

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES

February 24th, 2016

APPROVED AS AMENDED

MEMBERS PRESENT: Todd Cormier, Pierre Jomini, Jerry Dunning, Ron Alles, Capt. Harper; Gene Wade

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sondra Baker

STAFF SUPPORT: Terry Smith, Aaron Lebsack, Erin Claunch, Debi Meling, Lora Mattox

GUESTS: none

BUSINESS MEETING:

Call to order: Todd Cormier called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

Minutes: Motion for approval of the January minutes by Ron Alles. Seconded by Pierre Jomini. Motion carried on a voice vote.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: None

STAFF REPORTS: Todd mentioned that Grand Ave from Zimmerman Trail to Shiloh Road will be under construction this summer. This project will include widening to 4 thru lanes with a median and left turn lanes. Two roundabouts will be added with the project – one at 38th St W and one just east of the cemetery to provide commercial access north and south of Grand.

BOARD REPORTS: Lora reported that the Community Transportation Safety Plan project is moving forward with an online survey available until May. The project advisory committee has agreed to focus on the following emphasis areas in the study: unrestrained occupants, speeding, impaired driving, intersection related, and distracted driving. This study will look at how the “4 E’s” of traffic safety—engineering, education, emergency services, and enforcement—can be used to reduce serious injury and fatality crashes in the Billings area. It is not intended to develop countermeasures at specific locations.

Lora also mentioned that consultant proposals are due today for the bike/pedestrian plan update. A consultant is expected to be chosen within a month, with work starting on the update this summer. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for the 5th Ave N corridor feasibility study is also out right now. This study will look at the old railroad corridor from N 32nd St to Main Street. The goal is to determine the feasibility of using the corridor for non-motorized (bike/ped) traffic and/or a transit/trolley connection. Lastly, the Rimrocks to Valley bike/pedestrian feasibility study had its second public meeting looking at alternate routes from Highway 3 to the valley. The two main priorities for this project will look at N 27th St and Zimmerman Trl access.

Terry mentioned that MET Transit has a new director and MET is starting to review items such as their fare structure, extending services into areas of town that are not currently being served and transitioning to a fixed stop system.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Accesses from Rimrock Frontage Rd to Rimrock Rd; inconsistency in traffic control:** Nothing to report at this time.
- **6th Avenue North & North 31st Street. Is there a pedestrian crash trend?:** Engineering has nothing to report at this time. Capt. Harper noted there have been 4 recent pedestrian accidents at this intersection. One in

December, one in January, and two in February. Todd reported new signs reminding drivers of turning vehicles to yield to pedestrians have been posted.

- **Signal Timing; Grand Avenue and Zimmerman/32nd Street West:** Erin reported that he has implemented signal timing changes at the intersection. He removed the pm timing plan which ran from 6:30 pm to 8 pm and changed it to free operations.
- **Five non-signalized intersections with most injury/fatal accidents for 2014-2016:** Nothing to report at this time. Terry noted that developing such a list is essentially a manual process because it requires checking at least three databases.
- **Grand Avenue-Rehberg Lane westbound left turn:** Pierre mentioned that Todd had inquired about a westbound “no left turn” sign at Grand Ave & Rehberg Ln. Pierre asked if the median should be modified to accommodate U-turns for access to the businesses on the south side of Grand Ave. Terry stated there are no planned projects to make geometric improvements (turn lanes, median modifications, etc) at this intersection. Staff will look at the signing.
- **Striping Modification:** Pierre inquired about revising the striping at 20th St W & Monad Rd. At the moment this intersection is not set for an overlay or chipseal. Debi noted that staff can supply a list of the current 5-year plan for chipseals & overlays. She cautioned that projects on the list are subject to change, especially those farther out.
- **Signal coordination on Grand Ave. 13th to 19th St W:** Pierre asked about Ron’s concerns in relation to the coordination that is used on Grand Ave. Erin answered that at 17th St W and 19th St W ethernet radio is used, the rest was unknown. Erin also stated that Grand Avenue from 3rd St W to 19th St W is a corridor planned for signal controller & cabinet upgrades. An updated signal timing plan will be implemented after new controllers are in place.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Access to MDT crash database:** Pierre inquired about the possibility of the City having access to MDT’s crash database software for safety concerns. Terry noted that the last discussions he had with MDT were that MDT was looking at providing the City internet based access to their crash database. City staff will follow up with MDT.
- **Downtown Pedestrian Safety.** Ron Alles asked about the City Council request to look at ways to improve pedestrian safety in the downtown area. Debi reported that this is a Council Initiative. A committee of the Public Works Director, the Police Chief, and the Downtown Business Alliance has been directed to look at what can be done to improve pedestrian & vehicle safety downtown. The timeline for the study is approximately one year. Debi expects ideas from the committee will come to TCB for discussion.
- **Main Street & Lake Elmo.** Gene asked if there were any plans to improve the Main Street & Lake Elmo Drive intersection. Terry reported this intersection is being looked at indirectly with the Airport & Main study that MDT is doing.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Traffic Safety – How Billings crash data is used by Engineering
Billings Bypass Project
Airport & Main Intersection study (MDT w/ Kittleson & Associates)

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.