

**Traffic Control Board
Minutes
August 24th, 2010**

Members Present: James Knox, Brent Krueger, Walt Willett, Steve Zeier, Capt. Bedford

Members Absent: Sondra Baker

Staff Support: Terry Smith, Erin Claunch, John Gibson

Guests: None

BUISNESS MEETING

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Zeier at 12:15pm in the conference room of the Public Works offices at 2224 Montana Ave.

Minutes: Minutes of the July meeting approved as printed on a voice vote.

Open Public Comment: None

STAFF REPORTS:

Terry reported that Parkhill Drive and 13th St West has been reopened to traffic. Terry noted that Grand Avenue between 54th and 62nd Streets West was also open.

Erin reported that a storm drain will be installed in the neighborhood north of Hilltop and east of Nutter. There will be separate closures of Nutter and Hilltop. Construction will begin August 30th and continue through approximately November 27th.

Mr. Knox asked when the traffic signal for St. Andrews and Wicks would be in full operation. Erin Claunch responded, stating that advertising for bids is scheduled to start September 2nd with a bid opening on September 14th. City Council should award a construction contract on September 27th. Construction will start in late October and the signal should be operational before the end of the year.

BOARD REPORTS:

Terry reported that Alta Planning & Design from Bozeman has been hired to prepare an update to the *Heritage Trail Plan*. A public meeting on the Plan update is scheduled for September 15th at 6:00 pm at the Senior Center, 390 N. 23rd Street. Alta has established a website for the plan update, at <http://www.billingstrails.com/>.

OLD BUISNESS:

1. **Board Vacancy.** Terry reported that no applications were received for the vacancy on the Board. The Traffic Control Board vacancy and other board vacancies will be re-advertised starting August 26th.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **27th Street Signal Timing.** Terry presented a PowerPoint presentation on the 27th Street signal timing study conducted by the Montana Department of Transportation. The study started as a traffic safety project to determine if traffic accidents could be reduced along 27th. Terry presented accident summaries and suggested timing changes from MDT. Slightly longer cycle lengths are recommended to meet new guidelines for pedestrian crossing times. Small adjustments can be made to the signal timings, but no significant changes in progression along 27th are possible because the signals are so closely spaced in the downtown core. The MDT study included an evaluation of the need for left turn phases (left turn arrows) on 27th at Montana, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Avenues North. The need for separate left turn phases was reviewed based on traffic volumes, left turn delay, and accident history. None of the intersections warrants addition of protected left turn phasing at this time. Terry also noted any changes to the cycle length on 27th will require changes to the city signals on the east-west streets as well in order to maintain east-west progression. Capt. Bedford suggested that a series of public service announcements reminding motorists to watch for pedestrians in the downtown area might be more effective in reducing car-pedestrian accidents than changes to signal timing.
2. **Bicycles & Skateboards on Downtown Sidewalks.** Terry reported that staff had received a request from Shane Winden, one of the Downtown bike patrol officers, to place stencils on sidewalks in the downtown area to remind people that riding bicycles and skateboards is not allowed on sidewalks in the downtown area. The purpose of the stencils would be primarily educational, since the ordinances prohibiting bikes and skateboards can be enforced without any signs or markings. Terry distributed a copy of the existing ordinances. Bozeman did have a program of stenciling a “No Bikes or Skateboards” symbol message on sidewalks in the downtown area, but has dropped it in favor of signs posted on the traffic signal poles at each corner. Bozeman felt the stenciled markings were not enforceable, and feels the signs are more cost effective than re-painting the stencils each year. The Downtown Billings Association has proposed a word message approximately 29” x 12” as you come onto the sidewalk from each crosswalk (8 stencils at a typical intersection). The DBA would maintain the stenciled messages. Walt Willet commented that the Bozeman signs do not say “on sidewalk” and that “on sidewalk” needs to be part of the message since cyclists are not prohibited from using the streets.

OTHER

Steve Zeier reported that MDT in cooperation with BSEDA has submitted a grant application for TIGER II funding to construct an underpass/overpass at 6th Ave North and Main Street to carry the proposed Bench Connector under/over Main Street. The TIGER (*Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery*) grants are discretionary grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation awarded on a competitive basis. This project was nominated for the original round of TIGER grant funding and has been revised slightly for the TIGER II application.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:34 PM