City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2008

The City of Springfield Council met in a work session in the Jesse Maine Meeting Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, October 20, 2008 at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Leiken presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Lundberg, Wylie, Ballew, Ralston, Woodrow and Pishioneri. Also present were City Manager Gino Grimaldi, Assistant City Manager Jeff Towery, City Attorney Matt Cox, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

1. Gateway/Beltline Project Proposal.

Transportation Manager Tom Boyatt presented the staff report on this item. Staff has developed a Unit 1 Gateway/Beltline Project based on Council direction in October 2007. This project adds additional turn lanes and through lanes to three of the four intersecting streets and makes the associated signal modifications and access improvements. A future Unit 2 Gateway/ Beltline project would complete the Gateway/Beltline Intersection Couplet alternative identified in the 2003 Environmental Assessment at a future time when traffic congestion adversely impacts the I-5 northbound ramps and safe freeway operations.

The City has been involved in assessing improvements at the I-5/Beltline interchange for 10 years. Part of that assessment has been how to make improvements to the Gateway/Beltline intersection that work with and support interchange improvement investments. In 2003 the City signed on to the I-5 Beltline Environmental Assessment preferred alternative, which set out a series of interchange improvements and established the Couplet improvement for Gateway/Beltline (see Attachment 2 in the agenda packet). In early 2007, staff began investigating implementation of the Gateway/Beltline Couplet project through a combination of technical analysis and stakeholder involvement. In October 2007, Council provided staff direction to pursue a first phase of the Couplet project that added needed capacity, but did not complete the Couplet conversion of Gateway (Kruse to Beltline) to one-way southbound, and Kruse/Hutton to one-way northbound.

Staff believes that substantive issues have been worked out with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) in order to move ahead with construction of a first phase (Unit 1) of the Gateway/Beltline project. The final piece that is currently in process is the ODOT and Federal Highways review of City's Memo comparing environmental impacts of the Unit 1, Add Lanes Project to the Environmental Assessment of the full build out of the Couplet Project. That review is not anticipated to generate significant project issues.

The attached Council Briefing Memo (Attachment 1 in the agenda packet) provides a description of the Unit 1, Add Lanes Project, including estimated cost and funding for the project, traffic design life, anticipated right of way impacts, access and circulation for area businesses, and a description of next steps in the design and project delivery process.

Mr. Boyatt introduced Sonny Chickering, the ODOT Area 5 manager.

Mr. Boyatt walked through the project improvements and referred to the maps that were displayed on the table in front of the Council (also included in the agenda packet as Attachments 2 and 3) and explained them. He noted that it was important that the projects on the State highway and the City roadways occured at the same time because of continuity through the intersections. Staff have spent time coordinating the two projects to make them fairly seamless.

Councilor Ballew asked for clarification of the State projects.

Mr. Boyatt explained. Attachment 3 in the agenda packet was the proposed design.

Councilor Ballew said because there was little return on the investment on the Couplet, it was smarter to invest in the Gateway. She asked if the couplet had been abandoned.

Mr. Boyatt said they had been cautious to avoid throwing out the NEPA document. The red lines on Attachment 2 showed the solution the City was committed to. As they added elements up to the ultimate Couplet, this was a $10M cutline on a $25M-$30M project that provided substantial roadway capacity. He explained the first element of the ODOT project and the City project. He explained the turn lanes and how the traffic would be affected. He explained the other intersection and the treatment for Hutton Street and Beltline Road. He noted areas that had no left turn access and how traffic could take alternate routes. A raised median on Beltline between Gateway and Hutton was part of the original design. It was difficult to have any turn movements in that first block because of the large amount of traffic coming from the signal. What they were trying to do with this project was to extend the landscaping theme that was along MLK Parkway and bring some of that beautification into this part of the Gateway area.

Councilor Woodrow said the alternate routes to turn left seemed to make increased travel.

Mr. Boyatt said it may, but it could be quicker and safer.

Councilor Woodrow said knowing the businesses at the corners, it seemed a raised median would hamper their ability to enter those businesses from businesses across the street without going a long ways out of their way. That didn't make sense and seemed to create more of a traffic problem. He asked if the City would relocate the '76 gas station if it were to close.

Mr. Boyatt said his understanding was that the City would be negotiating with the property owner. There were a subsequent series of leases that ran through the distributor and the operator that was fairly complex. The City's obligation was to the property owner. Relocation costs were a negotiable expense in right of way acquisition.

Councilor Wylie asked about some of the accesses to businesses in that area.

Mr. Boyatt explained ways to access several of those businesses. The first thing the City and State were trying to do was to address congestion and safety on the Beltline Highway, and access control was a big part of achieving that goal. It may put more of the circulating traffic into the

block; however that pattern had been establishing over the years. Internal circulation had been growing in the transportation field. He noted the purpose of internal circulation.

Councilor Wylie said she understood the principle, but it put a lot of traffic in a close area. Because the internal circulation ways were not regular streets, people didn't follow the rules of the road. She asked if a traffic light would be installed at McDonalds.

Mr. Boyatt said it was not planned, but they recognized the difficulty of getting in and out of that area. The way this area was developed had created that problem and they weren't able to solve that with this stage of the project. They hoped the design would actually alleviate that issue. He explained the issues with adding another traffic light at that location.

Councilor Wylie said as a citizen, it seemed they were creating a system that didn't make it better in that area and easier to get around.

Mayor Leiken said there was an urban renewal opportunity about twenty years ago that would have made this area better regarding transportation. The estimation of vehicles per day through that area was about 100,000. About twenty to twenty-five percent came off of I-5 for some reason every day. They had also projected 30,000 to 35,000 vehicles per day on the Pioneer Parkway/MLK Jr. Parkway. In response to Councilor Wylie's concern, he said people would just have to plan their day when visiting that area. They needed to deal with the safety issues in that area and couldn't necessarily make getting around easier. There was still more property to be developed out in that area, which would make it worse.

Mr. Boyatt said those numbers projected out and included background traffic growth, origin and destination traffic growth for another ten years. It was a congested environment. In areas where medians and driveway closures were proposed, there were lines of cars. Turning left against Beltline traffic was scary and dangerous at those locations. The chief commitment made by the City in moving the I-5 Beltline Project forward was to protect the functionality of I-5 and the mainline first, and then protect the Beltline Highway second. He did have some next steps ideas looking ahead, but they would not be easy. Solving the issues would take an incremental approach.

Councilor Pishioneri discussed the eastbound dedicated right turns to southbound Gateway. He asked how that transition occurred as they entered Gateway.

Mr. Boyatt said the State had chosen to make the ultimate configuration in which Gateway became one-way south just past Kruse. Of the two right lanes south of the median, only one would be open to traffic and the other would be a fairly large shoulder. The second right turn would be on the north side of the pedestrian refuge and there would only be one right turn on the south side of the pedestrian refuge. Each one of those would feed a lane on Gateway.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if the southernmost lane on eastbound Beltline would be signaled or a non-stop slip lane.

Mr. Boyatt said it would be controlled by the signal the same way it was today for the pedestrian crossing. When the southbound Gateway traffic was released by the signal, people would have a way to move around.

Councilor Pishioneri suggested making one of those two lanes a non-stop slip lane to depressurize that intersection.

Mr. Boyatt said the light was just so people would stop before proceeding.

Councilor Pishioneri said some drivers did not know that and would stop at the sign for an extended period of time causing a lot of cars to queue up at that intersection creating more of a hazard. With a dedicated non-stop slip lane, it could alleviate that. He also suggested making the lane that was next to the dedicated left turn lane on westbound Beltline approaching Gateway, a dedicated straight through and left turn, both could go into the southbound lane.

Mr. Boyatt said he would take those comments back when looking at the design.

Councilor Lundberg asked where we were with 'agreeable solutions'.

Mr. Boyatt said the parties may interpret the discussions differently than staff, but he felt that what was mapped out in the proposed design had been agreed upon by all the impacted properties with the exception of the vacant lot north of the gas station, but staff was still working with them. The crossover easement between McDonalds and IHOP may not be acceptable to corporate McDonalds, but was acceptable to the franchise owners. He discussed other businesses in that area. Staff had met with them a lot and talked to them. Several people had told staff this was the design option they wanted in the 1990's. He noted the other properties that had agreed to this plan. There was some concern about internal circulation and loss of a few parking spots, but generally people kept coming back to meetings. They had expressed appreciation for the City trying to work with them. If Council directed staff to come back for a public hearing on November 3, they would send out notices and make phone calls. His job was to bring Council the information and facilitate those that wanted to challenge or support the project.

Councilor Lundberg said she liked the landscaping. Unfortunately, she didn't feel we could get away from medians because they helped to control dangerous crossings. There was a lot of traffic in that area and it would be developed more. People would figure out how to get around. She said the work staff had done was most appreciated.

Councilor Ballew asked if a public hearing was needed, or just a resolution.

Mr. Boyatt said based on the Code, a public hearing was more acceptable for alignment.

Mayor Leiken said he appreciated the letter from Sonny Chickering from ODOT, but still had some concerns about ODOT. He would like assurance from Salem.

Mr. Chickering said they had already had discussions regarding the environmental document, and traffic and congestion modeling done to the satisfaction of their Salem group. He was feeling confident and felt this was an opportunity to reassure Council.

Mr. Boyatt said there was a real benefit of presenting this as a joint City and State partnership.

2. Amendment to Systems Development Charge (SDC) Transportation Project List and Update to Transportation SDC Improvement Fees and Transportation SDC Reimbursement Fees.

Assistant Public Works Director Len Goodwin presented the staff report on this item. Under ORS 223.309, the City is required, as part of implementation of SDCs, to create and maintain a list of capital projects to be funded in whole or in part using SDCs. The statute permits that list to be updated at any time. Staff have prepared an updated SDC Transportation Project List so that it is consistent with the region's Transportation System Plan (TransPlan) and the federally-required Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Staff have also prepared updated SDC Transportation fees based upon the updated Project List.

The updated project list, if adopted, will result in an increase in Transportation SDCs. This is consistent with the conversation with the Council at the time we embarked on creating a Capital Financing Plan in June, 2007, as well as the staff briefings on the SDC update process in June and November 2007. ORS 223.309(2)(a) requires that in such a case, the City must give 30 days notice of the proposed adoption of increases and, if a written request is received within 7 days of the proposed adoption date, conduct a public hearing. Staff intends to provide notice of the proposed increases on or about October 24, 2008, and will schedule a public hearing for December 1, 2008. Staff recommends that such hearing be held even if no written request is received.

The update results from revisions to the cost estimates for a variety of projects, and inclusion of new projects that have been added to the relevant transportation system plans since the last SDC update in 2000. No changes are being made to the existing methodology. If adopted, the proposed project list will result in a 137 percent increase in the trip rate used to calculate Transportation SDCs.

Further details are contained in the attached Council Briefing Memorandum. City staff and Ms. Deborah Galardi will be available to provide further information and answer questions.

Mr. Goodwin said the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) met last week. Staff would meet with Council during their November 10 with a list of topics which they would seek Council input to determine if the list should be forwarded to the CAC. He noted that he was joined by Deb Galardi from Galardi Consulting, who was in the audience. The City had retained Ms. Galardi as an outside expert on all SDC reviews. The project list was required under ORS 223.309, to form the basis to calculate the charge. The list was to include all capital projects that were required to be constructed and the amount of the project for an addition to capacity so the City could use existing methodology to allocate to individual developments based on the formula in that methodology and their appropriate share. Because this was only a project update, Council would not see things that would normally be in an SDC methodology. He explained. Council would probably see the possibility of additional credits and adjustments to the SDCs to accomplish their economic development and growth objectives. Many were not appropriate to include in the methodology because the methodology was meant to be an objective calculation of the cost to grow and the shares of those costs to be absorbed by growth, not a place to make economic decisions. They must allocate only to an individual development its proportionate share. The methodology needed to treat everyone fairly. He noted other issues that would not be reviewed as they would happen outside the methodology.

Mr. Goodwin said staff had taken the existing project list from 2001 and re-evaluated the cost of those projects based on actual experience. In the existing methodology, the charge went up by an adjustment based on the engineering record and cost of construction each year. They were also going through TransPlan and looking for projects that had been added since the last methodology. One requirement for adding a project into a list that was available for SDCs was that it had the necessary land use approvals to be constructed. Design and precise land use decisions may not have been made, but the projects were contemplated by the appropriate land use plans. They added those projects with the updated estimated costs. In addition, they had looked through projects on the ODOT system, for which the City would most likely need to provide some local match, assuming ODOT would continue seeking a twenty-five percent local match. The list did not show twenty-five percent of the cost of the project, because none of the projects were one hundred percent caused by growth. Only the proportion of the growth would be allocated to the project list. This did represent a substantial increase in transportation SDCs. Staff had expressed concern that when the methodology and capital project lists were updated, there would be a large increase in SDCs. Attachment 7 in the council packet included a number of options for Council to consider ranging from doing nothing to having staff bring back a recommended SDC rate based on the project list as described. Staff would schedule a public hearing if they did propose an increase in SDCs.

Councilor Ballew clarified that projects, such as the Bob Straub Parkway listed on page 3 of Attachment 2 in the agenda packet, were already paid for and shown at actual construction costs. She asked if that was the same with the I-5 / Beltline. Yes. She asked about the assumptions related to miles.

Mr. Goodwin said the current methodology depended on total trips, and they must still rely on that number. He explained.

Councilor Ballew asked about calculations. Mr. Goodwin explained.

Councilor Woodrow thanked staff for doing this. He believed development needed to pay their fair share of the increase. If they went forward, he strongly suggested looking at Option 4 to adjust the project list.

Councilor Lundberg said 137 percent was too much of an increase. She would like to look at projects, and level it out in that manner. This was not the time to increase because there was not much being built. She would like to see something in the middle.

Councilor Woodrow said he appreciated that, but understood that if SDC fees were not imposed, the City had to pay for the rest of it and the City couldn't afford that. The City had to recover fees the City was investing. The City could no longer say we would cut services because we were losing money on SDCs. They needed to look at it realistically. The City had projects we needed to move forward on.

Councilor Wylie said she understood both sides. The City had just received information on other costs increasing and revenues decreasing. In order to maintain our community, the City needed adequate funds.

Councilor Ralston said he agreed with Councilor Woodrow. Looking at the proposed rates compared to other cities, we were still o.k. It meant we were growing. Development needed to pay their fair share. It was the cost of growing in a limited space with limited resources.

Mayor Leiken said Bend and Grants Pass had been hit hardest with the slow down of real estate.

Councilor Pishioneri said he could appreciate the costs going up and said the overall picture wasn't too bad. Council set down goals with staff and staff was doing what they had been asked to do. To reach the Council goals, they needed to do this. He agreed to go forward with Option 4 cautiously.

Mayor Leiken asked if staff had held conversations with the HomeBuilders Association (HBA).

Mr. Goodwin said he had talked to their intergovernmental representative last week about meeting with the association.

Mayor Leiken said he wanted to make sure the City reached out to the HBA. With the building industry as it was now, if the City enacted this now, we may not recover much of the cost.

Mr. Goodwin said most of this would be recovered through commercial and industrial activity.

Mayor Leiken said staff had been working on this for a long time, before the economic downturn. He appreciated that, but was concerned.

Councilor Ballew said she wasn't sure why it cost $126,000 for a striped lane on South 70th Street, Main to Ivy, as noted on Attachment 2, page 5.

Mr. Goodwin said staff would check into that.

Councilor Woodrow said he would be willing to wait on making a decision until staff had talked with the HBA and realtors.

Councilor Lundberg agreed.

Councilor Ballew asked that when they brought this back to Council, they provide a future project list only.

Mr. Goodwin said they would want to have a complete project list, because that was what the methodology contemplated. With that kind of change in the project list, they would need to reopen the methodology.

Councilor Ballew asked to just have it sorted and displayed differently.

Mr. Grimaldi said staff could come back in a couple of weeks for more discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa

Sidney W. Leiken
Mayor

Attest:

Amy Sowa
City Recorder