

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES

June 26, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Walt Willett, Todd Cormier, Sondra Baker, Gene Wade, Capt Bedford

MEMBERS ABSENT: Trina White, Brent Krueger

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

GUESTS: None

BUSINESS MEETING

Call to order: Terry Smith called the meeting to order at 12:16 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

Minutes: Motion for approval of the June minutes by Walt Willett, seconded by Sondra Baker. Motion approved on a voice vote.

Open Public Comment: None

STAFF REPORTS:

Erin Claunch gave a presentation comparing traffic on Aronson Avenue before and after the opening of the new Oasis water park. Traffic studies were conducted in late April before the water park opened, then again in June during the week the park first opened.

	North of Park	South of Park
Pre-Park Volume	7000vpd	8800vpd
Post-Park Volume	7675vpd	8830vpd
Pre-Park 85 th %ile Speed	31.7mph	39mph
Post-Park 85 th %ile Speed	32mph	38mph
Posted Speed Limit	25mph	30mph

Erin noted daily traffic volumes north of the water park increased almost 10% while the volume south of the park increased only 0.4%. However hourly volumes after opening of the water park do not exceed the am or pm peak hour volumes measured before the park opened. The water park may have increased traffic volumes during the hours it is open, but this is offset by a reduction in mid-afternoon traffic because schools are not open during the summer.

The speeds stayed fairly constant from before the park opened compared to after. There have been parking complaints from nearby residents however, the issue is getting better and varies day by day and with the weather for the day. City crews have painted curbs in the area and the fresh paint along with enforcement seems to be correcting the issue of illegal parking.

Gene Wade commented that he feels some of the traffic that started using Aronson when Hilltop was closed for bridge work has not gone back to Hilltop. Gene also asked if a crosswalk at the water park was needed. Erin responded that was one of the things staff was continuing to monitor. Staff does not want to base improvements on the large traffic volumes (pedestrian and vehicular) present during the opening. The need for additional improvements will be evaluated after traffic normalizes and the residents have adjusted to having a new traffic generator in their neighborhood.

BOARD REPORTS:

Lora Mattox mentioned the Transportation Plan will need to be amended for the Billings bypass project, connecting Johnson Lane and Highway 87. Funding is still in the process of being secured for this project. Federal regulations now require the Transportation Plan to be fiscally constrained, so funding sources will need to be identified for actual construction of the Bypass. Depending on the funding used this has potential impacts on the ability to construct other highway projects in the Billings area.

Because of projections of increased coal train traffic the railroad crossings in Downtown Billings are again an item of concern. The Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) has asked that attention not be focused just on coal train traffic, but how to improve traffic flow throughout downtown Billings.

OLD BUSINESS:

Traffic Volume Trends on Major Westend Arterials. Terry reported that the traffic volume data collected on 24th & 32nd Streets West appears to have been flawed due to equipment malfunctions. More data will be gathered and an update will be given at a future meeting after reliable data is acquired.

NEW BUSINESS:

Election of new chair and vice-chair. Walt Willett nominated Todd Cormier to become the new Chair and the nomination was seconded by Sondra Baker. Terry asked for additional nominations three times and there were none, so nominations were closed. Todd was elected on a voice vote. Election of a Vice Chair was postponed to the July meeting because of absent board members who might want to serve in that position.

Miscellaneous Issues and Questions from Board Members:

Gene Wade noted that recent chip sealing and new striping between 4th & 6th on Main has made the area less confusing for drivers. Erin noted that the chip sealing and final striping had to be postponed because the project was completed too late last fall. Gene asked when the next phase of Bench would be constructed. Erin reported that work is expected to start in late summer. Gene also asked about the next phase of Rimrock Road. Erin reported the design will be completed by the end of the year with a goal to bid the project in February and start construction next spring/summer.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:12 pm.