

**Planning Commission Minutes  
Willamette Activity Center Room 8  
June 16, 2020  
7:00 P.M.**

**1.0 Open Meeting 7:00 P.M.**

**Commissioners**

George Custer, Chairperson  
Kevin Gobelman, Vice Chair  
Loren Hogue  
Robert Baker-Absent  
Audy Spliethof  
Gail Partain  
Rick Wiemholt

**Staff Present**

Rick Zylstra, Community Services Coordinator  
Jackie Sims, City Recorder/ Assistant Planner

**2.0 Citizen Input**

**3.0 Consider Approval of Minutes- None**

**4.0 Action Items**

**4.1 Oakridge Transportation System Plan Approval and Recommendation to City Council to include Amendments to Oakridge Zoning and/or Comprehensive Plan**

- a. Conflicts of Interest/Exparte Contacts- None
- b. Open Public Meeting- 7:02 p.m.

Ashley Ludwig from Kittleson and Associates gave a presentation. What is a TSP? A TSP is a Transportation Systems Plan, it is a document that is meant to guide the 20 year transportation vision for the city. It is meant to be flexible to be able to modify and be able to choose what projects to go after. This is a plan, it is not committing the city to complete any projects in the plan. It will help the city go after future funding opportunities that may arise 5-10 years down the road that we don't even know about yet.

The TSP Committee met four times, they identified needs and viewed their technical documents, they had a joint work session with Planning Commission and City Council in October, there were three public meetings held during the development of the plan and that gave the public the opportunity to come and learn and provide input for the project.

The adoption process will be today we are looking to the Planning Commission to provide a recommendation to the City council that could be recommending adoption or it could recommending modifications to the draft plan. After that they will take it to the City Council and they will have the final decision to adopt the plan as is or to ask for additional modifications.

Ashley went over a brief explanation of the plan.

- c. Staff Report- Commissioner Custer read a portion of the Staff Report
- d. Statements in Favor

Rick read an email that came in today from Dee and Frank Sidwell 76403 Thatcher Lane- They build a house in Oakridge and they are both strong supporters of narrowing the highway to two opposing lanes with a turning lane, a bike lane and sidewalks of both sides. They walk and ride bikes around town as much as possible this is pretty dangerous, the sidewalks end on both sides forcing pedestrians to walk on the shoulder or cross the street. There are also issues getting in and out of business parking lots, these are safety issues we need to address. The highway frontage is unsightly and they are hoping business owners will do better when our town is not viewed as a passing lane and property owners will take more pride in the property they own and lastly trucker's noise is very loud and maybe with the change they will take other routes.

Lynda Kamerrer and Gary Carl 48175 E 1<sup>st</sup> Street- they own two properties directly on Hwy 58 and he is strongly in favor of proposition #1. As a business owner and property owner in Oakridge he strongly supports option #1 for the improvement of Hwy 58.

Trudy Hammond 47752 Berry St- she had a decision made up at one point and time, but now she agrees with a lot that was in the letter that was read. Walking along Hwy 58 can be treacherous and she is leaning towards option #1. There are plenty of passing lanes outside of Oakridge so she believes that is just an excuse,

- e. Statements in Opposition

Rick read a letter in opposition from Marsha Hall 47706 W 2<sup>nd</sup> Street- the proposal looks good on line however the reduction of Hwy 58 to two lanes is not practical. How can we justify this when we have over four thousands trucks pass through here daily along with the tourists and local traffic? She fears that local residents will use other streets as through streets and make former quiet neighborhoods noisy and not safe for children playing. Travelers will not want to stop at businesses because it will be too hard to get back on the Hwy.

Dennis Patterson 47871 W 1<sup>st</sup> St- He and his wife ride their bikes on First Street four or five times a week and they never have a problem. He can't see spending \$50,000-\$60,000 to fix something that doesn't need fixed. He is tired of ODOT, Kittleson, the planning commission and city council trying to shove the narrowing of Hwy 58 down their throat, they don't want and they don't need it.

Barbara Phipps 47720 Hwy 58-her main concern with any changes that you make that if you put in traffic signals that will slow traffic down. Weekends are already hard to get in and out of businesses. The Hardware store will have to have their delivery trucks go all the way down and turn around to deliver.

Mildred Cunningham- she understands what you are up against and she understands we need some better sidewalks through town. As far as the bike lanes there are other routes they can take through town, there are very few bicycle down the highway. You will create a real problem with traffic and people would get hit and killed. She doesn't see option #2 working at all, if you take 14 feet off of each side of the Hwy there is now way the businesses can sustain their businesses and they will be gone. We went through this 35 years ago when they widened the Hwy, because of all of the traffic and the danger.

Barbara Phipps 47720 Hwy 58- when her husband was alive they talked about this, what about the emergency vehicles and there is bumper to bumper traffic with only two lanes.

Cyma Lovell Beers 48417 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St- She comes from a place with a lot more noise and a lot more traffic, she came to this place and fell in love with it. There is not too much to change here, to modernize and bring younger people here we will lose our charm of our wonderful cute little place. That is something that as somebody who just got here, you are genuine. Maybe pave it and make clear markings, this place is unique and it needs to stay this way.

Rosemary Patrick 48373 7<sup>th</sup> St – She opposes the plan, this will destroy our small town. Faster traffic is never the answer and turnabout cause chaos.

- f. Statements in General-

Rick read a letter in general from Wayne A Hall 48227 Y Drive- he supports the plan to a degree, he commutes every day on Hwy 58, this used to be a two lane road and it wasn't until the state threatened to construct a detour bypassing the town that Oakridge expanded it to four lanes. This could cripple our already struggling businesses. Hwy 58 is not just a road it is a freight line and most of tourist industry comes by means of the hwy. He understands that crossing the Hwy can be dangerous and proposes a pedestrian overpass over Hwy 58.

- g. Close Public Hearing –8:02 p.m.
- h. Findings of Fact- Rick read the Findings of Fact
- i. Commission Discussion

Commissioner Hogue-what are the overall transportation increases? (Inaudible)

Commissioner Custer-he would think that there will an increase in transportation.

Commissioner Spliethof-how much money will the city have to contribute? (Inaudible)

Commissioner Custer-that depends on what they do initially.

Commissioner Spliethof-(Inaudible)

Rick this is not where our I and I is coming from so he doesn't expect to have huge problems with that, when you start throwing numbers out there when it comes to installing and repairing water and sewer, there are so many variables it's better to be on the safe side and put in research to find out.

Commissioner Spliethof- what about the sinkholes on the highway? One was by the church and pot place, (Inaudible)

Commissioner Custer-let's talk about 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Commissioner Spliethof-we need to get rid of the angled parking (Inaudible)

Commissioner Hogue-(Inaudible)

Commissioner Partain-in Eugene they have bike lanes in the middle of the roads, on school days you can't get through. When you pull in to the post office if you back out it is hard to see, you can't see and the oncoming traffic can't see you. She would like to see that changed. (Inaudible)

Commissioner Custer- from what he has seen on First St it seems like everyone shares with the bikes equally well. His concern with not putting in a bike lane is the Safe Routes to School, should something happen in the future and we don't have the bike lanes. This is a plan, it can be altered or amended.

Commissioner Partain- what happens if we don't get grants or anything for our portion of the cost?

Commissioner Custer-that is a what if question, grants do come up and they do go to eligible cities, usually the city matches are pretty low, about 10-15%.

Rick- another thing with the grants is they are competitive and without a plan we won't be competitive.

Commissioner Partain-ask if if we can get grants for streets.

Rick-we can, they are out there.

Commissioner Hogue-asked about ADA ramps in the curb cuts.

Commissioner Custer-that is something that the city has been on, there are very few that don't have the curb cuts, that is federal requirement and as they come up they get made.

Commissioner Gobelman-the TSP should include all options and when it comes to project selection it will be then that we decide what items we want to do. The Cadillac project would parallel parking and bike lanes. He'd rather be looking at everything rather than looking for something.

Commissioner Wiemholt- he is in favor of option one. He has seen people trying to back out and he stepped out in the street to help them back out. He is all for getting rid of the angled parking. As for bike lanes, he is on the fence. We do need a protective area for kids to be able to get to school safe.

Commissioner Custer-his concern is Safe Routes to School, he doesn't know if from Crestview to Hazel, if that could be school route. He is more in favor of getting rid of diagonal parking and going to parallel parking, he isn't too sure if we need bike lanes.

Commissioner Spliethof- we don't need bike lane down First Street.

Commissioner Custer-bike lanes are the future, they are going to be everywhere. It's a safety issue and sharing the road issue, it's going to be everywhere in small towns. So, yes what Kevin said, go all in and you can always not do portions of the plan, or is that not an option.

Commissioner Gobelman—from a funding standpoint whether or not we implement bike lines or we reduce parking on the south side of 1<sup>st</sup> street, is something we can do when we go into planning, for project definition he doesn't think it's crucial now to start defining the process.

Commissioner Custer-that does have some implications, however putting in the bike lanes is saying we are going to get rid of all the parking on the south side is going to scare a lot of people. He would like to see a modification instead of saying we are going to get rid of the parking.

Commissioner Hogue- he can envision Commercial Street being a bike route, there are a few empty lots there, there is a probability that there will be more buildings and the density will increase in that area, traffic may increase in that and that is something to look into more traffic control purposes.

Commissioner Custer- we could look at other traffic calming measures in the area.

Commissioner Spliethof- is there any regulations where if the phone company or power company comes in and put in a new pole, is there any requirements that they need to put in a ramp, is that something that goes to the city first?

Rick- they are supposed to pull a public improvement permit but that doesn't mean they always do.

Commissioner Partain- if we vote in option one can we say later that we don't want bike lanes?

Rick-yes, you could.

Commissioner Custer- in the mean time you can make up a plan to make it more amendable.

Hwy 58 Corridor comments;

Commissioner Hogue- the vast majority are very much in favor of speed control on the highway that is just deciding which methods to use for speed control. For him the idea of doing a road diet creating more pedestrian and biking safety, increasing awareness of what is around you, the accessibility to the businesses on both sides of the highway. You say it will not cause a little extra wait time at intersections is just an (inaudible) the road diet as he sees it right now could really be an asset for speed, accessibility and safety.

Commissioner Gobelman- one question he'd like to clarify is that currently Highway 58 meets the minimum right of way requirements.

Commissioner Custer- that is correct, there is sufficient right of way, width wise the road would stay the same.

Commissioner Spliethof- if we adopt the road diet, we have an election coming up this year, can the new council decide to say no, we don't want this.

Rick- the plan can be amended.

Commissioner Custer-if we go all in the plan can be amended, but we need to have a plan.

Commissioner Spliethof- can we just put in some signage that says this is the speed limit on each end of town, that wouldn't be a cost to the city.

Commissioner Custer- that is part of the road configuration, putting warning signs at each end of town.

Commissioner Spliethof- he is against the road diet, he doesn't think this would be a benefit. It is going to hinder our businesses, this is a transportation plan and it is the future of Oakridge and we should be listening to our citizens and there is a lot of opposition.

Commissioner Partain- she has been here for 25 years and during the summer months getting out from Hills Street is almost impossible from the traffic coming down the mountain. By the time people get to town they are irritated at the slower traffic and can't wait to go around. We could have a slower speed for the truck drivers.

Commissioner Custer- the truck drivers are some of the best drivers, they are not the problem. He doesn't want our town to be known as a passing lane, we have children and pedestrians out there. He wants them to stay in line, when cars go around trucks they can't see around them if there are pedestrians crossing. He wants them to slow down and see our town.

Commissioner Spliethof- getting in and out traffic if it goes down to two lanes, most of our traffic is trailers and RV's, trucks pulling ATV's. If they go to one of our restaurants when they try to pull out with trailers they won't be able to get out onto the highway. He talked to people in Cave Junction and even with more stop lights they have people backed up and it slowed their traffic down. The businesses are having a hard time, it is impossible for people to get back out on the road. He would like to see sidewalks and bicycle lanes, but to take this down to two lanes is the wrong way to go.

Commissioner Wiemholt- is the proposal for Hwy 58 a pilot or are we talking permanent?

Commissioner Custer- it wasn't specified on Hwy 58, her recommendation is one of these or with edits.

Commissioner Wiemholt- he would like to see this done as a pilot project for a full year so the citizens of Oakridge can see it in every season, to do it for a couple of months won't tell you nothing. He is in favor of this if we can do the pilot for a full year where we can see what it will really be like.

David Helton from ODOT- The plan is not specific on the exact planning of the pilot project, by hearing your idea of having it for a full year and having pile ons could be difficult when we have to maintain it and having to plow in the snow, those are issues that will need to be thought out. The pilot project would be primarily striping and it wouldn't include the sidewalks and other things so you wouldn't get the full feel of the project. Funding is a challenge for pilot projects, we want to have the funding in the pipeline and then a pilot could always result in a lack of support.

Commissioner Gobelman- so it is conceivable that the pilot could go through all four seasons?

David Helton from ODOT- Yes that is conceivable.

Commissioner Gobelman- how far out are you before we could do the pilot project?

David Helton from ODOT- It could be 4-5 years before we could start the pilot.

Commissioner Spliethof- can we put this to the council to put this out to the citizens to vote on?

Commissioner Custer- you can as a person, but not as a commission.

j. Commission Action

**Motion:** Commissioner Wiemholt moved to approve the Oakridge Transportation Systems Plan with East First Street corridor refinement project as currently proposed on the TSP page 40 configure 318. Commissioner Gobelman seconded the motion.



Commissioner Hogue- does council have full understanding of this project for First Street?

Commissioner Custer- he assumes they do, it's not a question we get to ask.

Hogue (aye) Custer (aye) Partain (aye), Spliethof (nay) Gobelman (aye), Wiemholt (aye) motion passed 5-1

**Motion:** Commissioner Wiemholt moved to approve the Oakridge Transportation System Plan option one a road configuration that is described in project numbers R-6A and R-6B that would be a one year trial plan to implement one year after we started. Commissioner Gobelman seconded the motion.

Rick clarified to the audience that R-6A and R-6B is a pilot project may be completed prior to the permanent installation.

Gobelman (aye), Custer (aye), Hogue (aye), Wiemholt (aye), Spliethof (nay), Partain (nay). Motion passed 4-2

**5.0 Discussion Item-None**

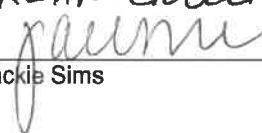
**6.0 Announcements-None**

Meeting Adjourned 9:33 P.M.

Signed:

  
George Custer Chairman Date Jan 18, 2022

Attest:

  
Jackie Sims City Recorder Date 1-19-2022