

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES

January 22, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT: Todd Cormier, Walt Willett, Capt. RD Harper, Gene Wade, Trina White, Sondra Baker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Brent Krueger

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

GUESTS: None

BUSINESS MEETING:

Call to order: Todd Cormier 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 December minutes by Gene Wade, seconded by Walt Willett. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Open Public Comment: None

STAFF REPORTS: None

BOARD REPORTS:

Planning Board: Lora Mattox talked briefly about the Hospitality Corridor Plan along with a recap of the transportation portion of the 12/5/12 Exposition Gateway Stakeholder Meeting. The map that was distributed includes concepts suggested by property owners at the meeting, not necessarily projects that will be included in the final plan. The State has shared all of the traffic data compiled by Sanderson Stewart in the study they performed for MDT. Lora stated that the Hospitality Corridor Plan should be complete by the end of the summer.

The Planning Department is starting the process for an update to the Billings Transportation Plan. This is a required update that occurs about every 4 years. Because all Federal Funding through 2021 is already committed, the plan will not include much in the way of new projects. Instead it will concentrate on strengthening the Transit, Safety & Security, and Freight & Rail components. A Request for Proposals is expected to go out in February.

Council Activities Related to Transportation: Gene Wade asked where the new schools being proposed by the School District will be built. Lora and Terry responded the process is just starting and sites have not been identified. The only known site at this time is the Cottonwood Park site at 54th & Colton. The process will focus on areas where residential growth is expected to occur. Todd also mentioned that next year the middle schools will include 6th grade in addition to the 7th and 8th grades.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Senators Blvd and Alkali Cr. Rd: Erin Claunch gave a presentation on the intersection of Senators Blvd and Alkali Creek Road. The review was initiated because of a citizen inquiry questioning whether the current all-way stop was needed. In 2006 stop signs were added to the Alkali Creek Road legs of the intersection as part of an Alkali Creek Elementary school sidewalk & crosswalk project. The decision to make the intersection an all-way stop controlled intersection was supported based on traffic volumes and delay. In 2008 Aronson Avenue was extended to connect with Alkali Creek Road. With the extension of Aronson, traffic patterns

have changed and the traffic volumes on Senators are now significantly lower. The following volumes show the decrease in traffic on Senators Boulevard north of Alkali Creek Road from 1994 through 2013. Data was not gathered in 2008 due to the construction on Aronson Ave.

Year	ADT
1994	5,293
1996	5,043
1998	4,383
2000	4,029
2002	4,347
2004	6,304
2006	3,846
2010	2,368
2012	2,471
2013	2,400

Erin reviewed the warrants from the Manual on Uniformed Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) for an all-way stop controlled intersection. The intersection of Senators Boulevard and Alkali Creek Road does not warrant an all-way stop based on either traffic volumes or crash history. The stop signs on Alkali Creek Road will be removed and the stop sign on Senators Boulevard will remain. The change will not be implemented until warmer weather when the necessary striping changes can be made.

Election of Board Chair & Vice-Chair: Walt Willett made a motion that Todd Cormier continue as TCB Chair and that motion was seconded by Trina White. The motion carried on voice vote. Todd Cormier made a motion that Gene Wade continue as TCB Vice-Chair and that motion was seconded by Walt Willett. The motion carried on voice vote.

Additional Items. Trina White asked if advanced warning lights for the railroad crossing could be added at 4th Avenue North on North 27th Street. Terry mentioned that there are existing warning lights between 2nd and 3rd Avenues North. Trina stated that at 2nd Avenue North it is almost too late and if the warning lights were placed at 4th Avenue North then drivers would be able to choose a different route. Terry and Lora noted that additional advanced warning signs are one concept being discussed with the proposed study of the impact of rail traffic on Billings. Discussions have included not only North 27th Street, but also the possibility of a warning sign on 1st Avenue North so drivers could take the 13th Street underpass. One of the other ideas is to have some system that would convey to drivers how long the crossing might be blocked. With the current signs, drivers only know the crossing is blocked—not whether it is a long train or just a switch engine with one or two cars. Terry did note that the current system sends a signal to emergency dispatch when the crossing arms are down and emergency vehicles can be notified. Gene asked if there was any talk of increasing the height on the 21st St underpass. Terry noted the idea of trying to get enough clearance that an ambulance could get under was looked at closely when the railroad rebuilt the underpass about 10 years ago. It was deemed not feasible due to high ground water in the area.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 1:07 pm.