

QUARTERLY WORKSHOP WITH COUNTY COMMISSION MINUTES  
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL  
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE  
OCTOBER 06, 2011

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Lon Kellstrom      Mayor  
David Asson        Council President  
Sharlene Weed     Councilor  
Pat Thompson      Councilor

**ABSENT:**

Wendy Holzman    Councilor

**DESCHUTES COUNTY:**

Tammy Baney      Commissioner  
Tony DeBone      Commissioner  
Alan Unger        Commissioner  
Eric Kropp        Acting County Administrator  
Peter Russell      County Transportation Planner

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Eileen Stein        City Manager  
Paul Bertagna      Public Works Director  
Kathy Nelson       City Recorder

**ABSENT:**

Lisa Young         Finance Director  
Pauline Hardie     Comm Devel Director

**GUESTS:**

Scott Beard        Kittleson & Assoc.  
Bob Bryant         ODOT Reg. 4 Director  
Erin Borla          Chamber of Commerce

1. Quarterly Meeting with Deschutes County Commissioners

**Mayor Kellstrom** and **Commissioner Baney** called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. and introductions were made.

**A. Highway 20 Roundabout**

**Director Bertagna** provided an overview to date on the feasibility of constructing a roundabout versus a signal at the intersection of Highway 20 and Barclay Avenue. He stated the updated Transportation System Plan (TSP) adopted by the Council in 2009 addressed traffic flow issues in Sisters by creating an alternate route that circumvented Cascade Avenue between Barclay Avenue and Locust Street. He reported to date, none of the improvements had been made. He commented that during the TSP update process it became clear there was community support for a roundabout at the Highway 20/Barclay and Highway 20/Locust intersections versus a signal. The feasibility of a roundabout became a study point and concept plans were developed for both intersections. He stated improvements to the Highway 20/Barclay Avenue intersection were currently running on a parallel track with the Cascade Avenue improvement project. **Director Bertagna** reported that according to the freight industry, the design exception-approval for the improvement project on Cascade Avenue was conditioned on a signal being installed at the Highway 20/ Barclay intersection, not a roundabout. He stated with both projects on the horizon, it was time to discuss the two intersection improvement options.

**Kittleson & Associates Senior Engineer Scott Beard** gave a PowerPoint presentation illustrating why a roundabout should be considered, the status on the Oregon Department of

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Transportation's (ODOT) position related to roundabouts, a review of design concepts for the intersection and the associated cost estimates.

**Mr. Beaird** reported studies have shown that roundabouts are safer, create less delay, lower emissions and provide fuel savings, as well as being aesthetically more pleasing. He noted the reduced number of conflict points a roundabout presents as opposed to a traditional signalized intersection. He discussed how negative public perception of roundabouts changes to a positive perception after a roundabout is installed and community members use it.

**Mr. Beaird** provided the timeline of the state's position on roundabouts, noting an effort to restrict the use of roundabouts on state highways did not pass during the 2011 legislative session. He reported that currently ODOT has halted construction of roundabouts on all state highway system projects until a solution can be found that addresses the concerns of the freight industry. He reported ODOT was waiting for results of a study on over-weight, over-sized loads on roundabouts. He stated ODOT Director Matthew Garrett had pledged to personally facilitate a meeting between the City and freight industry on finding a solution that would satisfy both groups. **Mr. Beaird** stated there was potential to use Sisters as a case study for roundabouts on a state highway.

**Mr. Beaird** provided information specific to the Highway 20/Barclay Avenue intersection and presented two concept drawings; a near-term concept plan, that would address immediate concerns and an ultimate concept plan that would provide a long-term solution.

**Councilor Thompson** noted that a lot of other issues, specifically creating an alternate route that could safely move vehicular traffic through the industrial park, needed to fall into place before a roundabout or signal could be considered. He asked if the roundabout could be moved further south on Highway 20 as to not impact the existing development and instead impact the other two undeveloped corners. He stated it could lower the price on right-of-way (ROW) acquisition costs and could allow the project to move forward more quickly. **Mr. Beaird** replied the intersection could likely be moved south but the initial scope of work Kittleson and Associated performed was to merely see if a roundabout was feasible and had been approached accordingly. **Councilor Thompson** stated he was anxious to have the project move forward as quickly as possible and asked what the chances of ODOT allowing a roundabout to be constructed were. **ODOT Region 4 Director Bob Bryant** replied it was timely to be having the conversation as it would allow ODOT Director Garrett an opportunity to consider Sisters as a pilot project that could also address freight industry concerns. He stated the question of how to make the project affordable now with elements that could be expanded to meet future needs would need to be considered, with the tightening of budgets. He stated the new TSP the City adopted that included an alternate route was a huge step in that it identified what the community would like to see. **Manager Stein** remarked the City would be holding a community meeting to collect input and make certain citizens were supportive of the roundabout concept.

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**Mr. Beard** outlined cost estimates for both a roundabout and signal, noting that neither estimate included ROW acquisition costs. The estimated cost of a roundabout was \$2.2 million and the estimated cost of a signal was \$1.2 million. He summarized the advantages a roundabout would provide and hurdles the City would need to overcome if one was constructed. **Deschutes County Transportation Planner Peter Russell** suggested the Council take into consideration the annual electrical cost of running a signal. He reported the county had also incorporated roundabouts on state highways into its updated TSP.

**Mayor Kellstrom** stated the City would appreciate comments and support from the Commissioners related to the concept of a roundabout. He stated that support from the Oregon Transportation Commission, on which Commissioner Baney sits, would also be appreciated.

**Commissioner Unger** stated if the City could become a pilot project, the attention it would receive would be positive, but as a pilot project, attempting to solve a problem for the entire state it would inherently be a more complicated project that would take more time. He stated he would have liked to see the positives and negative of both a roundabout and signal presented as part of the presentation, as opposed to focusing on just roundabouts. He stated he felt it was a great idea and suggested the City focus on issues related to the freight industry and it might be easier to receive support from the freight industry with the ultimate design concept as opposed to the near-term design concept. He stated he liked the idea of keeping traffic moving as opposed to trucks stopping at a stoplight which slows down traffic. **Manager Stein** explained that Kittleson and Associates had originally been hired to perform a feasibility study on roundabouts, not signals, and so the presentation was focused on roundabouts. **Mr. Beard** stated the freight community's two major concerns were overtracking and its ability to move big trucks through roundabouts.

**Councilor Thompson** stated that Sisters, as a gateway into Central Oregon and the traffic bottleneck it experiences, affected all the Central Oregon cities. He stated it was imperative to have outside financial support to build the alternate route. **Commissioner Baney** remarked it was a matter of balancing safety and capacity while meeting the needs of the community and freight industry. **Commissioner Unger** stated it would be helpful to see the "big picture" for the entire alternate route as opposed to just one intersection. **Councilor Weed** agreed stating the Highway 20/Barclay Avenue intersection was just one component of an entire system. She stated thought also needed to be given to the Highway 20/Locust Street intersection if an alternate route was going to be successful. **Mr. Bryant** stressed the importance of not being at cross-purposes with the freight industry while still considering the goals and desires of Sisters. **Mayor Kellstrom** stated he considered the amount of attention focused on the matter as a positive step.

**Councilor Asson** asked what it would take to create a design concept such as Councilor Thompson had suggested with the intersection moved south of the current spot by a few feet. **Mr. Beard** replied it would require a few hours for him to create a sketch to determine if the move was feasible.

### **B. Senior Grange Status Report**

**Manager Stein** reported the project had been moved to December and she would report on the project at the January quarterly workshop instead.

### **C. Three Sisters Scenic Bikeway Status**

**Sisters Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Erin Borla** reported the conversation about scenic bikeways in Central Oregon communities began in 2009. She stated communities were looking for a way to create avenues to and from communities to build connectivity and encourage tourism. She stated Oregon State Parks and Recreation began its scenic bikeways program and Sisters, with the help of 18 community volunteers, submitted three proposals which became three of the initial four designated scenic routes. She reported the routes included McKenzie Pass, Camp Sherman Loops and Sisters to Smith Rock.

**Councilor Thompson** asked if any support was provided by the State for the routes. **Director Borla** replied it was a feather in the cap of Sisters to have the three designated routes and the state provided signage and installation of the signage. She added she was also working with ODOT to possibly standardize an opening date for McKenzie Pass.

### **D. County Transportation System Plan**

**Mr. Russell** stated a community meeting was held in Sisters where a presentation on traffic flow on Santiam Pass was given. He stated ODOT was working with a group of concerned citizens on policy language to be included in the County TSP update that would set specific triggers for the construction of the proposed additional passing lanes.

### **E. Governor's Visit**

**Manager Stein** reported Governor Kitzhaber would be in Sisters on October 17<sup>th</sup> to tour the biomass boiler project at Sisters High School and invited the Commissioners to attend.

**Mayor Kellstrom** thanked the Commissioners and county staff for attending. He called for a recess at 9:35a.m. **Mayor Kellstrom** reconvened the workshop at 9:40 a.m.

### **2. Preview October 13, 2011 Workshop and Regular Meeting Agenda**

**Manager Stein** provided a preview of the upcoming workshop and regular meeting. An item to allocate additional funds for Family Access Network (FAN) and Sisters Park and Recreation District (SPRD) was added to the agenda. **Director Bertagna** reported he would be discussing an additional ODOT intergovernmental agreement (IGA) related to the Cascade Avenue improvement project with the Council at the workshop.

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3. City Manager Update

**Manager Stein** discussed the agenda calendar with the Council noting that several upcoming workshops would be dedicated to the Water System Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) findings and the Council's subsequent decision on the water rate structure.

**Manager Stein** reported that Director Young was working on updating the City's fiscal policies and asked whether the Council was interested in having citizens involved with the process.

**Councilor Weed** replied she had submitted some names for consideration to Director Young already. **Councilor Asson** asked what changes in the fiscal policies would mean to the City.

**Manager Stein** explained policies are established to drive how the budget is designed, such as the current policy that states a contingency is required. She stated the City needs to abide by its policies or change them to reflect current practice. She stated auditors point out differences in actions versus policies of the City.

**Manager Stein** reported the City needed to appoint a Sisters representative to serve on the Historic Landmarks Commission. John Hayes, a member of the Sisters Historical Society, was recommended.

The **Council** discussed their desire for staff to develop a policy on request for proposals (RFP'S) for engineering, attorney, insurance and auditing services. **Manager Stein** stated she would make this a next priority for staff.

**Councilor Weed** stated she would like the Council set the re-development of the old City Hall site as a priority in order for staff to begin looking for grants. She stated she would also like to have follow-up conversation on the recycling center so a decision as to whether the center would remain open or be closed would be decided prior to the FY 2012/13 budget season. She stated she would like to assemble a Parks Commission as soon as possible. **Manager Stein** replied Director Hardie would be providing information on her research of how other cities have structured a Parks Commission with her monthly staff report.

**Councilor Weed** stated she felt with the Main Avenue project forthcoming, the City needed to provide education on back-in diagonal parking. **Director Bertagna** replied he had met with property owners and businesses in the project area to discuss the parking situation and a community meeting would also be held.

**Councilor Thompson** stated it might be necessary to find an alternate to attend the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) Board meetings as he found it difficult to attend on a regular basis with his other commitments. **Councilor Weed**, the current alternative, stated she also had conflicts that made it difficult for her to attend.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

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Lon Kellstrom, Mayor