

Missoula City Council Public Works Committee Minutes

December 14, 2022, 2:30 pm

Council Chambers (in person) or TEAMS (virtually)

Attend in person: City Council Chambers, 140 W Pine, Missoula MT

Members present: Stacie Anderson, Daniel Carlino, John P. Contos, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Mike Nugent, Jennifer Savage, Amber Sherrill, Sandra Vasecka

Members absent: Mirtha Becerra (chair), Kristen Jordan, Heidi West

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

1.2.1 PWM Committee Minutes from December 7, 2022

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

3. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

3.1 Right-of-Way Vacation at 601 West Broadway

Brandt Dahlen presenting,

This is a presentation to request to vacate a portion of Front Street associated with the riverfront triangle redevelopment. The property owner Riverfront LLC brings about this request. The right-of-way is located at 601 W Broadway, at Broadway and Front Street intersection. Vacating this right-of-way relieves a pinch point and allows for a more usable area of sight improvements. The planned Greenway will continue through the proposed vacation.

Mr. Carlino asked what the plans for the Greenway include. Mr. Dahlen explained it would be more of a bicycle and pedestrian area with no vehicle access. Mr. Carlino also asked what type of development would be here and if it would have affordable housing. Mr. Keene added that the City does not know the specific details. This right-of-way agreement would go along with the building located at 601 W Broadway. The public benefit is the extended Greenway and a safer intersection. The zoning allows for a mix of residential and commercial.

Bob Carter commented about the crash statistics at that intersection and wondered if fixing this intersection would create issues down the street. Mr. Dahlen said he does not have exact statistics, but it would create more traffic turning from Broadway to Orange. They would add a new turn lane on Broadway.

Moved by: Gwen Jones

Set a public hearing on January 9, 2023 and preliminarily adopt a resolution declaring it to be the intention of the City Council of the City of Missoula, Montana, to close and

vacate a portion of Front Street public right-of-way in WJ McCormick's Addition, Blocks 51 and 56, and subject it to two (2) conditions of approval.

AYES: (7): Stacie Anderson, Daniel Carlino, Sierra Farmer, Gwen Jones, Mike Nugent, Amber Sherrill, and Sandra Vasecka

NAYS: (1): John Contos

ABSENT: (4): Mirtha Becerra, Kristen Jordan, Jennifer Savage, and Heidi West

Vote results: Approved (7 to 1)

3.2 Missoula City Public Works Standards & Specifications Manual Updates

Ross Mollenhauer presenting,

This public works manual provides a comprehensive resource for developers, contractors, and engineers. The City updates it every year to keep it updated and improving. The staff looks to City Code as the "why," and the Public Works Manual is intended to answer the "how." The manual establishes design and construction standards for City owned and maintained infrastructure. City staff has contacted contractors and the public for input on the new updates. The State also has a manual called Montana Public Works Standard Specification that was updated this year. The City wanted to update its specifications to be consistent with the State's.

Chapter 2 changes include the standard mods, asphalt penalties, defined warranty start date, and created a standard public easement template. Chapter 3 contains new content regarding trees and updated review requirements. Chapter 4 clarified hydrant requirements, updated max day and peak hourly demands, defined shutdown procedures for service line repairs, and added lead service line requirements. Chapter 5 clarified that commercial properties on city sewer outside city limits require water meters. Also, manholes must be kept out of wheel paths in the streets. Chapter 6 stormwater clarified that infiltration facilities should not be used where fines exceed 12%, added requirements for pretreatment for infiltrations, and addressed potentially contaminated soils. Chapter 7 added information regarding the City's Vision Zero policy, clarified requirements for sidewalk approach thickness, and updated bike lane signage requirements. Chapter 8 added a requirement to include phased erosion control plans for large projects.

Mr. Carter commented that he hoped the City would consider the county properties that have sewer would be allowed to use a well still.

No Recommended Motion—Informational Only

3.3 Presentation on the Higgins Avenue Corridor (Brooks to Broadway) Project

Aaron Wilson presenting,

The vision of the project is a safer design, an inviting streetscape, increased economic activity, and to create a postcard street. This area has about fifty-five vehicle crashes, four bike crashes, and one pedestrian crash with injuries yearly. This area also lacks left turns and business access. It also has a high-stress incomplete bike network and poorly defined bus stops. Higgins is the gateway into downtown.

The basic concept is to take Higgins north of the river from a four-lane to a three-lane concept with two travel lanes and a left-turn lane. This would also add bike lanes. South

of the river would be similar with a three-lane and dedicated left turns with protected bike lanes. The space is tighter here, so three blocks will lose street parking.

The design benefits of a 4-to-3 conversion are increased safety, protected left turns, reduced crossing distance, improved lane widths, and maintenance and emergency access. The design benefits of protected bike lanes are the separation of modes, increased safety, economic benefits, and predictability. Beartracks Bridge was designed for four travel lanes, but it will still work well with the new Higgins plan. The bridge was built with the capacity to separate modes of travel, and the investment will not go to waste.

There are trade-offs in this decision. This plan will increase vehicle travel time from 3 to 18 seconds to 50 seconds to get from Brooks to Broadway on Higgins during rush hour traffic. Parking is also another area of trade-off, losing about 22 spaces of parking. Engage Missoula has a more detailed draft of this plan.

Ms. Jones commented that she thinks this will be a great project and has wanted to see this area improve for several years. She asked Mr. Wilson to explain what he thought the impact on businesses would be. Mr. Wilson said there is an economic benefit to adding bicycle access. Also, it is difficult for vehicles to turn left into a business, which will be improved. Studies show that a 4 to 3 conversion is suitable for businesses because it increases all modes of shopping.

Ms. Savage asked how the bike lane would look in front of the hip strip area. Mr. Wilson says this is a complicated high-stress area; a bike lane will be added, and parking will stay in this location.

Mr. Carlino asked why the corridor from 6th Street to Brooks will remain four lanes. Mr. Wilson said that that section of Higgins has higher traffic volumes, and they wanted to preserve that capacity.

Ms. Sherrill commented that there are currently two lanes of traffic on Higgins, but they are very tight, and in the winter, snow build-up makes them even tighter.

Ms. Vasecka asked the staff to consider bike parking as they encourage more biking in this area, especially the bikes that are large commuter bikes.

No recommended motion – information only.

4. ADJOURNMENT