



Missoula Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Minutes

November 10, 2020, 3:00 PM
ZOOM Webinar

Voting members present: Britt Arnesen, Jessica Dougherty Goodburn, Jessica Tuberty (Vice Chair), James Walter, Gene Schmitz, Kristopher Pesci

Regular member(s) absent: Cory Simenson (Chair), Ryan Bundy, Kip Beckwith

1. **Call to Order**

Jessica Tuberty called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm.

2. **Roll Call**

Cory Simenson was not in attendance; Jessica Tuberty performed chair duties.

3. **Approval of Previous Minutes**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

4. **General Public Comments**

There was no public comment.

5. **General Board Member Comments**

James Walter welcomed the new board members, Kristopher Pesci and Kip Beckwith.

6. **Comments from City Staff**

6.1 **Bicycle & Pedestrian Program: Ben Weiss**

6.1.1 **Hwy 200/East Missoula Plan Update**

Ben Weiss, Bicycle/Pedestrian manager, updated the board on the Highway 200/East Missoula Plan. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has been leading a planning project to do some preliminary design work on improving the Highway 200 corridor. There have been several public meetings looking at different alternatives and options within those alternatives. The MPO has finally landed on a preferred alternative.

The information related to this project is readily available on MissoulampoMissoulaMPO.com. There is an opportunity to comment through that website as well.

The preferred alternative is divided into three different sections, which were reviewed.

Mr. Weiss presented details on the East Broadway segment. A shared use path alternative was preferred because that's currently how it's being used. As one moves to the railroad bridge, the road would be widened out and the shared use path would continue under the bridge. Through East Missoula, it would transition to raised cycle tracks. Mr. Weiss showed an example of how that transition would happen and what it could look like.

The Staple Street Crossing includes a transition from cycle track to a shared use path on north side of highway.

The Sha-Ron Marshall segment includes a bus pullout and possible parking options.

The consultants, WGM, are accepting public comment on this through November 12th. Comments can go to Acossitt@wgmgroup.com or 1111 E Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802.

A board member asked about the signage at the transition of the shared use path to cycle track. Mr. Weiss was unsure what signage would be allowed and hasn't seen anything yet. There will be, however, be a triangular rapid flashing beacon, but he's unsure about directional signage at this time. What he's presenting is a high level planning concept for design; none of the engineering work is being done yet. When the final plan is adopted, the idea would be that this would guide project development. Estimated cost right now is around \$25 million, and it's unclear where that funding would come from at the moment.

Mr. Weiss suggested making comments now, and including something in the narrative to encourage desirable movement and behavior.

Mr. Weiss further explained that a shared use path offers greater protection at a lower expense than bike lanes.

6.1.2 BUILD Grant/Mullan Area Master Plan Update

Ben Weiss, Bicycle/Pedestrian manager, presented on the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant. The city and county received a BUILD grant of \$13 million to help develop the collector road network west of Reserve Street. Projects that it hopes to complete are to build Mary Jane Boulevard from Mullan to Broadway, as well as George Elmer, and connect and those two via England Boulevard.

This project is moving along very quickly and doesn't have quite as many opportunities for public and board engagement with the design process. The project is at 60% design right now. Developers are trying to get these designs through so construction can begin next summer.

The Mullan Area Master Plan (MAMP) is the bigger picture look at what the goals for this area are and how the transportation network might be able to achieve them.

The BUILD grant is incorporating the planning concepts from the MAMP into what they're actually planning to build. England Boulevard, Mary Jane Boulevard, and George Elmer are all going to get protected bike lanes.

The website Mullanbuild.com shows everything that has been done to date including introductory sheets and safety patterns. Meetings are held every other Friday, online.

There are no design documents to share right now to share, but Mr. Weiss encouraged the board to go to the website and sign up for the meetings to learn more about what's happening.

The goal is to help spur better development out that includes mixed used and is therefore multimodal. If citizens can shop and work and get a bite to eat nearby then they might not have to get in a car to do all those things.

Mr. Weiss reviewed a map of the area and where they're looking to incorporate bike lanes in the hopes of connecting to the downtown area. He further states that there will be an additional 6,000 homes in this area between now and 2050.

Mr. Weiss wanted to offer some follow-up on the presentation from last month on the slow speed research from the Missoula in Motion intern. He said that they received some hesitation from the city attorney's office in regards to pursuing a blanket speed limit reduction around the city. State law says urban areas are 25 miles per hour. So the recommendation was to roll that research into other work they're doing to revamp the traffic calming program, and look at ways speeds can be reduced through a combination of traffic control and traffic calming.

7. Committee Reports

No subcommittees have met.

Mr. Weiss provided an update on the Third/Myrtle intersection. The grant has been extended through June 30, 2021. The immediate neighborhood will be getting together soon to design what the parklets will look like with the different pavement marking materials and potential planters and bike racks and other things that might be included there.

8. Old Business

8.1 BPAB 2021 Priority Planning

Mr. Weiss suggested the board think about project/program/research in terms of total hours and what it would take to do it as well as possible considering existing limitations. He reminded the board that it is advisory with the only statutory obligation being to provide advice about how the city can improve conditions for biking/walking in Missoula. This does not prevent them from taking actions themselves and creating programs, but he reminds them that they are not obligated to.

Ms. Tuberty reviewed the yearly board obligations.

Mr. Weiss explained that the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) happens every 4 years. The next presentation to board will be in January, and they will be seeking adoption by April. A board member suggested it would be nice to have the presentations

for such things well in advance of the meeting versus taking up meeting time. This would allow them to formulate better questions and comments.

The Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP) are projects that will be completed in the next five years with the funding currently available. The TIP is not a major planning process, it's a budgetary item the Metropolitan Planning Organization manages.

Mr. Weiss and the board reviewed the active transportation recommendations, which was a plan adopted in 2011. Most of the information included therein is also included in the LRTP and helped form the foundation for Bike master plan and the Pedestrian master plan.

The next item discussed was recommendations to the City of Missoula proposed public works, including what was being chip-sealed and resurfaced. This is a statutory obligation for the board to weigh in on. Ideally, this is something the board would see 2 years in advance.

Ms. Tuberty solicited suggestions for the list.

With Missoula in Motion (MIM) transitioning away from Bike Month, it was suggested the board might consider taking it on. Katherine Auge, MIM, stated their willingness to be a resource to the board.

Mr. Weiss stated that Bike Month should include a calendar of events for the month, publishing that calendar in as many places as possible, and putting on a commuter breakfast, along with other activities. Mr. Weiss approximates 100 hours would be needed to facilitate that. Ninety to the board and 10 to City staff.

It was suggested working with the Parks and Recreation department to include some Bike Month activities in their programming. Bicycle shops were brought up as well: classes on how to patch a flat tire, for example. Another suggestion was incorporating Mountain Line as well.

One board member suggested establishing a group ride for people who are new to commuting or biking in general.

The board was curious about a bike share or a bike rental for the city. Mr. Weiss explained that the city has looked into this in the past. The types of systems that have dock stations are prohibitively expensive for a city like Missoula. In terms of private companies spearheading such an enterprise, Missoula is just too small. Instead, the board suggested brainstorming creative ways for another kind of bike share program.

Bicycle/pedestrian public information and education review and development has been talked about before during the board meetings. A board member stated that city staff have taken the time and expense in the past to have some type of information about bike routes and smart bicycling. He'd like to see that updated into a more complete and accessible package, which might include a webinar or a series of YouTube videos to get bicyclists better informed about where they can ride, as well as provide tips and techniques about riding. The board would be willing to structurally assist the Bike/Ped office with obtaining additional staff and resources to do these things.

Mr. Weiss said the board is able to advise staff and council, and that right now this is not currently in the city's work plan or budget. The board would have to figure out what would

be involved in making such a thing happen. Staff is willing to be a resource and could commit 10% of the approximately 200 hours needed to help create an educational program like the one suggested.

The board would also like to better understand how bad sidewalks are managed, especially when people do renovations on a home or apartments and either don't include or don't fix the sidewalks in their project. Additionally, the board would like to know how sidewalks are managed within a construction zone.

The next item discussed was grant projects in development and special projects that are in development. The board would like to know at the city level what bike/ped-specific grants are being considered or are in the works, so the board could assist in pursuing them. Mr. Weiss explained that the city seeks large grants, and so are only aware of grants mostly at the federal level. The board would still like to hear about opportunities to pursue the smaller grants.

The board discussed how the city can be aware of pedestrian-vehicle and bicycle-vehicle collisions in data-driven way to allow the city to say they've made their bikeways and roads safe. Mr. Weiss said that on the MissoulaMPO.com website, one can see maps that show where the bike/ped crashes have been from 2007-2017. The data is updated yearly.

The board also discussed the lack of public input and comments, and suggested the public be notified of the board topics beforehand.

In addition, input and connection to neighborhood councils and perhaps the police department would be nice as well.

8.2 Higgins Bridge Safety Concerns

The board had desired a motion on this item, but it was decided prior to the meeting that, with it being a county project, it might not be in good form to have a motion.

The board stated that despite it being a state project, the Higgins Bridge is in the heart of Missoula's downtown.

Aaron Wilson, City transportation manager, stated that the Montana Department of Transportation is aware of the challenges in terms of bike/ped traffic.

The board said that if a motion was made at the next meeting, it would send a clear message to City Council that the board doesn't agree with what is being done.

A board member pointed out that there has been a change in signage on the bridge. Another member stated that the board could consider telling people that the Higgins Bridge isn't safe for bicyclists and pedestrians during construction.

There was further discussion about cameras monitoring the bridge and construction but Mr. Wilson explained that, per state law, those cannot be used for traffic enforcement.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Announcements

The board wanted to raise the issue of the out-of-date website again.

11. Next Meeting: (12/1/2020) 3pm at City Council Chambers

The meeting will be via Zoom.

12. Adjournment

Jess Tuberty adjourned the meeting at 5:04 p.m.