

City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2006

The City of Springfield Council met in a work session in the Jesse Maine Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, March 20, 2006 at 6:02 p.m., with Mayor Leiken presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Ballew, Lundberg, Ralston, Woodrow and Pishioneri. Also present were Interim City Manager Cynthia Pappas, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

Councilor Fitch was absent (excused).

1. Construction Phasing and Proposed Communication Plan for Construction Occurring at Pioneer Parkway/Hayden Bridge Way/Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway.

Traffic Engineer Brian Barnett and Community Relations Coordinator Niel Laudati presented the staff report on this item. Staff has prepared a communication plan to address the need to inform residents, drivers and businesses about construction activities occurring at the south end of the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway project. Construction will occur in phases, requiring changes to the traffic control through the work zone between June 8th, 2006, and October 6th, 2006. During this construction work there will be significant impact to traffic in this portion of town. This plan is intended to provide the best information possible to affected persons.

Staff requests Council's advice on the plan before implementing it.

At the south end of the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway project, the City's Contractor will be constructing a multi-lane roundabout. Construction will occur in phases, requiring changes to the traffic control through the work zone (see description in attached plan). Work is anticipated to start approximately June 8th, 2006, and continue to October 6th, 2006. During this construction work there will be significant impact to traffic in this portion of town.

City staff, in cooperation with Lane County construction management staff, Lane Council of Governments staff and Commuter Solutions, has prepared a draft communication plan to help inform the public of what work is happening and how to get around or through it.

This plan leverages services available through Metro partner agencies, with no additional cost to the City. It will maximize outreach, minimize City costs, and streamline City staff activities. Various activities in this plan will start immediately, and communication activities will be phased as described in the plan.

Communication work associated with construction impacts will be linked to an information campaign developed by the City Traffic Engineer, which will help drivers understand how to negotiate a multi-lane roundabout.

Mr. Laudati presented a power point presentation noting the location of the roundabout and the purpose for the road improvements. He noted the phases for this project and some of the

objectives of the community outreach during those phases. He discussed the alternative routes during the construction of the roundabout. He noted the importance of maintaining goodwill with those living and working in this area during this and other upcoming projects. Advanced notice was one way of maintaining that goodwill. He said the outreach was already in progress, he had met with media and the website was being designed. Information would be provided before each phase began, prompt updates would be provided, there would be an education campaign on how to use the roundabout, and the end of construction of each project would be announced.

Mr. Laudati said the outreach would target both Eugene and Springfield residents, nearby business, schools in the area, emergency units, local media, utilities and other agencies. The message would be that the area was open for business despite traffic impacts. Information sources would be provided to show that the City would be stepping up and available to answer questions and provide ways for citizens to get here. He discussed the need for the projects and the benefit the project would give to the area. He noted the importance of working with partners, including Commuter Solutions who was already under contract with the City and who would be a valuable resource for information. The City would be taking the leadership role, but Community Solutions would assist. He noted the other outreach mediums.

Mr. Laudati said updates would be on Springfield's website at the alternate address of gospringfielddoregon.com. He discussed the email distribution list to provide updates. Springfield staff would work with Eugene to use their telephone hotline which could be updated daily and also with the Radio Station AM 1660 which was the highway advisory radio. He said the signs that would be used had been purchased for the I-105 project and could be changed with new information for the upcoming projects. He said at the end of the construction, there would be a push on the education on proper use of a roundabout. He said this would include not only education on how to use the roundabout, but also the benefits of the roundabout as a practical and beautiful structure. He distributed a brochure that the Transportation Department had put together regarding the roundabouts. He said it would be a challenging summer in that area, but staff would handle complaints quickly and respectfully. It would be a more efficient area once the project was completed.

Mr. Barnett noted that the brochures had not been produced yet, so if Council had suggestions for changes, they could make those to him tonight.

Mr. Laudati distributed a two-sided map showing Phase I and Phase II.

Mayor Leiken asked when the I-5/Beltline project was scheduled to begin.

Transportation Manager Nick Arnis said he was not sure of the construction schedule.

Mayor Leiken asked to get the construction schedule from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). He suggested communication on that project tie in with the other projects in the area.

Mr. Laudati said the communication would bridge from this project to the I-5/Beltline project.

Mayor Leiken noted the many projects in the area that would all be occurring in a short amount of time. He asked Mr. Laudati to put talking points together for the Mayor and Council on these projects.

Councilor Lundberg said she would like to see signs directing drivers to where they needed to go during construction. She said signs were very effective to give drivers a heads-up. She suggested offering more than 5th and Laura Streets for alternative routes. She noted the stops along 5th Street because of school buses picking up students. She referred to the map and some places she would recommend for alternate routes. She discussed the I-105 project and the number of alternate routes available for that project. She suggested using postcards when sending out information as it was easier to read and more likely to be read by the recipient. She agreed that it was important to keep Council as up-to-date as possible so they could address questions from citizens when asked.

Councilor Ballew asked about people living on Wayside Loop and how they could get out.

Mr. Barnett said there was an alternate access that people were already using.

Mr. Laudati said they would remind people of that route.

Councilor Pishioneri said most of the construction would be done in the summer, so the school busses would not be a factor until October. He asked if any work on Phase II could be accomplished while the southeast portion of the intersection was being worked on in Phase I. That could save time so Phase II would not go into October.

Mr. Barnett said he could look into that, although he noted the site had been thoroughly reviewed by the contractor and the City. He noted that the drawings displayed did not show all the detail of the project. He discussed a temporary roadway that was being built.

Councilor Pishioneri said to look at the whole project for any opportunities to save time.

Councilor Woodrow asked when the MLK Parkway would be open.

Mr. Barnett said it was intended to open on the same ending date of Phase II, scheduled October 2006.

Councilor Woodrow asked if Pioneer Parkway East would be closed throughout both phases.
Yes.

Councilor Ralston asked about Lockhaven Street and whether or not the barricade across it would be opened during this project for another access. He said all access points needed to be considered.

Councilor Lundberg said at some point the barricade may need to be removed. She said she would hesitate opening it during the project, but thought it may be something to consider after the project was complete.

2. Pioneer Parkway EmX.

Transportation Manager Nick Arnis presented the staff report on this item. In Fall of 2001, the Council recommended that LTD study the Pioneer Parkway corridor for the next bus rapid transit

project in Springfield. After two years of study and stakeholder meetings, LTD has initiated the EA process that evaluates alternatives on the Pioneer Parkway corridor that includes roads in the RiverBend site, International Way, Gateway Street, and Harlow Road.

The Council met with LTD representatives on February 21, 2006 to discuss the proposed LTD timeline and schedule of decisions in order to meet an August 2006 deadline for an annual Federal Transit Authority (FTA) deadline for Bus Rapid Transit projects. The Council will conduct a public hearing on April 17, 2006 and may select a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) which is then included in the Environmental Assessment (EA) for further public review during the early summer. City and LTD staffs are meeting on a weekly basis to manage and coordinate the EmX project. City staff will develop a recommendation to Council for the April 17, 2006. City staff has identified the following issues with EmX design alternatives 1 and 2 along Harlow Road and Gateway Street which we are working with LTD staff to resolve and mitigate:

- Viable mitigation for parking impacts to properties such as SELCO and Applebee's.
- Police and Fire Departments have significant concerns about the impact of non-traversable medians on response times and access to fire hydrants.
- Restricted property access due to raised medians.
- The need to identify future improvements at key intersections.
- At all intersections along the EmX corridor, it is likely the anticipated signal priority strategy cannot be accommodated by our existing signal hardware/software systems.

Mr. Arnis introduced Lane Transit District (LTD) staff Steph Viggiano and Graham Carey, and LTD Board Member Mike Eyster. He also introduced Debbie Davis of the LTD Board, who was present in the audience.

Mr. Eyster thanked Council for taking the time to talk with LTD regarding this issue. He distributed handouts which addressed questions from the Council following the last meeting on this subject. He noted that Mr. Viggiano and Mr. Carey had also met with area businesses and would be addressing those concerns as well.

Mr. Viggiano reviewed the timeline and schedule for the EmX project. He discussed the public involvement plan for the project that was created a year ago and noted that everything on that plan was being done. He discussed upcoming items on the schedule. He said they hoped for a decision on a locally preferred design in April.

Mr. Viggiano referred to some maps which showed the areas for the EmX. He discussed the alternatives on Pioneer Parkway East and West and parking that may be removed. He said they had talked to some of those along that part of the corridor that would be the most affected. He referred to a list of corridor contacts included in the agenda packet and noted that not all had been contacted yet. He referred to areas on the map that indicated concerns or complaints by people and explained some of those concerns. He said LTD had talked with some of the people regarding their concerns. Photo simulations had been created to show possible routes. He referred to those photo simulations, which showed the LTD stations. He said the Historic Commission indicated support for their station and suggested it be called the Washburne Station.

Mr. Viggiano discussed the area on Pioneer Parkway where the two parkways came together with a median in between. He referred to photo simulations showing alternatives for the extra lane.

He said the bike/pedestrian path would remain in its current location. Either option worked well in LTD's opinion. The stakeholders preferred maintaining the median as much as possible.

Councilor Ralston asked about the preferred options. He asked about the lane with the diamond on it and whether or not traffic would be able to use that lane.

Mr. Viggiano said it would be an exclusive EmX lane. He said there were some situations on Pioneer Parkway East and West where left turners would merge into that lane to make a left turn.

Councilor Ralston said using diamonds in the lane may confuse people who associate that with commuter lanes for those carpooling.

Mr. Viggiano said they would most likely not use the diamond in the actual lane for that reason.

Mayor Leiken asked why the stakeholders wanted to maintain the median.

Mr. Viggiano said to keep as much greenery as possible. He said it was a personal preference.

Councilor Ballew noted the amount of exhaust put off by the busses. She questioned whether or not it was best to have the bike path so near the bus lane.

Mr. Viggiano said these would be hybrid electric busses and would be very clean. He said regulations on emissions from busses and trucks were getting more stringent every year. He discussed one of the options for the road next to the school. He said LTD staff talked to the school and the school was willing to give up a part of their frontage so the entire road could shift over and the median could nearly be preserved in its entirety. Or it could continue as it did in the southern section.

Councilor Ballew asked how it would blend into the roundabout.

Mr. Viggiano said it would have to taper in and out. He discussed the stations along the route. He explained how the buses would go through the roundabout with other traffic. He discussed the connectivity in the Gateway area with this transit system.

Councilor Woodrow asked where the EmX would be in front of the school.

Mr. Viggiano explained that the traffic would shift to the right and the EmX would go along the median.

Councilor Woodrow asked about the intersection and where the bus would travel going under the freeway.

Mr. Viggiano explained where the bus lane would travel under the freeway.

Councilor Woodrow referred to an agreement with PeaceHealth to pay for restructuring that intersection with two left turn lanes onto I-105. He asked how those two left turn lanes would fit into this design.

Mr. Carey said the left turn lanes were on the other side of the abutment.

Further discussion was held regarding the intersection.

Mr. Viggiano said he could bring a diagram of that intersection.

Councilor Ballew said a lot of trees would be lost along the EmX corridor.

Mr. Viggiano said they were avoiding the biggest trees. Some alternatives took more trees than others, but in all cases LTD would plant as many trees as the City wanted. He said on the Franklin Corridor, LTD was planting about twice as many trees as they were removing.

Councilor Ballew asked which stations were northbound and which were southbound.

Mr. Viggiano noted that many were both north and south stations. He said the MLK Parkway was an existing condition and would be done before LTD started the EmX project. There would be nothing left to do on MLK Parkway. He discussed land donated by PeaceHealth for the EmX lane in the median of RiverBend Drive and the agreement for that land. He discussed the lanes up to International Way. He noted some of the options. Bikes and pedestrians would be on the same path.

Councilor Lundberg said she would not support having bikes and pedestrians on the same path because of the speed of some of the bicyclists.

Mr. Viggiano said there may be a way to design the sidewalk to delineate the two. He discussed Game Farm Road going to Gateway. He said LTD would go through and determine a preferred design, but the preferred design could not be finalized until the study was completed. He asked Mr. Arnis about the bounds of the study.

Mr. Arnis said it was northbound to International Way and south to Postal Way.

Mr. Viggiano said the final decision couldn't be made until the final study was done. He discussed acquiring frontage from Taco Time. He said the manager didn't have a problem with that, but one of the owners had a lot of concerns. He said LTD would try to work through that issue. Mr. Viggiano discussed Postal Way and a possible realignment of that roadway to provide left turn access. Otherwise, there would not be left turn possibilities under some of the design options. He referred to another photo simulation on Gateway Street. One of the options included relocating the station at the Gateway Mall. He discussed the difficulties with the current location of the station. LTD would like to move it closer to Gateway Street, but the owners of the Gateway Mall were not happy with the proposal. Mr. Viggiano would be meeting with the regional manager of the mall next week to discuss this further. LTD felt there were significant advantages to moving the station.

Councilor Lundberg asked what the concerns were.

Mr. Viggiano said the biggest concern of the owner of the mall was the image issue with the transit station right in front of the mall. He said the Gateway Station issue still needed to be resolved. He referred to Harlow Road and the effect the EmX lane would have on SELCO's parking. LTD was looking at some design options that could address that issue and it looked like that could be resolved with SELCO.

Councilor Ballew asked about the Gateway Station. She discussed the difficulty for older people or people with physical challenges that use the bus to walk over to the mall if the station was moved out by the street.

Councilor Lundberg said it could also affect teenagers because it didn't offer protection of the building nearby. She discussed safety issues if they needed to cross the street.

Mr. Viggiano said the station would be on the mall side of Gateway Street, but would be farther from the front door than the current station. He said one of the proposals to the Gateway Mall was to provide a pedestrian sidewalk between the parking lot and the front door of the mall. He said it would still be an issue for those with disabilities. He referred to Guy Lee School and noted that Mr. Carey had met with the principal and Steve Barrett, Deputy Administrator of the School District.

Mr. Carey said they brought forward some designs to the school, with the help of Springfield staff, and the school was very encouraged with the design options. Some of the designs could really help the situation.

Councilor Lundberg said it was important to keep the children safe along that corridor.

Mr. Viggiano said they could provide the Guy Lee School design options to Council. He referred to an area on Gateway Street that had a high accident rate and would be addressed by a study Springfield was conducting.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if there was a consideration of an over-the-road walkway for pedestrians. He noted the number of residents on the opposite side of Gateway that frequented the mall.

Community Development Manager John Tamulonis said a pedestrian bridge had been considered in the past from Guy Lee School over to the north side of Harlow Road. It would require a 600 foot walk-up to get to the top and the same on the way down. It would have extended far into the neighborhood. Because of that, it was not a feasible option. The cost at that time was about \$1M.

Mr. Viggiano discussed Harlow Road and access issues with businesses and residents. The businesses felt left turn access was imperative so LTD said they would provide left turn access. He explained the EmX route in that area to accommodate left turns into those businesses on Harlow Road.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if there would be a traffic signal in the area of Game Bird Village. He discussed the increased traffic and those trying to exit from Pheasant onto Harlow eastbound.

Mr. Viggiano said their proposal included a signal at that intersection. Everyone seemed to like the idea of a signal.

Mr. Arnis noted the requirements for signals.

Councilor Lundberg discussed Oakdale Road and the traffic that used it for a cut through route. She asked if there would still be busses that would go through apartment complexes, or if everyone would have to walk out to the EmX station.

Mr. Viggiano said there would still be neighborhood connector buses, but the routing for those had not been established. Initially, LTD had thought the residents from the apartment complex would access the bus via the station. He said there was an option to design the neighborhood connectors to travel through the apartment complex.

Councilor Lundberg said a lot of people in the apartments used the bus.

Mr. Viggiano discussed some of the options near Les Schwab and the other businesses along Harlow Road. LTD would work with Springfield Public Works staff to make sure the City was comfortable with the design. He noted that on April 17, Council could choose several options. He said it was just a decision on a preferred design, not a final decision. The final decision would occur about three months after the preferred design was chosen.

Councilor Lundberg said she would not be supportive of anything that potentially restricted access to businesses. She said ingress and egress was critically important for the survival of businesses.

Mr. Viggiano agreed and said LTD did not want that to happen either.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa

Sidney W. Leiken
Mayor

Attest:

Amy Sowa
City Recorder