

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES

May 22, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Walt Willett, Brent Krueger, Gene Wade, Capt. Bedford

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trina White, Todd Cormier, Sondra Baker

STAFF SUPPORT: Terry Smith, Lora Mattox, Erin Claunch, Zach Heid, Steve Zeier

GUESTS: None

BUSINESS MEETING

Call to order: Terry Smith called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

Minutes: Motion for approval of the April minutes by Gene Wade, seconded by Walt Willett. Motion approved on a voice vote.

Open Public Comment: None

STAFF REPORTS:

Shiloh Road. Erin Claunch gave a presentation comparing traffic accident data before and after the reconstruction of Shiloh Road. The work on Shiloh Road began in 2009 with the utilities and phase 3 of the project from Poly Drive to Central Avenue. Phase 1 from King Avenue to Central Avenue and phase 2 from King Ave. to Zoo Dr. were completed during 2010. Data during the years 2009 and 2010 was not analyzed because the roadway was under construction. "Before" data from 2004 – 2008 was used to compare to the 2011 "after construction" data.

Erin presented information on the number of accidents along the entire Shiloh corridor between Zoo Drive and Rimrock Road:

	Total Accidents	Injury Accidents	Fatal Accidents
BEFORE (Annual Average 2004-2008)	37.2	16.6	0.2
AFTER (2011)	81	15	0
Per Cent change	+118%	-10%	na

Erin noted the number of accidents by itself does not provide a true comparison because of increased traffic on Shiloh Road. Shiloh now accommodates an average of 3000 more cars per day than it did in the years prior to the construction project. This is an increase of approximately 36.6% in average traffic volume.

Crash rates take into account traffic volume and are calculated on the basis of a million vehicle miles of travel (MVM). The crash rate (total accidents) for 2008 was 2.91 accidents per MVM, while the crash rate had risen to 4.64 accidents per MVM in 2011. Thus, while the total number of crashes more than

doubled, the crash rate rose by only 60 per cent. Erin also pointed out that because of increased traffic volumes, the injury accident rate actually decreased by 34%. Erin speculated that the increased crash rate reflects the fact that Billings drivers are still getting used to roundabouts. Gene Wade asked if there was a national statistic for crash rates to compare the numbers gathered here in Billings to other Cities or states. Erin did not think there was a national statistic and didn't know if it would be comparable if there was one.

Erin noted that the decrease in the injury accident rate is due to the type of accidents that occur with roundabouts as opposed to conventional signalized intersections. Accidents in the roundabouts most often occur as a side swipe. Side swipe accidents tend to be less severe which in turn decreases the injuries in accidents. Speeds are also lower within a roundabout than at a conventional intersection, which also results in fewer injuries. The accidents that were used in this study came from the entire length of Shiloh Road, not just the roundabouts. This is a preliminary study. Additional years of "after" data are needed in order to accurately reflect the impact of the roundabouts and the roadway reconstruction on accident rates.

Board Reports:

Planning Board. Steve Zeier presented the Board with an overview of the East Billings Urban Revitalization District otherwise known as EBURD. A special development code has been proposed for EBURD which is a cross between traditional zoning and a form based code. From a traffic perspective, EBURD is focused on making the area more pedestrian friendly by slowing down the motor vehicle traffic, requiring boulevards and shortening crossing distances by providing curb bulbs at intersections. EBURD is also encouraging development of back-in angle parking along the non-major streets. A departure from normal zoning codes is that the EBURD code will dictate how the adjacent street right-of-way is developed as well as controlling building on private property. Existing buildings can remain without change; however, any new buildings must meet the requirements of EBURD. The EBURD code will be discussed at a City Council Work Session on June 18, and be considered by the Zoning Commission on July 3rd.

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

- Because several Board members were absent, election of a new Chair and Vice Chair was postponed to the June meeting.

Miscellaneous Issues and Questions from Board Members:

Gene Wade asked if job descriptions for President and Vice President of the Traffic Control Board were available in order to know the responsibilities of each position.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm.