

East Idaho Avenue Refinement Area Plan

Stakeholder Meeting #1

May 27, 2020 – 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Microsoft Teams/Telephone Meeting

In Attendance: Brittany White, MCOACS
Cecilia Awusie, Idaho Transportation Department
Cheryl Jarvis-Smith, ODOT
Jeff Wise, ODOT
John Eden, ODOT
Mark Zimel, Property Owner/Manager (East Idaho Marketplace)
Kishi Stice, The Happy Hippy
Al Haun, City of Ontario/Jacobs
Casey Mordhorst, City of Ontario/Jacobs
Steve Solecki, City of Ontario/Jacobs
Kevin Mullen, City of Ontario/Jacobs
Betsy Roberts, City of Ontario/Jacobs
Rick Watkins, Fruitland
Ryan Bailey, Malheur County Economic Development
Terry Leighton, Ontario Fire
Nick Foster, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Mark Heisinger, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Matt Hughart, Kittelson & Associates, Inc
Matt Hastie, Angelo Planning Group
Mike Faha, Greenworks
Andrew Holder, Greenworks

Action items are highlighted in **bold text**.

INTRODUCTIONS

- Introductions and overview of agenda

PROJECT BACKGROUND

- This project is focused on E Idaho Ave
 - How the street functions for all who use it
 - The streetscape (look, feel, stormwater management, land-use management)
 - Potential circulation improvements via 5th Ave.
- City:
 - We also updated the traffic counts to reflect recent development in the area
 - We will be taking a close look at active transportation in the area, including bike/ped connectivity as it fits in with the new Parks Master Plan and other upcoming bike/ped projects in the region

- Is there any way we can improve access or connectivity to businesses in the area?

PROJECT SCHEDULE

- We have been focused on collecting and reviewing existing conditions data in the region.
- Next steps include taking input from this meeting and other public outreach to develop draft concepts for the area.
- Questions?
 - The project is being funded primarily through ODOT's Transportation and Growth Management program with a match from the City
 - East Idaho Avenue is under ODOT's jurisdiction, no plans to give ownership to City. City and ODOT have a good partnership on this street.
 - Current traffic volumes on East Idaho Avenue are about 22,300 vehicles per day.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS DISCUSSION

- Zoning
 - Existing zoning in the area is predominately general or heavy commercial use. This allows for a wide range of commercial uses. Restaurants, bars, truck facilities, shopping centers, auto repair, etc.
- Opportunities
 - Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities
 - Land use and site design
 - Enhanced connections between businesses
 - More efficient parking
 - Potential for housing in the heavy commercial area? Question for the public
 - Urban design
 - Consider gateway feature, public art, wayfinding, street trees, pedestrian amenities, and other features that may create a unique character for area
 - Consider maintenance level, cost, and constructability of different treatments
 - This will depend heavily on input from property owners and other stakeholders
 - Stormwater
 - Consider centralized vs. dispersed facilities
- Discussion
 - Jeff Wise: When the State built highway between I-84 and Walmart, a double-left turn lane was planned. The left-turn pocket can overflow during peak seasonal times. The current plan is to assess solutions.
 - Mark Zimel: Also understood the double-left would be implemented. People currently go through Denny's parking lot to access Ontario Marketplace, this is not a written deal and there is no promise that this will continue in the future. Closure of this link may affect circulation in the area. It's important to have multiple access points to a property.
 - Mark Zimel: From standpoint of leasing, this is the gateway to Treasure Valley and this area gets a lot of traffic from all over the Treasure Valley. This could be the focus of the area.
 - Terry Leighton: This is one of the busiest streets in the area. It would be nice to get some increased traffic control and emergency vehicle pre-emption at the signals in this area.
 - This is likely something that could be accomplished outside of this project

- Casey: We do not have great connectors between E Idaho Avenue and 5th Ave – It would be great if Goodfellow extended all the way south to 5th Ave
 - The signals here are owned by ODOT, would require coordination with them
 - This would also help emergency response in the area
- Observations on crashes on East Idaho Avenue?
 - ODOT is looking at signal timing changes and other improvements (like reflective heads), which may help address the crash history
 - Foggy weather makes actuation/detection difficult
 - Buses can have a tough time pulling out onto 5th Avenue – there are fast vehicle speeds on that road
 - Public transit currently has two stops in area – would like to see more stops in area that are accessible from E Idaho Avenue and East Lane. It can be difficult to navigate to stop at Walmart. MCOACS has funding to install more stops and add enhancements to stops.
 - Mark Zimel: They are open to conversations about stops at Ontario Marketplace.
 - Kishi Stice: Also would support a stop at the East Lane Plaza.
- Bus drivers have noted it can be difficult to make a left-turn onto 5th Avenue at times. They also believe people are driving faster than the posted speed limit on that road.

NEXT STEPS

- Online community workshop will open later this week (open through June 12)
- Next public meeting – week of July 20
 - Draft concepts
 - Health impact analysis