



CITY OF WHITE SALMON
Planning Commission Meeting - Wednesday, August 9, 2023

COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Planning Commission Members:

Greg Hohensee, Chairman
Ross Henry
Seth Gilchrist
Michael Morneault
Tom Stevenson

City Staff:

Troy Rayburn, Administrator
Erika Castro Guzman, Project Coordinator
Shawn MacPherson, Attorney

Planning Consultants, Nelson/Nygaard:

Drusilla van Hengel, Senior Principal
Layne Wyse, Associate III

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Chairman Greg Hohensee called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. A quorum of planning commissioner members was present. Nine audience members attended in person and by teleconference.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Shelley Baxter, NW Cherry Hill Rd (Inside City Limits)

Shelley Baxter appreciates the city's efforts for the improvements on Patton Lane. She was happy to report that she could safely bike from NW Spring Street through Patton Lane to come to tonight's meeting without worrying about potholes, a road where it was once dangerous for her.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

1. Meeting Minutes – May 10, 2023 (Meeting)
2. Meeting Minutes – May 10, 2023 (Workshop)
3. Meeting Minutes – May 24, 2023

Moved by Ross Henry. Seconded by Michael Morneault.

Motion to approve minutes of May 10, 2023 (Meeting), May 10, 2023 (Workshop), and May 24, 2023, as written.

Michael Morneault withdrew his Second. Ross Henry withdrew his Motion.

Moved by Seth Gilchrist. Seconded by Michael Morneault.

Motion to approve minutes of May 10, 2023 (Meeting) and May 10, 2023 (Workshop) as written, and May 24, 2023, as amended.

ed. For structures that are two stories or more in height ~~and structures that are two stories~~ where more than one story touches the ground grade, all floors touching the ground grade will be considered ground floors. where two or more floors touch the ground/grade, all floors shall be held to the following standard: no more than 25% of a floor touching a grade or the ground may be narrower than 20".

MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

Henry – Aye, Morneault – Aye, Gilchrist – Aye, Stevenson – Aye, Hohensee – Aye.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. DRAFT “Lite” Transportation System Plan

Chairman Greg Hohensee discussed the purpose of the “Lite” Transportation System Plan (TSP). He emphasized the importance of the plan for accessing funding and focus on minor edits rather than substantive changes.

Chairman Greg Hohensee opened the public hearing at 5:40 pm.

Presentation

The City Consultant Planner, Drusilla van Hengel, with Nelson/Nygaard, introduced the proposed “Lite” Transportation System Plan (TSP) to the Planning Commission with a PowerPoint presentation. The plan focused on improving access, walkability, and transportation options in the community and included projects, programs, and policies to achieve those goals.

Consultant Planner Drusilla van Hengel discussed the human-scale draft city plan, including community input on driving, parking, and other transportation concerns. She presented a prioritization framework for short-term and long-term projects, considering factors such as connectivity, equity, safety, and public support. She said Nelson/Nygaard worked with staff to prioritize funding for various projects, including the reconstruction of sidewalks and streets, multimodal improvements, and pedestrian and bike enhancements. Staff explored potential funding opportunities from local, state, and federal sources to support these projects.

The presentation also cited reviewing and adding policies related to providing mobility, parking, land development, and pedestrian routes to improve safety, connectivity and reduce car dependency.

City Administrator Troy Rayburn highlighted the Public Works Director's and other stakeholders' involvement in prioritizing the list. The Director provided technical feedback, staff availability, and resources, which were then shared with the mayor, former planner, and consultant. The mayor and clerk-treasurer also provided financial context.

Public Comment

Chairman Greg Hohensee opened the public comment portion of the hearing at 6:14 pm.

Shelley Baxter, NW Cherry Hill Rd (Inside City Limits)

Shelley Baxter, a Cherry Hill Road resident, expressed concerns about the freight corridor and logging road down Spring Street. She suggested that logging trucks should be encouraged to route via SR 141 Alternative for safety. She also mentioned that the proposed connection between NE Tillotson Road and Snowden Road would cause additional traffic concerns for residents on NE Field Street. Baxter suggested that all Snowden Road residents continue using Loop Road.

Shelley Baxter further stated that she prefers Dock Grade Road for her commute due to her fear of going up Jewett with her E-bike. She suggested implementing a bike lane on Dock Grade Road sooner than later and considering El Camino Real a major bike route. She also mentioned the possibility of a bike lane on Spring Street but is uncertain how it would work. Baxter added that riding a bike on the sidewalk is safer but is still determining if it is allowed.

Overall, Baxter stated that she believes the study highlights the importance of considering these factors when planning future improvements to White Salmon's transportation system.

Justin Sherwood, Schoolview Place (Outside City Limits)

Justin Sherwood, a resident of Schoolview Place, said he understands that punching through his road is a long-term proposal but believes that most residents would be vehemently opposed to this proposal. He stated that the map showed the line drawn through his yard, which concerned him.

Sherwood added that he thought a sidewalk on Spring Street would be dangerous, especially in the afternoons, because westbound traffic is blinded by the sun. He also assumes that Spring Street would require significant excavation and improvements. Sherwood emphasized that despite Schoolview's long-term project, many residents would not be happy with a thorough street with vehicles, as they would have to navigate daily school trips.

Sandy Roberts, Schoolview Place (Outside City Limits)

Sandy Roberts, a resident near Justin Sherwood, expressed concerns about the punch-through of Schoolview Place onto Loop Road. She noted drainage issues along the street and suggested that Schoolview Place's thorough road from the long-term planning be removed from the map, as it is believed redundant with the more natural thoroughfare at Champion/Jake Lane. Roberts stated that she appreciated the improvements and the work on the plan.

Chairman Greg Hohensee closed the public comment portion of the hearing at 6:24 pm.

Discussion

The Planning Commission asked questions and sought clarification on various aspects of the Transportation System Plan, including the inclusion of specific plans referenced in the Comprehensive Plan, the classification of roads, and the frequency of the transportation system plan updates. They also discussed the possibility of revisiting the functional classification system and incorporating changes into the plan in a future process, as needed.

Chairman Greg Hohensee asked about the decision to create a "Lite" Transportation System Plan instead of a full one. Senior Planner Drusilla van Hengel explained that the focus was on incorporating walking, biking, and transit access projects. A future, and complete transportation system plan could include larger-scale transportation like rail, water, and air, she said.

Commissioners and staff discussed the process of project planning and construction in the city, emphasizing the importance of transparency and public engagement. They mentioned the availability of information through the city website, various personalized notification methods, advertised news articles, and noticed agendas, ensuring that the community has the opportunity to stay informed and provide input.

Commission members asked City Attorney Shawn MacPherson about the level of changes they can make to a document without requiring another public notification process. Attorney MacPherson explained that as the planning commission's role is to make recommendations, they can suggest changes to the document, but that substantive changes would require going through the public hearing process again.

The Planning Commission discussed various edits and recommendations for the transportation plan.

Commissioner Seth Gilchrist suggested the need for sidewalk requirements in new developments and discussed connectivity, not limited to streets, but that could be walkways too. The discussion involved various commissioners expressing their opinions and suggestions regarding the removal of a through street, the need for pedestrian connectors, the importance of historical thinking, the inclusion of income brackets and elevation considerations in surveys, the differentiation between different modes of transportation, and the preference for small town street plans over those of larger cities.

They considered adding new projects, revising the map, and removing certain connections while also discussing the possibility of expanding the speed limit consideration citywide.

Commissioner Ross Henry voiced his concerns regarding the cost and potential conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles on Oak Street. Consultant Planner Drusilla van Hengel stated that the road designation was not under consideration in this document. She stated that a change of designation would need to be done by WSDOT, which is separate from approving the proposed plan. The decision was made to leave (SE Oak Street and SE 2nd Avenue) the listed road classification as is for now and reevaluate all road classifications in the future.

The Planning Commissioners discussed whether to remove or keep specific proposed connectivity routes in the transportation plan. They ultimately decided to leave them in, acknowledging that the policy document shows deficiencies rather than proposing projects and not indicative of construction.

During the discussion, the Planning Commissioners identified several corrections and edits to be made in the document, including:

- Page 3-1: *There is also a small riverfront RV/camping ground and visitor center...*
- Page 3-4: *Speed limits within White Salmon are generally 20 and 25 mph, including...*
- Page ~3-4: Add historical background about the City and WSDOT calibration to lower SR 141/Jewett Blvd speeds down to 20 and 30 mph speed limits, the lowest highway speeds in Washington State.
- Page 3-13: Title update – Freight/Logging (update throughout the document)
- Page 4-8: Priority Project – *At the conclusion of ranking and phasing all of the projects, a limited number can be advanced and included in the cost-constrained Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) list. It is assumed that all eight of the near-term projects described below will be include in the ~~6-year~~ STIP.*
- In appendix D: add sidewalk requirement in WSMC 16.65.070 - Review standards. *H. Sidewalks. Construction of sidewalks may be required in conjunction with short plat subdivisions in areas where school bus service is not provided and students walk to and from school.* Recommended revision is that sidewalks are required.
- In all appendices: Add table headings and page numbers.

Plus, map revisions:

- Page 3-16: Figure 11, Revise map to illustrate second serious injury.
- Page 4-5: Figure 18, Revise project map to reflect NW Cherry Street connection correctly between Strawberry Mountain Road and N Main Ave.

Motion

Moved by Seth Gilchrist. Seconded by Michael Morneault.

Motion to recommend approval of the "Lite" Transportation System Plan, as presented, with council consideration of the suggested edits and revisions as part of the record of this proceeding.

MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Henry – Aye, Morneault– Aye, Gilchrist – Aye, Stevenson – Aye, Hohensee – Aye.

The Motion was passed, and appreciation was expressed to all members, including the public, for their diligence and hard work in the creation of the plan.

Chairman Greg Hohensee closed the public hearing at 7:59 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 pm.



Greg Hohensee, Chairman



Erika Castro Guzman, City Project Coordinator