



Butte-Silver Bow Transportation Plan Update – 2005

Planning Board Briefing and Discussion May 27th, 2004

Attendees

Planning Board Members

Dan Ueland
Ristene Hall
Ed Harvey

Planning Board Staff

Jon Sesso
Russ Connole
Roxie Larson

HKM Staff/Sub-Consultants

Gary Simonich
Chris Laity
Jennifer Peterson
Jeremy Salle
Janet Cornish, CDS of Montana

Presentation

Gary introduced the planning team and provided a preliminary overview of the presentation. Chris Laity, Project Manager, discussed the entire planning process, which will include the identification of problems and solutions. He noted that public involvement helps to identify the issues, while data collection helps to support or refute public perceptions. Data collection will include traffic data as well as socio-economic information. Every year the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) collects traffic data. HKM will supplement this information using additional data collection points. Data will be used in a MDT computer model using TransCAD © software. Information derived from the model will be evaluated using a “fatal flaw” analysis that will identify and eliminate transportation projects that are not feasible. Finally, project alternatives will be ranked based on feasibility, urgency, and funding availability.

The plan will address transit and non-motorized transportation issues as well as traffic/road related concerns. The plan will reflect growth patterns and growth related goals and objectives, as presented in the community’s growth policy (comprehensive or Master Plan).

The public involvement program will feature three general public meetings and a variety of smaller sessions with local organizations and agencies, as well as the Planning Board and Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners.



Discussion

Planning Board members and staff expressed concern that the public involvement meetings may not draw enough participation. There was also some concern raised over the chosen location of the first meeting (Montana Tech). We may move the meeting to a more centrally located site such as the Butte High Cafeteria or the rotunda of the Courthouse. Additional suggestions for drawing a bigger crowd focused on providing specific reasons for people to attend (e.g., do you need a STOP sign on your corner? What are the critical transportation/traffic problems in your neighborhood? What is your hope for the TRAM road? Etc.). The team will consider ways to draw people and identify the best place to hold the first public meeting. Attention will also be given to how the meeting will be publicized – press releases/coverage, PSA's, organizational newsletters and e-mail notifications and e-mails.

Chris noted the transportation issues that had been identified in the RFP process. He asked the Planning Board members and staff to identify additional issues that should be addressed in the Transportation Plan update. Additional issues included:

- Consideration should be given to the east-west link between Montana Street – George Street and the Met Tavern on Harrison.
- Coordination of motorized and non-motorized travel – trails and roads is important.
- Dewey-Hanson Corridor – How far south do we go?
- Congestion around Butte High School, particularly on Mercury and Silver Streets and at the intersection of Wyoming and Silver (should we punch Silver Street through to Utah/Arizona?) is a problem.
- There is poor visibility at the intersection of Texas and Continental.
- Is there a logical place to develop a commercial corridor that would support big box stores?
- Intersection of George and Kaw is problematic.
- The Intersection of Montana and Hanson is dangerous.
- Wynne Avenue, between Longfellow and Holmes, is dedicated, but undeveloped.
- There is no real “road system” in the area of the newer subdivisions to the south – Green Acres, Terra Verde, Ridge View Heights, etc. along the west side of Continental.
- North Main to Daly Street in Walkerville is very steep. A route could be constructed that would follow the Granite Mountain Overlook road and bypass Walkerville. The community would probably prefer a bypass in their effort to discourage new commercial development and additional traffic.
- Primary access to the dump is via the Interstate. As trucks speed down I-90/I-15 they are likely dropping garbage along the way. Another route may be preferable.
- Transportation planning can help to generate and direct growth.
- Lane change markings and signing are not always clear and difficult to follow, e.g. on Arizona Street at the Galena and Park intersections.
- Trucks travel very fast along Continental, failing to reduce their speed as they leave the interstate.
- A pedestrian crossing (overpass or underpass) is needed at the Hillcrest school. There may be other places where they are needed.
- We need to respond to new generators, such as the YMCA.



Butte-Silver Bow Transportation Plan – Public Meeting and Workshop
July 15th, 2004, 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.
Belmont Senior Center ~ Butte, Montana
First General Public Open House and Meeting
5:00 to 7:00 P.M.

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Attendees:

- Russ Connoles, Butte-Silver Bow Planning Department
- Gary Simonich, HKM Engineering
- Bernie Harrington, Mayor of Walkerville and member of the BTCC
- Joe Olson, Montana DOT
- Lynn Zanto, Montana DOT
- Tom Laity, Joe’s Pasties
- Gary Keeler, Director, Butte-Silver Bow Transit
- JD Lynch, Candidate for Chief Executive
- Ed Leipheimer, Car dealer
- Jeremy Salle, HKM Engineering
- Jennifer Peterson, HKM Engineering
- Darryl James, HKM Engineering
- Janet Cornish, CDS of Montana
- Diana Begsten, Belmont Center
- Sarah Joyce, HKM Engineering
- Chris Laity, Project Manager, HKM Engineering
- Laura Wooden, Montana DOT
- Dave Stratton, Terra Verde Fire Department
- Megan Thompson, Butte Weekly

Issues and Opportunities Identified:

Butte-Silver Bow Transit

- The five year Butte Transit Development Plan has just been completed and should be incorporated into our plan.
- The Transit Plan identifies the need for an intermodal facility near the bus transfer station on Harrison, near the Civic Center.
- Butte-Silver Bow Transit would like to see an increase in ridership. Currently, they have 100,000 riders per year and 10,000 Para transit riders (special needs).
- Increased ridership would help relieve Harrison Avenue Congestion.
- Additional services are needed to provide transportation for after school activities.



Roadway Infrastructure and Design.

- The intersection of Continental and Texas does not provide good visibility for cars turning onto Continental.
- Storm drains and manhole cover on “showcase” routes should be level with the road.
- The intersection of Janney and Highway 2 should be more perpendicular to provide better visibility.
- At the intersection of Highway 2 and Harrison (Basin Creek Road), the northbound lane on Harrison should be right turn only. This would make it easier to turn right onto Harrison.

Railroad Infrastructure

- Railroad crossings are poorly maintained.
- The Railroad Bridge structure over Montana is in poor repair.

Community Development

- The road to the Tram should be routed through Uptown Butte to help promote revitalization.
- Roadway development can help improve Butte’s aesthetics.
- Currently there is no link between Terra Verde and Basin Creek. This makes it difficult for fire trucks to travel directly from Terra Verde to Basin Creek when they are participating in mutual aid fires. Currently, in order to get to Basin Creek from Terra Verde, one has to travel back to the Beef Trail Road.

Special Needs

- The Belmont Center and other groups provide services to seniors for doctor appointments and other needs. However, there are insufficient services for seniors that wish to go shopping or on day trips to nearby towns.

Recreational Trails

- Improvements to the Blacktail Creek Trail - Harrison Avenue interface are needed. Better pedestrian and other non-motorized access from the Trail to specific destinations such as the Mall would be beneficial. This is particularly true for children who try to access establishments along Harrison Ave. from the trail.

Traffic Flow and Signs

- In some cases, both 4-way stops and the absence of stop signs can cause problems and confusion for drivers.
- The City-Center Exit, off I-90 east-bound, is difficult to maneuver and it does not really take the traveler directly to the City Center. It would be more accurately called the “Montana Tech” exit.
- The speed limit on Holmes Ave. between Harrison and Hill is too high. There are often children crossing at Hill Street and other traffic entering Holmes. The 45 MPH limit should not begin until after Hill Street.



**Butte Transportation Plan Update
Silver Bow Kiwanis Club Meeting ~ Tuesday, August 14th, 2004 ~ Perkins ~ Noon**

**Meeting Results ~ Issues Raised by Participants
(verbal comments and items listed on index cards)**

Transportation Management/Policy/Maintenance

- Speed limits are often improper and inconsistent.
- There are conflicts with pedestrian/trail walkers at the Harrison Avenue Interchange, exiting from I-90, westbound. The interstate off-ramp stop light needs to be better synchronized with stop lights at Dewey and Amherst in accordance with the pedestrian trail.
- We need an organized, well advertised schedule of maintenance. Many streets are like “washboards”, such as Dewey.
- Dewey needs to be reconstructed.
- Signage is not always visible. Some signs are hidden by trees/shrubs that should be trimmed.
- Residential streets are decaying in many neighborhoods and need repair.
- At Iron and Montana Streets, the speed limits are unclear (25 v.35) for both east-west and north-south travelers.
- Better marking of pedestrian crossings is needed.
- We need better advanced warning of lane shifts and changes, i.e., when four lane streets change to two lane. Which lane is for turning only? This often switches.
- The lane “drop” at Broadway and the Public Library is poorly marked and needs better signage.
- Landscaping at Montana and Iron Streets is needed to create a better entryway.
- Out of town drivers need better information/education.
- Is the stop light at Harrison and George warranted?
- Harrison and Cobban need a “protected” left turn (arrow).
- The left turn from Continental to Mercury is awkward because of the way the yellow lines are painted.
- Manholes should be raised to street level, particularly along Harrison.
- The island at Continental and the old highway is too large and difficult to negotiate.
- Street Lights Uptown should be set to flash after peak use.
- Grand and Harrison intersection needs better signing and striping for stops and turns.
- Drivers use parking lanes for turning on an ad-hoc basis, such as at Platinum and Montana, and at Walmart, creating greater potential for accidents.
- People don’t use their turn signals.
- Snow covers up signs on pavement. We need alternative signage.
- Snow removal on residential and arterial streets is too slow.
- Cement bridges are more slippery than those covered in asphalt.
- Potholes need repair.
- Trees in the median on main streets would enhance them.
- Consider putting brick streets back in the Uptown.
- We need better enforcement of speed limits and stopping at lights and stop signs.
- Landscaping is needed at the Rocker Interchange.
- Two hour parking is not always clearly marked Uptown.
- We need better landscaping overall.
- Speeding in Rocker is a problem.

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Transportation Infrastructure/Routes

- Exiting from west-bound I-90 to Harrison Ave. northbound, is difficult because of inconsistent left turn.
- We need a center turning lane on Harrison (similar to Dewey) and the cement abutments should be removed. Left hand turns cause traffic slow downs.
- An alternate route is needed to the dump to avoid trash blowing down the Interstate and along Iron Street.
- The Rocker Interchange is still a “disaster”. Signage at Town Pump makes it difficult to decipher. Who should stop? Who has the right of way?
- A better link is needed between Continental/Highway 2 and Uptown.
- Peak hour and school traffic on Continental requires alternate route, particularly over the 2-lane bridge.
- Rowe and Continental should be 4-lane to help relieve traffic on Harrison.
- The rest area at Homestake (or elsewhere in the Butte area) should be re-established.
- Left hand exit, from I-90 eastbound (City Center), is difficult to negotiate.
- Rocker to Butte needs three lanes to accommodate truck traffic entering from Rocker (the hill requires that they travel slowly).
- Entrance to Butte High at Wyoming should be redesigned.
- Exit at City Center is for east bound traffic only.
- Continental-Texas Interchange is problematic.
- It is difficult to see oncoming traffic at Iron and Montana for those turning north (left) on to Montana.

Non-Motorized Transportation

- Bike and pedestrian routes on Continental are not consistent. Gravel at bridge at Hillcrest School is problematic.
- We need more bike and pedestrian paths (clearly marked).

E-Mail Addresses of Attendees

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Butte Transportation Plan Update
Butte Exchange Club Meeting ~ Tuesday, August 17th, 2004 ~ The Thornton Building ~
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Meeting Results ~ Issues Raised by Participants
(verbal comments and items listed on index cards)

Transportation Management/Policy/Maintenance

- Synchronized traffic lights are needed.
- We should have better traffic law enforcement.
- Construction and maintenance work should be planned carefully to avoid continual road closings, year after year, such as on Second Street.
- The intersection at Granite and Excelsior is dangerous. Traffic traveling west bound has poor visibility due to both the angle of the street (it's on a hill) and vehicles that park too close to the intersection. Given that Granite Street is a primary route to Montana Tech, a four way stop would be a good addition, as would the extension of "no parking" zones at the intersection.
- Speed limits need to be re-evaluated.
- Turning lanes should be painted at the beginning of tourist season, rather than at the end.
- Many people use "parking lanes" as ad-hoc turning lanes. Signage should be used to more clearly delineate these lanes for safety and traffic management.
- Overall, people park too close to intersections, creating visibility problems. (several comments).
- Hedges at intersections create visibility problems and should be trimmed.
- Overall, better signage is needed.
- Parking of boats and campers (and other large vehicles) on streets is problematic.
- Street repair and maintenance AFTER construction is poor. Better backfill of streets, after water/wastewater projects are completed, is required.
- The speed limit on Continental could be increased between the Hillcrest School and Uptown.
- Sand should be cleaned off the streets immediately after the snow removal season.
- Better street lighting is needed along Continental Drive, particularly near the concentrator.
- Uptown, lane delineations are needed to keep people from driving in the parking lane, particularly the elderly.

Transportation Infrastructure/Routes

- Elizabeth Warren should be extended across Harrison to the west to form a loop to Montana Street (2 comments).
- The "old" highway (Montana Highway 10) should be improved and widened between Harrison and Continental Drive.
- The intersection at Elizabeth Warren and Harrison is poorly aligned.
- The intersection at Amherst and Harrison is poorly designed.
- There is a bottleneck problem where Dewey, Amherst, Harrison and Interstate 90-15 come together.
- In general, Butte needs more east-west connectors. North-South travel is well addressed, while east-west routes are limited.



Transit

- Bus schedules and routes should be posted at bus stops.
- Regular bus service to the Belmont should be provided.
- The current buses may be too big for our community. Perhaps we should consider smaller buses that run more frequently.
- Provide transportation for low-income persons to work sites.
- Stop people from driving and using cell phones.
- Potholes need to be addressed.

Non-Motorized Transportation

- Sidewalks should be improved in Uptown.
- Sidewalks should be improved in residential areas and subdivisions.
- Maps of the trail system should be readily available (2 comments).
- Bike trails on Continental are not well defined and in some cases have never been completed. There are also conflicts between these bike trails and parked cars, making it unsafe to park in certain areas.
- The trail between Blacktail Creek (near the Chamber of Commerce) and Rocker should be completed.
- Currently the asphalt batch plant is located along the proposed route of the Rocker trail and is an obstacle to completion.
- Bike paths along other main streets are needed (for bike commuters).
- Conflicts between joggers, bicyclists and cars should be addressed, differentiating between recreational and commuting non-motorized traffic.
- The old railroad grade on the East Ridge should be converted to a rail trail.

Other Issues

- The airport should be moved to Rocker.
- There is too much freeway noise in residential areas. Sound barriers should be installed.
- Better directional signing to the Uptown is needed.

E-Mail Addresses of Attendees

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**Butte Transportation Plan Update
Kiwanis Sunshine Club Meeting ~ Wednesday, August 18th, 2004 ~ Peppers ~ Noon**

**Meeting Results ~ Issues Raised by Participants
(verbal comments and items listed on index cards)**

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Transportation Management/Policy/Maintenance

- Street names change for same street (e.g. Kaw, Lexington, City Road).
- Stop light is needed at Dewey and Kaw, rather than 4-way stop.
- The corridor from Main to Rowe Road is getting increased use and more traffic control is needed (a loop).
- Streets are not fixed properly after pipeline replacements (e.g., Civic Center Road).
- Pot holes are not adequately repaired. Previously, a student intern identified all of the potholes, which worked very well.
- Sensor activated traffic lights would work well at a number of intersections (e.g., Amherst and Farragut).
- Our signal system is archaic.
- Traffic lights should be removed at Broadway and Wyoming and Mercury and Arizona and replaced with stop signs.
- Other traffic lights could flash yellow/red.
- Some traffic lights could be replaced with 4-way stops.
- Parking Uptown is a major problem. Violations discourage customers. On street permits for small business owners are needed (especially for those that deliver merchandise, conduct service calls, etc.).
- Cars park too close to intersections.
- We need free public parking Uptown.

Transportation infrastructure/Routes

- Given the growth in the “flats”, an effective east west corridor south of the airport is needed.
- The intersection of Rowe Road and Kaw is very dangerous.
- No passing is permitted on Continental Drive between Highway 10 and the Harley Davidson Dealership. This creates traffic bottlenecks.
- The exit from east bound I-90 to Harrison Ave. South is very problematic. It creates terrible bottlenecks and should be redesigned.
- Alternative routes are needed for Harrison Avenue.



Transit

- The bus transfer station on Harrison Avenue is underutilized.
- The buses are large and underutilized and could be downsized. Ridership is not commensurate with the size of the buses (2 comments).
- Bus routes are unclear.
- Buses are big, noisy and belch black smoke.
- There should be shorter waits for buses and the possibility of a paging system should be explored (shorter bus headways).

Non-Motorized Transportation

- Sidewalks are often broken and difficult to navigate, especially for persons with disabilities.

Airport/Air Travel

- The current location of the airport is an obstacle to development.
- Flying out of Butte is costly.

Other Issues

- An up-to-date street map with street names should be easily available to the public.
- Overall, we have a good transportation system.
- We need to make our transportation system free of fossil fuels.

E-mail Addresses of Attendees

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**Chamber of Commerce Meeting /Presentation ~ Butte-Silver Bow Transportation Update
February 18th, 2005**

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Suggestions/Comments:

- The Butte-Silver Bow Chamber of Commerce is undertaking the improvement of the interpretive center at the Berkeley Pit. In conjunction with this effort, they would like to have the city bus stop at the site. They would also like the city bus to stop under the portico at the main Chamber visitor center. This might be achieved using Community Transportation Enhancement Funds (CTEP) because of the interpretive potential associated with transportation. (Marco Lucich, Chamber Director and John Sando, President).
- The intersection at Wyoming Street/Thompson Distributing/Old Safeway Warehouse/Dan Coles-City Transfer and Steele's Warehouse is a "disaster waiting to happen", particularly after Butte High School students are dismissed at 3:00 P.M. Wyoming Street becomes a "race track". There have been several accidents there. Suggestion: Enforce the speed zone. – Margie Thompson, 494-2873.
- Need some 45 MPH speed limits like Rowe Road to facilitate smooth flow of traffic uptown to Downtown.
- The light at Rowe Road is the worst thing to happen in a long time.
- What is stopping development around the I-90 exits at Montana Street, Iron Street and Continental Drive? We need to fix it!
- Butte-Silver Bow must have the authority to address sidewalks that are beyond repair: give owner a warning and then, if they fail to respond, have a contractor repair the sidewalk and put the bill on the property tax bill.
- We need a "Reserve Street" (Missoula) or a 19th (Bozeman) to provide opportunity for economic development.
- The focus on extending Dewey seems a poor allocation of money.
- Rowe Road needs shoulders and sidewalks to accommodate joggers and bicyclists.
- Several layers of asphalt around manhole covers create a "pothole", especially on Harrison Ave. and Montana Street.
- Continental should be 45 MPH and 50 MPH in some places.
- The condition of asphalt is poor throughout the community.
- We need an exit off I-15 further north (north of I-90).



Butte Transportation Plan Update
Chamber of Commerce Civic Improvement Committee ~ Wednesday, September 7th, 2005
~ Christina's Cocina ~ Noon

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Suggestions/Comments:

- This committee would like to be notified to attend public involvement meetings for all transportation improvement projects.
- This committee may be contacted through the Chamber of Commerce.
- This committee advocates the use of landscaping during project development.
- Chris Laity, HKM, and Joe Walsh, MDT, advised the committee on the public involvement process, as it relates to MDT governed projects.