnect project which is having the traffic signals communicating with each other. Our traffic count on Mountain City Highway is about 24,000 vehicles per day.

Ms. Cole said on Mountain City Highway there are a lot of major land use destinations; big retail stores, etc.

Mr. Andreozzi said NDOT is in the process of doing some rehabilitation projects which gives us an opportunity to float some ideas by them. We're planning on taking something to the City Council to request some other turning pockets and things to improve that traffic movement on Mountain City Highway such as Aspen, West Sage, or some of those other locations where we have a lot of cross traffic. Our Level of Service rating on Mountain City Highway is a D, so it's not critical at this point but it's getting there.

Ms. Cole said it's to the point where you need to start looking at how to make some improvements.

The Draft Projects List of the PowerPoint presentation was reviewed.

Ms. Cole said some of the big projects are installing traffic signals which can only be done once they meet Federal Highway Administration warrants, which are essentially based on traffic volumes. There are a couple other ones that take into account schools or pedestrian volumes. We

will provide this information online so you can provide some additional comments on these. I think once the Silver Street connection is made there may be some additional opportunities on Idaho Street for things like adding bike lanes or a road diet. Looking at the I-80 at 5th Street interchange, I really think it probably makes more sense to identify an interchange near the college just because of interchange spacing and also the land uses that you're accessing. You don't want to funnel a lot of traffic onto 5th Street and create an overcapacity situation. Pedestrian Bridges are very costly so we need to really look at the feasibility of constructing them, make sure there are actually enough people that are going to use them to justify the cost of putting something like this in. We do know I-80 is a big barrier to pedestrians, so there are probably some things that we can look at in terms of enhancing the current under-crossings and locations where you can cross, like Ruby Vista or College Parkway, and then maybe look at an opportunity to do some kind of bridge for pedestrians over I-80. We tried to look at all the public comments that we got. If something just isn't feasible from a constructability standpoint or a financial standpoint we will respond to those and give the reasoning why we don't think that particular improvement is either necessary or feasible from a construction standpoint.

Ms. Hanson said please send me some photos of Elko to put in the Master Plan. We've gotten a few of them and have a lot of examples of other places in the Master Plan, but we'd really like to use local Elko examples to the extent possible. My email address is on the project website, www.envisionelko.com and my email address is laura@crsa-us.com. It makes a lot of difference when you see places that you're familiar with. Hopefully next month we will have a complete draft of the Master Plan. We'll post tonight's presentation online first thing tomorrow so you can share it and encourage people to participate and share their ideas. Unless we get your input, the Plan's not going to say what you want it to say. We can't read minds.

Mr. Andreozzi said City Staff is putting a lot of energy and effort into reviewing the document, providing a lot of correspondence and feedback. The City Council recently awarded a change order to CRSA to do some additional work for the downtown Redevelopment Plan.

Chairman Thompson said I want to thank CRSA and City Staff on behalf of the Planning Commission. They've given us a lot of information.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

This agenda item is to provide time for the general public to address the Planning Commission regarding items of concern not specifically listed on the agenda. Action cannot be taken at this time, but a matter can be set on the agenda for a future meeting, as appropriate.

There were no comments made at this time.

NOTE: The Chairman or Vice Chairman reserves the right to change the order of the agenda and if the agenda is not completed, to recess the meeting and continue on another specified date and time.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jeff Thompson, Chairperson

Reece Keener, Secretary