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TRAFFIC ENGINEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES
October 15, 2013
Minutes

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MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Baxter, MTA Vice - Chair
Ben Kageyama, Staff
Trent Taylor, UPD
Jerry Whitaker, Staff
Rick Seanor, Staff

OTHERS PRESENT

Jessica Stull-Otto

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kim Jordan, Staff
John Lampi, Public Representative

STAFF PRESENT

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Traffic Engineering Committee meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Baxter at 3:05 p.m. in Conference Room No. 3, Ukiah Civic Center, 300 Seminary Avenue, Ukiah, California.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 20, 2013

M/S Taylor/Whitaker to approve August 20, 2013 minutes, as submitted. Motion carried by an all AYE voice vote of the members present.

3. AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

4. OLD BUSINESS

4a. Discuss and Provide Comment on Draft Complete Streets Policy (Report Attached)

The Traffic Engineering Committee (TEC) referenced to page 1 of the policy document and talked about the definition of the term, 'cyclovias.'

Member Seanor:

- In 2012, City Council had a presentation and discussion about the topic 'complete streets' and what this means to the community. Since that time Councilmember Rodin spent a significant amount of time creating the 'Complete Streets Policy of the City of Ukiah' with assistance from City staff and public members. The policy document raised some concerns by the City Engineering Department about why the TEC was not included as a participant in the process and the possible effect the document may have on street maintenance.
- City Council reviewed the policy document at the regular July 17, 2012 meeting and referred it back to the TEC for review and input.
- Related to the 'Complete Streets Policy,' the City already has other documents/processes in place such as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that are used to analyze projects and/or to seek grant funding. There is a bike plan through Mendocino County Office of Government (MCOG) that specifically addresses bicycle routes in the City and throughout the County. Also, when cities receive funding from Caltrans for road projects, Caltrans passes a complete streets policy onto the cities. As such, the City has to follow a complete streets policy when it receives grant funding from Caltrans for street-related projects. This essentially means, we have to look at whether there are adequate and/or up-to-standard ADA ramps on street corners for sidewalks, acceptable accommodations for bicycle routes and other such accommodations required in the 'Complete Streets Policy.'
- Supports not changing the current process by not adopting a policy that could possibly impact the City financially and unable to properly maintain City streets. The City of Ukiah as well as other jurisdictions in the area suffer because they have very little maintenance dollars to maintain streets.

- Recommends focusing on being able to provide for an adequate maintenance levels for maintaining City streets first by utilizing the dollars available wisely without doing/committing to maintenance projects that are beyond the scope of what the City can realistically and/or economically afford.
- Lastly, to address the 'Complete Streets Policy' many if not most City streets have very little traffic so there is no really no issue concerning bicyclists being able to ride on them. Related to City streets, there are bicycle facilities on some of the routes Member Seanor identified some of the streets having such facilities. Accordingly, there are existing bicycle/pedestrian facilities 'pretty much everywhere in town.' While there are a few places on streets where gaps exist between sidewalks, most streets have sidewalks.
- Is inclined to support continuing on with the present process of reviewing/evaluating improvement projects for City streets.
- Is requesting the TEC comment on the proposed document.

Vice Chair Baxter:

- It appears Councilmember Rodin is of the opinion having a 'Complete Streets Policy' is a good idea.
- The County in addition to the State has a 'Complete Streets Policy' that staff can use for reference purposes when seeking grant funding for street improvement projects and essentially sees no need to add yet another layer and/or duplicate a process that already works that may also create more work for staff and unnecessary costs to the City.
- The TEC can support staff's recommendation and that is to comment on the draft Complete Streets Policy.

Member Kageyama:

- Referenced the 'Evaluation' section of the policy document which states the Public Works Department shall perform biennial evaluations of how well the streets and transportation network of the City are serving each category of users by collecting baseline data and collection follow-up-data on a regular basis. Evaluation of projects is performed when an opportunity exists to improve pedestrian access involving crosswalks, ADA compliance issues, bulbouts, and/or some other street-related improvement matter that would benefit an area.
- Is of the opinion, City Public Works staff is already to a large degree looking at projects and ways of making a street project more of a 'complete street.'
- Does not have a problem with what is being asked for in principle with regard to the proposed policy document.
- Finds the language in the document rather vague; As written, the document will create the need for some paper work on the part of City staff, particularly with regard to what is required in the 'Exemptions' section that says the department head must provide a written explanation of why accommodations for all modes of transportation were not included or necessary for a project to the City Manager. With this and what is required in the 'Evaluation' section will create ongoing paperwork for City staff that is time consuming and essentially unnecessary when staff already analyzes/evaluates every street project for 'completeness.'

Member Taylor:

- It may be the recommendation of TEC should be since City staff is already meeting the requirements outlined in the proposed 'Complete Streets Policy' that adding a new policy requiring more reporting about what is already being done is basically a waste of time.

Jessica Stull-Otto:

- Works for the County Public Health Department.
- Related to the comments that processes contained in the draft Complete Streets Policy are already being done, is concerned about what happens when present City staff leaves?
- The idea of a policy is for the good work/processes currently being done to successfully continue into the future.

- Has questions related to the 'Exemptions' section of the draft policy document and with having to write an explanation of why accommodations are not to be included or necessary with regard to street improvements. It may be the written evaluation needs to be further clarified as to how the process can effectively be accomplished where the process is simplified and made less burdensome to staff.
- The intent of the policy document is to make certain the process related to street improvements is working and to fix it where it is not. As such, understands the concept of reviewing plans and policies to make necessary changes/improvements where needed and to make certain the intended purpose is being done. Appreciates the interest in not adding yet another thing for staff to do.
- Is it possible to simplify the draft document and/or make it a checklist to better serve its intended purpose?

Member Seanor:

- It is possible to simplify the document. However, we already have a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, as well as the Regional Bikeway Plan that MCOG has and other documents that staff follows regarding street improvement projects. Having a Complete Streets Policy in the mix of documents that places an extra requirement of evaluating streets for all modes of transportation could actually limit how much the City can afford to do in the way of improvements. If it becomes necessary to do some projects that may be more expensive in order to fulfill the requirements of this policy then this could restrict our maintenance abilities. The problem Public Works has with regard to the streets department is to be able to effectively maintain City streets. Any work done on pavement is very expensive. We are struggling with not having the funding necessary to sometimes do basic maintenance so if at the same time another policy places additional requirements, this can limit our ability to maintain City streets because the policy says we have to do something else. Again, when the City gets funding through Caltrans, Caltrans has its own Complete Streets Policy that is passed onto us and other cities for improvement projects. When the City receives funding from Caltrans, we have to follow their complete streets policy. What has occurred typically in the past for a street project, is we have to look at the ADA ramps and upgrade those to meet the acceptable standards. This can be a challenge in itself because over the years there have been incremental changes in ADA standards that require an upgrade to ramps. Something may be built one year according to one standard and then the standard changes the next year such that the City is not in compliance with those standards. Therefore, is leery of having a policy that is going to say the City has to have an evaluation for all of these requirements when we already have the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in place. This plan will be updated in the near future by a consultant.

Member Kageyama:

- Exemptions would be handled on a case-by-case basis. A biennial evaluation would also be required for the draft Complete Street Policy.

Jessica Stull-Otto:

- Understands Sue Barton from public health was working on this project and has left.
- She is stepping into Ms. Barton's place to continue the process.
- Recalls a public discussion at a TEC meeting about the issue of routine maintenance such that the language in the policy document can be changed so that some evaluation does not trigger a larger project.

Member Whitaker:

- It is his understanding that after a certain dollar amount it triggers specific requirements that must be met to be in compliance with the standards.

Jessica Stull-Otto:

- The aforementioned scenario may pertain if the cost is 20% or more of the projected cost amount and if this is the case then the associated requirements could be exempted.

- 1 • Requested clarification that the discussion is about a maintenance project that is really small and
2 inexpensive.
3

4 **Member Whitaker:**

- 5 • For example, what could occur is if work is being done to an intersection and the site does not
6 have ADA ramps where the work being done can trigger further work associated with the
7 intended street maintenance and improvements by having to provide for ADA ramps. At this
8 point, this is when the job cost becomes too high for City work crews to do in-house and has to go
9 out to bid for a contractor to do.
10 • As the City Streets Supervisor, his cost threshold limit per job is a maximum \$40,000. After this
11 amount, if the job cost exceeds this amount it must be contracted out to complete.
12 • The intent is to keep job costs down so the work can be done in-house as much as possible.
13

14 **Jessica Stull-Otto:**

- 15 • How does the above-referenced scenario fit with the 20% over cost and can the associated
16 requirements then be exempted? If the project triggered ADA accessible ramps would the ramps
17 be part of the 20% over cost or just increase the cost of the entire project?
18

19 **Member Whitaker:**

- 20 • It would likely increase the cost of the whole project. Whether or not the cost was increased by
21 20% would not be known until a cost estimate was done.
22 • What is of concern is if once a project is started and where it was later determined that other
23 requirements were necessary this could drive the costs to exceed what City crews can do in-
24 house and this is a problem.
25

26 **Member Kageyama:**

- 27 • Pavement work is not just for vehicles, but rather for other modes of transportation, such as
28 bicycles.
29

30 There was discussion concerning certain types of street improvements that include 'sharrow' striping that
31 could encompass more street users.
32

33 **Member Seanor** noted the City is working with a consultant to complete the Safe Route to School Plan.
34

35 **Jessica Stull-Otto:**

- 36 • How are the existing plans that staff uses related to maintenance communicated in the plans? For
37 example, do the plans list/address maintenance items that can be incorporated for complete
38 street projects?
39 • Is it possible related to maintenance that the plans document what might be a small project could
40 actually trigger a large project? How is this aspect documented/communicated in the plans?
41 • Would not want a policy in place that essentially triggers larger projects. However, it would be a
42 good thing if the policy incorporates/addresses smaller scale maintenance items for projects. Are
43 those identified and who would identify them? How would they be communicated in making sure
44 that information is related to maintenance so that when work is done no other additional work has
45 to follow.
46 • The intent of a complete streets policy is to make certain maintenance projects are designed for
47 everyone to enable safe access for all users of all ages and abilities, i.e., pedestrians, bicyclists,
48 motorists and public transportation.
49

50 **Member Seanor:**

- 51 • Member Whitaker is the City's Streets Supervisor and he reviews plans for projects.
52 • Even though some projects appear to be simple at the beginning this may not always be the
53 case. For instance, if the project is Caltrans funded, the design aspect must still be considered by
54 an engineer even if it is just a striping project. Contractors typically do the striping of streets
55 because a special truck is necessary.

1 **Jessica Stull-Otto:**

- 2 • Striping is an important aspect of street maintenance.
- 3 • Related to the threshold of when it is necessary to go out to bid for a contractor, would like to see
- 4 this amount clearly documented.
- 5 • Concern is that once existing staff has left the City, the good work being done presently can carry
- 6 on. This is the 'beauty' of a policy because the information would be represented in this
- 7 document, but only if it is done in a manner that does not actually prevent staff from doing the
- 8 good work that is currently being done.
- 9

10 Brief discussion concerning what constitutes forced accounting and work that needs to be done as the

11 result of an emergency situation.

12

13 **Member Whitaker:**

- 14 • Confirmed the threshold amount per project is \$40,000. He cannot do any work over \$40,000.
- 15 • Emergency work is different from forced accounting.
- 16

17 **Member Seanor:**

- 18 • Briefly addressed the topic of constructing an ADA ramp and noted if such a ramp is non-existing
- 19 and work needs to be done from 'scratch' the cost could be anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000.
- 20

21 **5. NEW BUSINESS**

22 **5a. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Request for Eight Additional Speed Limit Signs along**

23 **West Mill Street**

24

25 **Member Seanor gave a staff report and noted:**

- 26 • Public Works staff has received a request for eight additional speed limit signs along West Mill
- 27 Street from a group called the Residents for Enforcement of Residential Speed ((RERS).
- 28 • West Mill Street from McPeak Street to Main Street satisfies the California Vehicle Code definition
- 29 of a residence district and therefore, has a prima facie speed limit of 25 mph.
- 30 • In addition, an Engineering and Traffic (Speed Zone) Survey was completed under the direction
- 31 of a California licensed professional traffic engineer for W. Mill Street on April 30, 2012. This
- 32 survey confirmed the posted 25 mph speed zone on W. Mill Street.
- 33 • W. Mill Street is technically classified as a collector and therefore, does see a larger volume of
- 34 traffic than a local street. This street picks up the tributary area from the west side of Ukiah.
- 35 • W. Mill Street is approximately 25 feet in width and approximately 2,000 feet in length between
- 36 McPeak Street and South Oak Street with parking allowed on both sides of the street. Vehicles
- 37 parking in this manner tend to create traffic calming as vehicles slow down when negotiating
- 38 narrow stretches of the street where the cars are parked on both sides.
- 39 • There are four existing 25 mph speed limit signs posted on W. Mill Street at different locations.
- 40 • Staff observed the Ukiah Police Department speed radar trailer is in use on W. Mill Street for
- 41 westbound traffic. This device is a good tool to remind drivers of the speed compared to the
- 42 posted speed zone.
- 43 • Offered the following recommendations: 1) Continue to utilize the Police Department speed radar
- 44 trailer. 2) Recommend W. Mill Street for the Police Department's 'Directed Enforcement
- 45 Program.' 3) Take no action. 4) Refer to staff for further analysis. 5) Post additional signs.
- 46 • Notification of this meeting was sent to the group requesting the eight additional speed limit signs.
- 47

48 **TEC:**

- 49 • W. Mill Street has four existing signs. Questioned where eight additional signs would be posted?
- 50 • What initiated this discussion is that some people from this neighborhood group put up signs to
- 51 address speeding. It is illegal for a neighborhood group to post its own traffic control devices.
- 52 • The speed limit in any residential area is 25 mph.
- 53

54 **TEC consensus:**

- Deny the request for additional signs on W. Mill Street.

- 1 • Continue to utilize the Police Department speed radar trailer and include W. Mill Street for the
2 Police Department's 'Directed Enforcement Program.'

3
4 **Member Seanor:**

- 5 • When a speed survey is conducted data has to be collected from 100 vehicles from both
6 directions of traffic and analyzed. The results conclude that people tend to drive in and around the
7 posted speed limit. If not, this is reason to look at either increasing or decreasing the speed limit.
8 • Also, the engineer conducting the speed limit surveys for the City, observed people tend to drive
9 the posted speed limits.

10
11 **MS: Taylor/Whitaker** to deny the request for additional signs and continue to utilize the Police
12 Department speed radar trailer when available and utilize the 'Directed Enforcement Program' as much
13 as possible. Motion carried by an all AYE voice vote of the members present.

14
15 **6. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS**

16 **Member Seanor:**

- 17 • The TEC has a vacant seat. Steve Turner served on the TEC for many years and had to resign
18 because he now resides in the County.

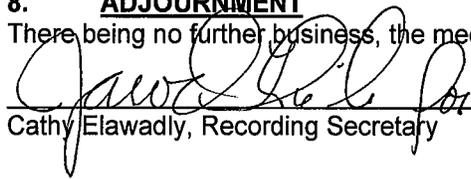
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20 **Vice Chair Baxter:**

- 21 • On Thursday, October 17, MTA will have a Chamber of Commerce open house in the
22 shop/garage structure on the MTA site from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

23
24 **7. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

25
26 **8. ADJOURNMENT**

27 There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.

28
29 
30 Cathy Elawadly, Recording Secretary
31
32