

**Brookings Transportation Steering Committee**  
**December 1, 2014**

The Brookings Transportation Steering Committee meeting was held at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December 1, 2014 at Brookings City & County Government Center with the following members present: Daryl Englund, Keith Corbett, Jacob Mills, Michael Bartley, Jim Morgan, Les Rowland and Al Baker. Jason Harms appeared by teleconference. Others present included: City Manager Jeff Weldon and Communications Specialist Laurie Carruthers. Vice-Chair Englund called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

**Approval of minutes.** A motion was made by Bartley, seconded by Morgan, to approve the November 17, 2014 minutes. All present voted yes, motion carried.

**Consideration and committee recommendation regarding Highway 14, Main Avenue to Medary Avenue Project.**

Vice-Chair Englund reminded the members the charge of the Charter, public testimony, letters, map data and committee discussions on the topic. He also noted Chair Corbett is intending to put the recommendation on the December 9 City Council agenda in order to have a response to the DOT in the timeline. Weldon advised the deadline for the December 9 agenda packet is Tuesday, December 2 at 5:00 pm. Englund summarized the accident report: Main Avenue to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue (5 lanes) has had only 5 accidents with 1 rear end accident; from Main Avenue to Medary Avenue the DOT recommends 5 lanes, with a center turn lane, 2-11' lanes, 2-14' outside lanes. The current width of 6<sup>th</sup> Street is 12' or 11' per lane. The Committee will discuss the project, and then take public testimony.

Bartley commented there is no consistency with left turn lanes. The accident report does not delineate between rear end accidents vs. other sideswipes to avoid a car in front making a left turn. Comments from the public include the traffic should use the bypass. Bartley does not believe the thru traffic is coming through town. The traffic will only increase in a growing community. Reducing the speed limit for a 4 block range will not be effective. He has concerns with consistency in width of lanes, speed limits as well as snow creep and ice. Mitigation with the historic nature of the neighborhood would be the responsibility of the City, not the Committee.

*Corbett arrived at 3:17 pm.*

Baker advised that it is the Committee's responsibility to provide a safe environment. Safety is the number one concern. He would like to see 5 lanes, with 11 feet outside lanes vs. 14 feet.

Morgan remarked that Brookings has changed the past 50 years and with the city thriving with growth, it will certainly change in the next 50 years. 4 lanes would be difficult. However, in interest of growth, 5-11 feet wide lanes would be sufficient. One concern, the DOT advised the 14 feet lanes could accommodate bike lanes. However, there are other bike routes in Brookings that are better suited for bikes. Our challenge is to provide a safe route for the next 50 years while insuring the amenities of the historic neighborhood are preserved.

Mills advised this is a challenging issue, and there is not an easy answer. The Committee would like to preserve the neighborhood look, but there will need to be compromise. His understanding from the DOT is that 4 lanes is the worst possible configuration, worse than 3 lanes. Even if only the

infrastructure is replaced, there will be damage to tree roots, which will lead to the loss of the neighborhood feel. Looking at things today, knowing this project will not happen for 3 years. A possibility may be to plant trees on property owners' side of property now, to lead the reforestation effort.

Rowland agrees with what has been said, but we need to remember that Brookings is proud of Brookings and its character. The center of our community is downtown with the buildings and businesses. Brookings holds intrinsic qualities. The Committee has an opportunity to do something. It could be a compromise. Reducing a speed limit does not hinder progression, it will help with safety. The boulevard needs to be upheld.

*Hill arrived 3:26 pm.*

Corbett expressed there was a lot of concern within the community, and the focus is around safety. The community advised that 5 lanes is the answer to safety while keeping 11 feet outside lanes. Lowering speed could be the answer. Even if you stay with 4 lanes, you will still lose a lot of trees. The charge now is what to do to preserve the neighborhood with sidewalks and lighting. The Committee's charge in the Charter is to build a strategy for Brookings.

Harms agrees with major points - planning for 50 years and 5 lanes. He questioned the road construction. Is it possible to construct the storm sewer closer together? Are there other alternative design options? His opinion is that 5 lanes are appropriate with 11 feet lanes, which will try to keep as many trees and provide for possible lighting options. This is a fair compromise.

Hill has received all the emails and read the minutes but missed the last meetings. It comes down to what is best for the city of Brookings and the future.

Englund thanked all the people who have spoken up and communicated with the Committee. Morgan and Englund have looked together in detail at the project. The Committee needs to preserve the area while still maintaining a safe street. The DOT did not look at any option that addressed a 4 lane street, which is his biggest disappointment. The DOT did address the 3 lane option. The traffic counts are double on 6<sup>th</sup> Street compared to 8<sup>th</sup> Street S, so he can see why that is not an option. The DOT did not provide an opportunity to discuss a good 4 lane option.

Morgan commented on the new perspective from the DOT at the last meeting regarding queue lengths with the 3 lane option. If there is only one lane of traffic in a direction, the queue lengths increase drastically during heavy traffic. Additionally, the transition from 5 lanes to 3 lanes would not be a viable alternative.

Bartley advised that once this is decided on 11 feet outside lanes, there will never be a possibility to put a bike lane there. However, bicyclists do make their own path.

Weldon and Englund reserved their comments until after public comment.

**Public Comment:**

Doug Smith: He is for the 5 lane option with wider outside lanes to be used as bike lanes and a safety buffer. With a heavy rain or snow compaction, water builds on shoulders and the additional room is needed.

Phyllis Cole-Dai: Asked if the Committee is planning to take a vote today?

Englund advised that if it comes to a motion, it will come to a vote.

Phyllis Cole-Dai (continued): She has had a lot of time to reflect since the last meeting. The Committee is in a tough spot and she thanked them for their hard work. The public is here to be part of the process. She is disappointed by DOT's approach and completely blindsided. At the last meeting they took off the 4 lane option arbitrarily, shutdown the timeline, threatened to take away funding for the project if we did not meet their timeline. The Committee needs to maintain good relations with the DOT. At the last meeting it appeared that the Committee Members acquiesced to the DOT. However, according to the Charter, the Committee is responsible to City Council, not the DOT. You can refer a proposal to the City Council that is not what the DOT wants. Has anyone followed-up on the request to look at other historic districts in other cities who are addressing traffic flow and safety needs? Have you answered all your questions? DOT has shut the timeline down, which makes the investigation difficult. She wants to see the outcome to come about through fair and transparent process. The DOT does not have the final word on this, the State Transportation Committee does. She asks for a careful rendering of the proposal to the City Council and to not circumvent the process. The DOT is forcing you into to shut down the process. If you feel you have been forced into a certain position due to the timeline, tell the City Council - we don't know what to do. 4 lanes may be worth additional conversation.

Englund advised that Ms. Cole-Dai is correct; the committee does report to City Council.

Nancy Flynn: She lives on 4<sup>th</sup> Street in a historic district. She asked what is the the width of the street on Main Avenue at 8<sup>th</sup> Street S. She does not want to see what happened in Huron, happen to Brookings. Has it been discussed to have 4 lanes with only left turns at Medary Avenue and Main Avenue? 5 lanes would be her next preference. Formerly, this section had different seasons due to the school year. Now, it is heavier traffic all the time. Getting all the traffic downtown while keeping the unique feel of the community and this neighborhood is important to her.

Due to the DOT's January deadline, Corbett advised that he has asked the Mayor to add this recommendation to the City Council agenda for December 9. Other City Council Members would like to see a recommendation come from this Committee. The Committee has done the legwork, and the City Council will value that input. Then the City Council will be making the final decision.

Englund commented that he has performed design work through his experience working in other historic districts. Typically, the storm sewer is put underneath the curb pursuant to DOT design. It does not have to be this way. On other projects they have put the storm sewer and water main 10 feet off the center line of the street. There are ways to reduce the impact on trees and still comply with DOT's 5 lane street. If there is a motion that does come forward with 5 lanes, he suggests putting in the motion

that the Committee works with DOT to try to maintain as many of the trees as possible. There will be less impact with 11 feet lanes, but he believes the Committee can do better to reduce the impact and disturbance of the trees. Historic lighting is something that needs to be looked at to preserve the historic nature of the neighborhood, but the City does need to evaluate the costs. As to the sidewalks, Englund referred to Bartley's comments at the last meeting.

Bartley added that there are possibilities with colored stamped concrete or to curve a sidewalk around, in order to add to the area's charm.

Baker questioned if the outside lanes are 14 feet on the 5 lane option, is it possible to not have sidewalks adjacent to the road?

Weldon responded that regardless of whether the outside lanes are 14 or 11 feet, the only place there will be curbside sidewalk is at the very east end of project for the last block. Otherwise for the duration of the remainder of the project, there would be a grass boulevard between the sidewalk and the street.

Englund advised that currently, 8<sup>th</sup> Street S has a designated bike lane.

Hill asked if the City Street Department could address the issue regarding the 5 lane options and snow clearance.

Interim Street Superintendent Marty Hendricks stated that when the snowpack is at the curb, the higher the windrow gets, the more of it runs into the street. When it gets bad enough, they pick it up in the middle of the night, but also cause a disturbance to the residents at this time. The wider lane option would allow for snow to accumulate.

Bartley brought up the issue of the bike lane requests from SDSU when he was on the Planning Commission. At that time SDSU realized it was not feasible to have bike lanes on 6<sup>th</sup> Street. There is a decision to be made. He believes the Committee can make a recommendation to the City Council for 5 lanes with 11 feet outside lanes, if there is no desire to address the snow creep issue or the bike lanes. The project developers need to work with the utilities and gas company prior to construction.

Baker asked if the west end of 6<sup>th</sup> Street past Main Avenue and the east end of 6<sup>th</sup> Street past Medary Avenue were 11 feet wide lanes.

Englund responded east of Medary the lanes are 11 feet wide. West of Main Avenue the lanes are 14 feet wide.

Mills commented that with this recommendation, he would like to see the Committee provide as much information concisely as possible as well as the options considered and not considered.

Corbett encouraged the Committee members to attend the December 9 City Council meeting.

Rowland asked why did the lane width changed along 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

City Engineer Jackie Lanning responded that the east stretch was built in 2006. At that time the DOT had not contemplated bike lanes. As time progressed, biking for transportation has been on the radar for

the DOT. The new DOT standard is a wider outside lane for these purposes; hence the west stretch of 6<sup>th</sup> Street has this feature.

Rowland asked if this is for a safety issue as well.

Lanning did not know if it was for safety or multi-modal aspects.

Harms commented that east on 6<sup>th</sup> Street at Medary Avenue, there is a 6<sup>th</sup> lane for turning north on Medary Avenue. He also added one more consideration. At the last meeting, the DOT brought up an idea relating to the width of boulevard. Typically, the DOT starts outside the sidewalk, one foot into the DOT's right-of-way and what is left, around 5 feet or 8 feet, is the boulevard. If the DOT can get a temporary easement from land owner, the DOT could build the outside edge of the sidewalk on the right-of-way boundary, which will add a foot of grass on the boulevard. This could be considered or incorporated into a motion.

Englund stated that typically the sidewalk is on the right-of-way line.

Lanning verified yes or 6 inches off the property line.

Bartley advised that he remembers asking the DOT at the meeting and they stated it was 1 foot off the right-of-way line right now. The DOT then stated that they would need construction easements in order to move it.

Morgan advised that there are several items that the Committee could suggest be investigated with the DOT in order to mitigate the impact of construction.

Englund commented that the DOT must get construction easements before proceeding. He suggests having the sidewalk as close to the right-of-way through a construction easement.

**MOTION:** Bartley made a motion, Hill seconded, to recommend the City Council consider for the Highway 14 (6<sup>th</sup> Street) from Main Avenue to Medary Avenue project a 5 lane street with a center turn lane, which is the safest for the City of Brookings and the 50 year plan, the width of the outside lane is recommended to be 11 feet wide with an alternative 14 feet wide lane should additional information become available; construction change recommendations include sidewalks closer to the right-of-way line, historic street lighting, alternative sidewalk design, keeping the boulevard as wide as possible, preserving as many trees as possible and a plan for reforestation, moving the storm water system off the curb and gutter to protect the trees, and consider a 25 mph speed limit.

*Discussion:*

Morgan asked if the motion was discussing the sanitary and storm sewer?

Englund clarified the sanitary would be down the middle. Storm sewer would be left or right 10 feet and the water main would be on the opposite side 10 feet. The gas line generally goes into the boulevard as well as the electrical for the street lights.

Weldon added comments about the design issues. When discussing a move of the storm sewer to the center of the road from the curbs, the reason the storm sewer is located at the curb is because it is the

closest and shortest distance from the catch basins. The catch basins are at the curb. Moving the storm sewer from the curb will cause a longer distance and greater propensity for back-ups. He is concerned that a design like this may cause storm water problems for adjacent property owners and the City.

Englund answered this is correct, however, the catch basins still need to connect from the other side of the road. If the street is 60 feet wide, there will be a 60 foot lateral connection from one side of the street to the other. There may be some additional charges for manholes to deal with this design change.

Mills suggested the Committee clarify the preference of 11 feet lanes.

Rowland asked if the reason for the 11 feet width is to maximize the width of the boulevard. Do we need this clarification in the motion?

Harms responded the reason behind the 11 feet lanes is to preserve as many trees as possible.

Corbett advised that with the motion the Committee can explain to the City Council that the preference is 11 feet lanes unless new information becomes available.

Rowland added that it is not about saving the existing trees. The current trees are in bad shape. In the future, several will be removed before the road construction is complete. The subject is to maintain the maximum width of boulevard, so trees can be replanted into the canopy that everyone is attracted to in Brookings.

Harms stated that the Committee has a very complex motion recommending aesthetic improvements such as historic lighting and concrete work. The Committee has concerns with the up charges, which can get expensive in a hurry. Does the Committee want to recommend these up charges to the City?

Baker commented that the Committee could make a more generic motion concerning the historic nature of the neighborhood and the up charges.

Bartley said the Committee could change motion to a more general recommendation regarding the historic nature of the neighborhood, but he thinks there should be some suggestions.

Englund stated that the Committee could add to the motion other historic amenities that may become available.

Bartley explained that after the Council makes their recommendation, they direct it to staff who are creative and can add suggestions. The Committee has performed the investigation and made suggestions. He would leave the rest of it up to staff.

Harms asked if the Committee amended the motion to strike the language regarding 14' outside lanes.

Englund advised that the motion has not been amended.

**MOTION TO AMEND:** Harms moved, Mills seconded, to amend the original motion and strike the language regarding an alternative 14 feet wide lane should additional information become available.

Harms was unexpectedly disconnected from the conference call.

*Discussion:*

Mills commented that from the beginning the Committee wanted to present a range of options to the City Council. He does not believe the Committee needs to spend time concentrating on one motion. The Committee can follow-up with additional recommendations.

Bartley said the motion as it states gives the City Council options.

ACTION ON MOTION TO AMEND: Committee members Morgan, Mills, Baker, and Englund voted yes; Committee members Bartley, Hill, Rowland, and Corbett voted no. Motion to amend failed.

On the original motion, all present voted yes; motion carried.

Englund advised that this recommendation will be on the December 9<sup>th</sup> City Council Agenda and encouraged all members to attend the meeting. Englund will prepare a summary report for the agenda packet.

Corbett reported that Brookings Day at the Capitol is January 21<sup>st</sup>. They have arranged for a meeting with Secretary Bergquist and the Committee Members at 10:00 am on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Please let Laurie Carruthers know if Committee Members would like to attend.

Next meeting is scheduled for December 15. Englund asked the Committee if they wanted to meet then or wait until January 19.

Weldon advised the next issues are the turn back issue on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and the 20<sup>th</sup> interchange project. Pursuant to the Charter, the Committee will want to gather information for an overall transportation strategy.

The Committee decided to wait until January 19<sup>th</sup> for next meeting with both issues on the agenda.

**Adjourn.** A motion was made by Hill, seconded by Corbett to adjourn. All present voted yes; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Submitted by Laurie Carruthers.