

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
June 8, 2015

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cummins called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Jim Barrow, Barbara Clark, Chris Plucker, Allen Pomraning and Mayor Jerry Cummins. (Councilmember Plucker arrived at 4:14 p.m.)

Absent: Councilmembers Mary Lou Jenkins and Dick Morgan.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, City Engineer Neal Chavre, Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain, Engineer Doug Eaton, Engineer Monte Puymon and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. Isaacs Avenue Corridor Study – Preferred Design Alternatives.

Engineer Puymon and Scott Mansur, DKS Associates, presented the preferred design alternatives for the Isaacs Avenue Corridor Study and reviewed:

- Project purpose is to address safety, efficiency and modality along the corridor.
- The high collision history along this primary arterial.
- This project entails a massive amount of work and infrastructure.
- The Council will be asked to narrow down the two alternatives to a final design by July 22.
- Overview of the process and schedule.
- Public involvement on the project and screening criteria.
- The preferred alternatives are alternatives 2 and 3.
- Both alternatives include improved street lights, ADA improvements, utility infrastructure, sidewalks, and pavement.
- Enhanced pedestrian crossings and safety benefits.
- Walking and biking assessment and transportation analysis overview.
- Alternative 2 scored the highest based on evaluation of the screening criteria.
- Review of similar projects and safety benefits as a result of the improvements.

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There was discussion on:

- Rationale for a separate bus pullout along Isaacs Avenue at Green Park elementary school.
- Consideration of a 3-lane to 4-lane "hybrid lane configuration" with an alternative bike route.
- Safety concerns with establishing a bike path due to increased use of roadway by cyclists.
- Planting strips proposed under alternative 3 and the increased costs due to maintenance and damage.
- The Isaacs Avenue corridor's accident rate is 325 percent higher than the statewide average for similar corridors. Alternative two is the safest option.
- The use of a landscape median as a stormwater facility to improve the competitiveness of the project for grants.
- Advantage to businesses by slowing vehicular traffic and improving other transportation modalities.

Mayor Cummins invited public input.

John Neel, 51 South Division, Walla Walla, asked that Isaacs Avenue remain four lanes with no bus loading and unloading area on the south side of Green Park School.

D. Robert Smith, Walla Walla, commented on the costs associated with a loss of life, especially for mere seconds in travel time, and indicated his support for the safest alternative.

Jim Harold, 3030 Brisbane, Walla Walla, suggested incorporating alternative routes to move traffic; and that the one percent growth rate used in the analysis may not be realistic.

Michael Corliss, Walla Walla, commented on the importance of addressing bicycle safety.

Jean Dolling, 208 Detour Road, Walla Walla, spoke in support of Alternative 2.

Kurt Friederich, 150 Ruth Street, Walla Walla, spoke in support of Alternative 2.

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Dominick Elia, 302 South Roosevelt, Walla Walla, representative of the Transportation Improvement Advisory Committee, suggested that the "hybrid" option (three lanes through the residential area expanding to four lanes) may be a viable alternative and should be looked at in the commercial area of Isaacs Avenue.

B. Informational Briefing: Highway 12/North Clinton Street/Lower Waitsburg Road Traffic Mitigation.

Development Services Director Chamberlain reviewed the traffic mitigation measure required by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) due to the proposed warehouse project on Middle Waitsburg road. The project required SEPA review and then triggered mitigation measures by WSDOT at the Clinton Street/Highway 12 intersection. WSDOT is requiring a restriction of traffic movements across the highway that must be completed by the time a Certificate of Occupancy is issued for the project.

There was discussion on:

- The required mitigation measures for the Highway 12/Clinton Street intersection.
- The concern for safety of cyclists and pedestrians attempting to cross Highway 12.
- The use of only tubular markers to separate and restrict turning movements on the highway.

City Engineer Chavre reported that Whitman College has been encouraged to have students use other routes for crossing Highway 12.

Mayor Cummins invited public input. No one in the audience chose to address the City Council on this item.

C. Alder Street Project Update.

City Manager Shawa reported the City has been requested to reconsider the approved striping plan by eliminating the dedicated left turn lane at Alder Street and Second Avenue. There are no overriding safety concerns. The request does not take any transportation modality away from the area. The change in striping would contribute to additional diagonal parking spaces increasing economic activity in the Drumheller building.

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Public Works Director Bealey provided an overview of the public outreach effort; a comparison of options; the pros and cons of adding parking spaces versus future traffic queuing problems.

There was discussion on:

- Eliminating the left hand turn lane in only one direction.
- The revision only requires re-striping which can easily be changed in the future if necessary.
- Importance of garnering as many parking spaces as possible downtown.
- Transitioning vehicles through the traffic signal.
- Importance of protecting the integrity of the public process.
- Having a more formal process to consider project changes.

Mayor Cummins invited public input.

Mike Corliss, Walla Walla, reported he had hired HDJ Design to review the Alder Street striping plan. Many residents and businesses were under the impression that Alder Street would function just like Main Street. Adequate parking is necessary for proposed improvements to the Drumheller Building and downtown.

Greg Flowers, HDJ Design, showed depictions of what Alder Street would look like with diagonal parking mirroring Main Street. Traffic would be slowed which is good for retail. Through traffic would use Rose or Poplar Streets. In his opinion, eliminating the left-hand turn lane would not have a detrimental impact.

Elio Agostini, 217 Beam Court, Walla Walla, said he did not believe Walla Walla was growing at the projected growth rates so traffic queuing is unlikely to be an issue. The main issue downtown is lack of parking. Alder Street should mirror Main Street for maximum parking.

There was discussion on:

- Delaying a decision until July 8 to allow for additional public input.
- The negative impact on vehicle mobility if the left-hand turn lane is eliminated.
- The City Council is a policy-making board and should not be involved in design decisions.
- The importance for citizens to feel they have a voice in government.
- The need to ensure citizen input is protected.

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Mayor Cummins invited additional public input.

Doug Ralph, Windemere Property Management on behalf of the Drumheller Building property owner, voiced his concerns regarding the difficulty renting space in the building because of a lack of parking. Mr. Ralph indicated his support for allowing the creation of the maximum number of parking spaces.

Jim Harold, 3030 Brisbane, Walla Walla, asked Council to reconsider their approval of the initial plan and voiced support for the creation of the maximum number of parking spaces.

Katie Daniel, 2448 Provenance, Walla Walla, respects the process that the City used and the City's willingness to accommodate requests for reconsideration from citizens and property owners. Ms. Daniel indicates she is in favor of the alternative for creation of the most diagonal parking.

Jean Dolling, 208 Detour Road, Walla Walla, suggested that parallel parking creates traffic delays and left-hand turn lanes on Alder Street are unnecessary.

It was the consensus of a majority of Council to delay a decision until the first Council meeting in July to allow for additional public input.

The meeting was recessed for a break at 6:33 p.m. and reconvened at 6:40 p.m.

Engineer Eaton reviewed:

- The Alder Street project has two change orders that are likely to exceed the City Manager's signatory authority.
- The City has asked the contractor to include the installation of fire lines to avoid street cuts. This work will likely exceed \$100,000.
- There was also a delay due to failing water mains. This work is estimated at \$125,000.
- The project schedule has been revised due to these change orders. This project includes very unique work and completion is estimated to be very close to the middle of August.

There was brief discussion on how property owners would be charged for the installation of the fire lines and substantial completion of the project.

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D. Council Meeting Schedule Changes.

Mayor Cummins reported three members of Council and the City Manager will be attending the Association of Washington Cities Annual Conference during the June 24 City Council meeting and asked for consideration of changing this meeting to Monday, June 22, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. An action item has been prepared for consideration on June 10.

There were concerns expressed with changing regular City Council meeting dates.

City Manager Shawa reported an additional Work Session is necessary due to a number of issues staff would like to discuss with the Council; and suggested Monday, June 29, 2015, at 4:00 p.m.

It was a consensus of a majority of Council to hold an additional Work Session on June 29, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the LT2 water treatment plant upgrade.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.