



MEMO TO TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Agenda Topic on the Transportation Commission Agenda

From: Miranda Carson, Coordination Planner **Meeting Date:** October 3, 2022
Topic: Staff Communications

Below are summaries of relevant correspondences received by City Staff since the last TC meeting.

Farewell to Commissioner Joseph Leckie

Youth Commissioner Leckie's term ended in August. As we had a field trip in September, we did not get to have send off, but I wanted to provide some information. Mr. Leckie graduated in June, and in the Fall will be going to University of Michigan to study electrical engineering. He also hopes to start doing research on nuclear energy while there or after graduation. In his own words, "I have really enjoyed my time on the commission, and it's been a very valuable experience."

Records Way Follow Up

We recently received update from Bruce Wong, Director at ACHD of progress on Records Way:

I checked with our team and the 25 MPH signs will be going up in the near future on Records between River Run and Fairview as the Mayor as requested.

Speed cushions in Kleiner Park may still be considered in the future. As of now a speed study there has not been done.

Speed Limit Change on Meridian Road

Recently the Speed limit changed on Meridian Road, Cherry to Ustick from 35mph to 40mph. After inquiry by the City ACHD provided the following explanation:

The original request for a speed limit review came to use from a citizen, which happens with some frequency. We found average speed along the corridor to be 40 mph while the 85th percentile speed (the speed at which 85% of vehicles are traveling at or below) was 43 mph. There are many factors to consider when setting speed limits, but the 85th percentile speed is a good place for us to start.

We set the 35 mph posting after completing our most recent project. We found that speed to be significantly lower than prevailing speeds, which is generally not desirable from a consistent vehicular flow perspective (higher speed discrepancy). Raising the speed limit to 40 mph made it consistent with the segment of Meridian to the north and with Ustick to the east and west, though the segment of Meridian to the south will remain 35 mph (as does Cherry /Fairview to the east and west of Meridian).

As with any proposed speed limit change, we asked MPD for their thoughts with the speed data provided. MPD indicated support for this change, and we completed the work this week (I haven't seen the returned work order yet, so I can't say for certain which day our sign crew completed the work).

We intend on following up with a post-change speed study in a few weeks. What we almost always find is prevailing speeds do not significantly change with a change in speed limit (up or down).

Overgrown Weeds on Sidewalks

The Mayor's office received a complaint from a citizen regarding overgrown weeds and goatheads on the side walk between Ten Mile and Meridian on Cherry Lane. In the case of the Cherry stretch it looks like there are HOAs adjacent. The concern also named the sidewalks along Pine Street near Meridian High School.

I shared with the Mayor's office that adjacent property owners are responsible to maintain sidewalks. I referred the Mayor's Office to code enforcement.

Black Cat Crosswalk Request near Pleasant View

Councilwoman Liz Strader sent the following email:

Several mothers in the large Meridian Moms group on FB are upset about the lack of a safe crossing for the children at Black Cat near McMillan to get to Pleasant View. Apparently there have been several close calls. There is not a safe way for children to cross Black Cat, so they are doing so without adults. Perhaps WASD is providing bussing, but it is not resolving the safety issue for those trying to cross. It is a matter of time before someone gets seriously hurt, I would like us to put on a lot of pressure please ASAP with both West Ada and ACHD to find out the status and to try to get this fixed at a faster pace than usual.

Caleb Hood responded to Councilwoman Strader:

I checked the City's priority projects list and I don't see any mid-block crossing project on Black Cat that would address this issue (there is a Gondola-Malta Bikeway Community Programs project planned but that likely doesn't address the concerns and is not funded.) I will add this issue/new project to the list and then we will discuss with the Meridian Transportation Commission as part of our annual update to priorities. In the meantime, we will work with ACHD and WASD to see what can be done ASAP. With school just kicking-off I imagine there are other "hot spots" we should discuss; I'm also looping Sergeant Justin Dance into this thread as Police may be aware of this and other school-related concerns that may have flared in the City.

According to the West Ada School District's website, the walk zone for Pleasant View is east of Black Cat and north of McMillan: https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/2699/WASD/2050161/Pleasant_View_Elementary.pdf So, WASD is likely providing safety bussing to Pleasant View Elementary kids on the west side of Black Cat. Therefore, I doubt they have a crossing guard at Gondola/Black Cat or anywhere along Black Cat for that matter. The attendance boundary for Pleasant View is pretty large – between Ustick, the County line, the Boise River and Ten Mile.

I went to ACHD's website and don't see any bike, pedestrian, maintenance, bridge or miscellaneous projects in the area of Gondola/Vanderbilt/Daphne at Black Cat. (Here is a link if you want to see for yourself projects in ACHD's 2022-2026 Integrated Five Year Work Plan (IFYWP):

<https://achd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=c1b6fafa7b384b45918666e472f9767b>

I will note that I am part of the ACHD project team that is currently working to design improvements at the Black Cat/McMillan intersection. I don't know how much, if any, this intersection will help kids trying to get to/from Pleasant View but I thought I'd let you know that ACHD is designing a roundabout at that location; construction is "future" in the IFYWP. Here is a link to the Black Cat/McMillan intersection project via ACHD's website: http://achdidaho.org/Projects/2022/proj_intersection_mcmillan_black_cat.aspx At our last project team meeting we did discuss the multi-use pathway (MUP)/sidewalk network. On the west side of Black Cat, north of McMillan there will be continuous MUP/sidewalk up to Gondola. On the east side of Black Cat, we discussed working with development to understand their timing but the current goal is to connect at least up to Daphne with the intersection project. There is still one County parcel between McMillan and Gondola, owned by the Poormans. So there will very likely still be a gap in the pedestrian network on the east side of Black Cat with the intersection project.

Finally, I will note that the Meridian Transportation Commission (TC), which also includes Ex-Officio members from ACHD (Mr. Martin) and WASD (Mr. Huntley), as well as the City Staff in this thread, stands at the ready to hear from citizens with transportation related concerns.

We received the following update from WASD on a PHB on Black Cat at Gondola:

We are currently in the process of working with Keller Associates on placing a PHB at that intersection. Here is an update on the activities being performed and also a preliminary timeline:

- Topographic field survey and Quality Control check is complete
- Have received most of the underground facilities mapping from utility companies; need to follow up with a few stragglers
- Working now on detailing the base mapping in preparation to begin layout of the signal and ramp improvements
- Working now on preparing the traffic signal materials list to send to ACHD

Upcoming schedule:

- 9/19/2022 – Submit 90% Design package to WASD and ACHD
- 10/3/2022 – Hold 90% Design review meeting
- 10/31/2022 – Submit 100% Design Package, ready to bid

Additionally, we are, as you noted in your email, providing safety bussing until such time as the intersection is complete.

City Jurisdiction in Transportation Planning

We received a request from a citizen that Amity, Cloverdale to Eagle be widened to four lanes prior to any future development in the area that he felt would cause undue congestion. The following were also included in the correspondence:

- Frustration that developments, power poles, and pedestrian signal poles are too close to Amity for future widening
- Frustration that a turn lane was not added at Amity/Meridian when resurfacing was done
- Complaint regarding our noticing policy for development
- Request for clarification on the interaction of water between drainage basins and the aquifer
- Request for clarification of our public hearing comment process
- Request for “A review of recently approved projects and future real estate/annexation decisions should be held to insure “transparency” is a meaningful motivation for responsible decision making.”
- Request that ACHD provide “adequate infrastructure” before all developments are approved and constructed
- Request for communication with the Southwest Ada County Alliance regarding any “city activities that directly impact citizens and businesses beyond the City's eastern boundary south of I-84.”

To sum up the request in his words, “I find it difficult to understand how and why road planners and the City of Meridian did not plan this situation better.”

In Ada County land use plans are determined by City and County agencies and transportation Plans are decided by ACHD and ITD. Caleb Hood provided the following detailed response to the citizen that I wanted to share with the Commission:

I know you sent your concerns not only to the Mayor, but to the City’s P&Z Commissioners, City Clerk and ACHD Commissioners. I will address the topics the Mayor lists below, but feel free to follow-up with me or others (ACHD, ITD, COMPASS) if additional details are needed.

As I’m sure you understand, the City does not have a Roads Division and we do not have authority and are not responsible for the construction, operation or maintenance of roadways in the City. We coordinate with but largely rely on ACHD to provide the transportation network in the City. That said, we do usually communicate pretty closely with ACHD, but not on all projects.

The City and ACHD both use the Master Street Map (MSM) to understand and plan for the future configuration of “major” public roadways, typically section line roadways and mid-mile collectors. The MSM is developed using transportation models and demographics of the future. The City does not have any subject matter experts in demographics or transportation modeling but relies heavily on the analysis done by both ACHD and COMPASS Staff (COMPASS is our regional long-range transportation planning organization). For Amity, west of Cloverdale to Eagle, the MSM only calls for a 3-lane roadway – 1 travel lane in each direction and a center turn lane. This segment of Amity is listed as “constrained” in ACHD’s Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

(https://www.achdidaho.org/Documents/Engineering/ImpactFees/CIP_Draft/CapitalImpPlan_Draft.pdf) West of Eagle, to Meridian Road and even into Canyon County, Amity is planned in the CIP to be 5-lanes wide eventually. Again, I’d recommend talking to ACHD about why Amity is only planned to ever be 3-lanes wide between Cloverdale and Eagle; I’m not going to try and justify that.

Regarding the Idaho Power poles on Amity, the City does not have any authority where those are

placed. Idaho Power coordinates the placement of poles with ACHD.

As for the storage units near the Eagle and Amity intersection, they are close to the road, but as I mention above Amity is only planned for 3-lanes and the storage units are set back accordingly. The City ensures that the necessary right-of-way, as planned for in the MSM and CIP, is dedicated to ACHD as projects are approved and constructed. You are right in that the east leg of the Amity/Eagle roundabout will be different (not concentric) than the west. Again, the City is consulted and coordinates with ACHD, but they design, build and maintain the roadways and intersections; please talk to them about how they plan/model to accommodate traffic to understand that better. The roundabout will be the transition point from 3 to 5 lanes on Amity.

As I mention above, the City is usually part of a project team lead by ACHD for “major” projects like roadway widening and new intersections. The City usually has members from our Public Works Department present to discuss sewer and water lines, as well as lighting of the roadway; Parks to discuss pathways; and Planning to discuss connection points, landscaping and other beautification options and nearby development. In the case of maintenance or resurfacing projects however, we aren’t always consulted. Right turn lanes are wonderful and I do not know why one was not paved with the resurfacing of Amity between Locust Grove and Meridian. If I had to guess, I would imagine ACHD did not have enough right-of-way and/or there were drainage issues that the additional pavement would have caused. I don’t know about the location of the signal poles at the Meridian/Amity intersection either and why they were placed where they were – ITD did not contact me or anyone on my team about them. Again, I would guess there is a right-of-way constraint or a cost-benefit analysis done that didn’t justify the turn lane. You might consider reaching out to ACHD and ITD to understand the constraint as they do typically try to fit in bike lanes and turn lanes where they can.

Development applications in Meridian are noticed in accord with both State Statute and Meridian City Code. Idaho Code does not have a requirement to provide any written notice for development applications, only a published notice in the newspaper and a public service announcement. Meridian Code goes further and we require posting of the site, written notice to neighbors (500’ usually and sometimes 1000’) and the published notice in the newspaper. Further, while not a requirement, the City’s current practice is to also notice development proposals using the NextDoor application. I’m sorry you do not believe these forms of notice to nearby affected parties are sufficient, but I believe we do more in Meridian to get the word out than any other jurisdiction in Idaho. Most agencies only send written notice to property owners within 300’ from the property and I don’t know of any that use social media to share this info. Just within the last couple of years we had a robust discussion about our processes and noticing and this is what was decided. I’ll make a note of your concern, but I believe what we have in place is very effective.

Part of our coordination with ACHD involves collection of development impact fees on their behalf. These funds are pooled at ACHD and then used to make transportation network improvements throughout the County that can be attributed to growth. We regularly share our priorities with ACHD on where we’d like to see both impact fees and funds from their other sources (property taxes, registration fees, etc.) spent in Meridian. We try to work with ACHD and the development community to realize improvements sooner rather than later, but it is pretty rare that improvements are made before development occurs. There are a lot of existing needs and not a lot of money to cover costs.
