

Ontario Active Transportation Update and East Idaho Avenue Refinement Area Plan

TAC Meeting #1

May 27, 2020 – 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams/Telephone Meeting

In Attendance: Brittany White, MCOACS
Betsy Roberts, Jacobs/City of Ontario
Steve Solecki, Jacobs/City of Ontario
Blaise Exon, Jacobs/City of Ontario
Dan Cummings, City of Ontario
Jeff Wise, ODOT
John Eden, ODOT
Cheryl Jarvis-Smith, ODOT
Ralph Poole, Property Owner/Ontario Planning Commission
Nick Foster, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Mark Heisinger, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Russ Doubleday, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Matt Hughart, Kittelson & Associates, Inc
Andrew Holder, Greenworks
Mike Faha, Greenworks
Andy Lindsey, Anderson Perry
Dana Kurtz, Anderson-Perry
Matt Hastie, Angelo Planning Group

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

INTRODUCTIONS

- Reasons why TAC is excited for project:
 - Identify implementable solutions
 - Active transportation improvements
 - Aesthetic improvements on E Idaho Avenue
 - Make conditions safe and efficient for all users

PROJECT BACKGROUND

- Project Background
 - This is two projects in one:
 - Active transportation plan for entire city: Focus on walking, biking, and access to public transportation
 - East Idaho Avenue Refinement Area: Improving function for all users, enhancing streetscape

- City was initially looking at tree improvements on East Idaho Avenue and was reminded of previous study on East Idaho Ave. The previous study, along with new growth and development in the area triggered this study.
 - Is land use in the area properly identified based on recent and anticipated development?
- Committee Roles and Responsibilities
 - Attend four meetings
 - Review documents and provide input
 - Represent your organization/agency
- Project Schedule
 - Consultant team has finished draft analysis of background and existing conditions
 - Next step is working with public and stakeholders to learn more about the study area
 - Will the schedule be posted online?
 - **Kittelson to work with Steve to post on the website**
- Public Involvement Process
 - Three open houses/workshops with the community. First one will be virtual. Online components will be in subsequent efforts, too, but hope to add in-person elements, too.

TECH MEMO #5 – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Tech Memo #5 presents draft vision statement, goals, and objectives for project. Based on previous material from ODOT and the City.
- No comments during the meeting on the draft vision statements or Goals #1-2. TAC members are encouraged to review the memo and provide comments.
 - Goal #3: Environment
 - John Eden: ODOT is open to changes to stormwater management at East Idaho Avenue. It currently has a rural-look and needs to be updated/developed.
 - Mike Faha: We will look at alternatives to stormwater management that are aesthetically pleasing and fit with transportation facilities.
 - Brittany White: Would like to find an easier way for people walking and biking to access office from East Idaho Avenue, would like to see connection between SE 1st Avenue and East Idaho Avenue
 - John Eden: Will this project look at ways to increase access to East Idaho Avenue via 5th Avenue?
 - Yes – we have looked at traffic operations and crash history on 5th Avenue
 - Betsy Roberts: City is trying to find funding for sidewalks along 5th Avenue
 - Jeff Wise: We should identify any vulnerable users and their needs along East Idaho Avenue.

EXISTING CONDITIONS REVIEW

- TM #2 – Baseline Transportation Assessment
 - Inventory and assessment of active transportation network
 - Bicycle facilities and bicycle level of traffic stress
 - We will be looking to create routes that are level 1 or 2

- Major barriers now are crossing Fourth Avenue, E Idaho Ave, Oregon St, and other high speed, high volume roads
- Walking facilities and walking level of traffic stress
 - Fairly comprehensive sidewalk coverage, but several small and large gaps
 - Barriers include roads like Fourth Ave, E Idaho Ave, I-84, and railroads
 - Ralph Poole: Locations with open ditches around the city are a challenge. They present significant barriers, especially for vulnerable users. We should look for cost-effective solutions to improve these locations. Some of these might require coordination with the County or Irrigation District.
- City-wide bicycle and pedestrian crashes
 - Mostly on high volume, high speed roadways
- Existing public transportation system
 - There is a commuter route that runs from Ontario, Vale and Nyssa twice a day that is not shown. **Kittelson to coordinate with MCOACS to obtain information on this route.**
- Existing transportation operations and crash history on East Idaho Avenue
 - Traffic operations
 - Not much congestion at ramp intersections or Fifth Ave. East Idaho Avenue intersections are near mobility targets.
 - Crash History
 - Relatively high number of crashes at East Lane and Goodfellow Street. We will look into this further later in the project.
 - Cheryl: This can provide a barrier for people crossing at these intersections.
- TM #3 – East Idaho Avenue Refinement Area Land Use Assessment
 - 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.
 - There are limited site development standards
 - All commercial uses in city have architectural design standards
 - Existing development
 - Mix of newer chain businesses and some older establishments
 - Oriented towards people visiting by car
 - Future development potential
 - 25% of area vacant or redevelopable, primarily on northern or southern ends of area
 - 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

- There is potential for future pathway along Snake River from East Idaho Avenue to Ontario State Recreation site (see 2018 Parks and Rec Master Plan for more detail), we can look at possibility of creating a connection to that path via East Idaho Avenue
- The City is also looking at creating park on south side of town (old gravel pit)
- What type of landscape zones do we want in this area? Low vs. high maintenance zones? Gateway locations? Street trees?
 - Will look at elements of distinction vs. continuity on the corridor
 - Will coordinate with City maintenance crews
- Current landscaping standard of 6% coverage is pretty low, but City gets pushback on this requirement as it is.
- Brittany White: Safer crosswalks across East Lane. Several riders and drivers state the crosswalks going from areas such as Dollar Tree over to Harbor Freight are very uncomfortable to use. Maybe enhancements such as flashing lights, etc. would help?
- This is an opportunity to re-imagine how we want this area to look and function
- Dan Cummings: If we propose increased landscaping, we need to consider that the State does not allow irrigated landscaping in its right-of-way.
 - We will likely focus on drought-resilient, low-maintenance solutions.
- Stormwater drainage area near Snake River – open to changes, including development of area along south side of roadway and piping of water towards the river

- TM #4 – East Idaho Avenue Refinement Area Natural and Cultural Assessment
 - Natural and cultural resources assessment
 - No impact anticipated on Goal 5 Resources
 - Portions of management and refinement area are within 100-year floodplain
 - Development in this area will have to consider FEMA requirements
 - Waterways are adjacent to refinement area and are in management area
 - Wetlands are in management area
 - If no in-water works occurs, no effect on threatened and endangered species likely
 - Hazardous Materials: ODOT Level I HMCA likely required
 - Cultural Resources and Historic Properties: Review of above ground structures and CRI anticipated to be required
 - Topographic Constraint: Main constraint is Snake River
 - Demographics and Socioeconomic Considerations
 - 4(F) and 6(F) resources: if land is converted 4(F) and 6(F) consultation mitigation may be required
 - Cheryl: Are there currently any ways to access the Snake River (i.e., boat launches?)
 - **Betsy: City is working on a site now along the Malheur River – will send the plan and location to Kittelson.**

NEXT STEPS

- East Idaho Ave Stakeholder Meeting (today)
- Safe Routes to School Stakeholder Meeting (TBD – City is working on scheduling)
- Online Community Workshop (starts Friday, runs through 6/12)

- **Comments due on Tech Memos by 6/3**
- Next Meeting – week of July 20
 - Draft Concepts
 - Health Impact Analysis
 - **Kittelson to send out survey to gauge availability**

ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

- **Kittelson and City to work on posting project schedule to website**
- **Comments due on Tech Memos by 6/3**
- **Betsy to send Water Trail location to Kittelson**
- **Kittelson to send out survey to gauge availability for next meeting**