

**WOODBURN PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP/MEETING
MINUTES
March 24, 2011**

CONVENED: The Planning Commission met in a workshop/meeting session at 7:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers, with Chair Jennings presiding.

ROLL CALL:

Chair	Jennings	Present
Vice-Chair	Bandelow	Absent
Commissioner	Corning	Present
Commissioner	Grigorieff	Present
Commissioner	Piper	Present

Staff Present Jim Hendryx, Director of Economic and Development Services
 Vicki Musser, Recording Secretary

99E Corridor Project Members Present:

Frank Angelo, Angelo Planning Group
Becky Dann, Angelo Planning Group
Ellie Fiore, Cogan Owens Cogan
John Bosket, DKS
Allison Wildman, SERA Architects
Naomi Zwerdling, ODOT

Chair Jennings opened the workshop/meeting at 7pm, and led the Commissioners in the flag salute.

Minutes

Commissioner Corning moved to accept the minutes of January 27, 2010 as written. Commissioner Grigorieff seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Business from the Audience

There was none.

Communication

There was none.

Workshop – 99E

Jim Hendryx, Director of Economic and Development Services, gave a brief introduction to the topic being discussed in the workshop – the 99E Corridor Project. This commercial corridor has been developed to a certain extent over the years and has an important current and future role in the community. A corridor study was begun 6-8 months ago to provide a comprehensive look at its state both today and in the future, and

to help the City decide how it can best serve the businesses and property owners along 99E. The Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed to help develop a plan to improve the corridor. This plan will ultimately be adopted by the Planning Commission and the City Council. The CAC has met twice so far, with the Planning Commission being represented at the meetings by PC Chair Dick Jennings. Two open houses have been held for 99E business and property owners, and were attended by approximately 20-25 people each time.

Frank Angelo, the lead consultant on the 99E Corridor Project, introduced himself and his team, and told the Planning Commission that the key objective of the project is to facilitate the revitalization of the corridor as a viable, safe and sustainable business district. The 20 year plan needs to be an expression of what the community wants. Some of the purposes of the corridor plan are:

1. To protect the long-term function and performance of 99E
2. To balance state and regional traffic demand with local traffic demand
3. To serve adjacent land uses in the corridor
4. To ensure state and local government make transportation and land use decisions together
5. To meet standards and policies in both the Oregon Highway Plan and the Woodburn Comprehensive Plan

The Corridor Plan's study area includes the land and development ½ mile on either side of the 99E highway.

Major issues along the corridor include:

1. Economic development
2. Motor vehicle mobility and safety
3. Corridor aesthetics
4. Pedestrian and bicycle access safety
5. Business/property owner participation
6. Neighborhood connections
7. Property access

Ellie Fiore, a member of the consultant team from Owens Cogan Owens, presented the vision statement for the corridor project. The overall goal for 99E is to create a safe, vibrant and sustainable business district that is easily accessible to shoppers and travelers by car or on foot. She requested feedback from the commissioners on the following questions:

1. What are the critical land use, transportation and other issues that need to be addressed?
2. How does the Planning Commission view the role of 99E in determining Woodburn's future transportation and land use patterns and economic development opportunities?
3. What are the desired outcomes and important statistics that the Planning Commission would like to see emerge through the corridor planning process?

Chair Dick Jennings emphasized that improved lighting along Highway 99E is critical, especially within the developed commercial area. Chair Jennings noted that many businesses on the corridor are rented, and that both the business owners and the property owners need to understand what the potential impacts would be for any proposed changes.

Commissioner Piper noted that the southern end of 99E is older than the northern end, and hasn't been improved in a very long time. It is important that the aesthetic quality of the corridor be improved, especially on the southern end, in order to promote economic growth in the corridor. Commissioner Piper noted, however, that it was important to avoid imposing overly prescriptive aesthetic requirements for private property, such as paint colors, as the businesses and their customers are diverse and have different preferences and needs. In response, Frank Angelo clarified that the corridor plan will not include detailed aesthetic requirements for private property down to the level of paint colors.

Commissioner Piper stated that improving safety will be an essential part of plans for and improvements to the corridor.

Commissioner Grigorieff expressed the need for sidewalks and better lighting along the corridor, and wants to be sure that there are enough lanes to accommodate traffic on the southern end of 99E.

Commissioner Corning observed that that community outreach should be a top priority. Frank Angelo noted that as alternatives for the corridor are developed and the project becomes more tangible, public outreach will become even more important. He also noted that there is a project website (www.woodburn99e.com), which provides an additional way for people to obtain information and provide comments on the project.

Frank Angelo presented Technical Memorandum #1, which is a review of relevant plans and policy documents.* In response to a question from Chair Jennings, Frank Angelo explained that the Highway 99E Corridor Plan will look ahead to the year 2035, even though the City's Comprehensive Plan and other earlier City planning documents extend through 2020. The planning team will ensure that these are made consistent when the Corridor Plan is adopted.

Jim Hendryx noted that the plans and policies summarized by Frank Angelo in some cases include competing objectives, such as providing for through-traffic and serving businesses. He noted that these policies will become more important as the alternatives for the corridor are developed, as they will shape the range of options available.

* The consultant team's presentation to the Planning Commission, which includes a summary of Technical Memorandum #1, as well as summaries of the other Technical Memoranda presented and background information on the project, is available on the project's website:<http://www.woodburn99e.com/meetings.html>

Commissioner Piper asked how much flexibility was left once all the policies are addressed, and how the community would know where the regulatory framework left opportunities to make choices. Frank Angelo responded that the corridor plan itself will become the guiding policy for the corridor when it is adopted, and that there are opportunities to modify some of the rules as part of the planning process, as long as it is done cooperatively with the City, ODOT, and other regulatory bodies.

John Bosket of DKS gave an overview of Technical Memorandums 2 and 3.* Technical Memorandum #2 describes the current access conditions. These accesses (or driveways) have an effect on corridor safety and mobility, as well as accessibility in general. They are also the customer entrance for the business, and there may be opportunities to improve the customer experience by making it easier to find the entrance or to get from one business to another. The goal now, after doing a great deal of research (detailed in Technical Memorandum #2) is to decide what methods, or “tools” could be used to achieve the best results along the corridor. He discussed several possible tools, such as two businesses sharing a driveway, or interparcel circulation, where adjacent businesses provide a connection between their parking lots so cars don’t have to get back on the highway to go between businesses.

Commissioner Piper noted that the number of existing access points might constitute a problem and that there would be a need for shared parking. John Boskett responded that the plan would need to find a balance between safety, mobility, and access to businesses. He also clarified that most access management solutions would be implemented through policies that would govern future development and redevelopment in the corridor, rather than being imposed on existing development today.

Chair Jennings noted that it is important to keep the peace between different property owners to implement some of these tools.

John Boskett then presented a summary of Technical Memorandum #3, which deals with existing and predicted future traffic conditions. John noted that at present:

1. Sidewalks are needed between Lincoln and Cleveland Streets, with extensions southward
2. Obstructions are common
3. Bicycle facilities are needed from Lincoln to Cleveland Streets
4. More pedestrian and bicycle crossings are needed
5. Amenities, such as pullouts and bus stops, need to be considered

John reported that the CAC had raised several issues at their last meeting similar in nature to the Commissioners’ comments, including:

1. More illumination is needed
2. The speed limit is too high
3. Congestion along 99E is far worse during regional events or highway incidents

* The consultant team’s presentation to the Planning Commission, which includes a summary of Technical Memoranda 2 and 3, is available on the project’s website: <http://www.woodburn99e.com/meetings.html>

4. Safe pedestrian crossings are important
5. More lanes are needed further south

John noted that there are several projects planned for the corridor already, including improvements for the intersection of 214 and 99E and a project to improve the visibility of the median there, and a signal at the intersection of 99E and Cleveland. He also noted that the addition of a two-way left turn lane south of Cleveland would improve traffic mobility in that area, and that a traffic management plan could help handle traffic for special events and when 99E is used as a detour for I-5.

Technical Memoranda 4 and 5 were discussed by Allison Wildman of SERA Architects. She told the Commissioners that the character of development along Highway 99E changes along the corridor, and can be thought of in 3 zones: the north, which has good landscaping, road improvements and businesses which are set back from the highway; the center, where driveways and developments are closer, and the road is still fairly wide; and the south, which is made up of smaller shops, as well as trees, farms and largely undeveloped land along the highway, and where the roadway is narrower. Commissioner Piper noted that there are isolated pieces of property on the east side of the highway that are not within City limits, and that policies affecting those properties would require coordination with the county or annexation to the City. Frank Angelo noted that Marion County is represented on the Technical Advisory Committee and is participating in the project.

Allison Wildman described site conditions along the corridor – generally parking is located in front of the building, but there are various configurations, from small properties with one row of parking to large properties with large parking lots. She also noted that while there are limited opportunities for parallel routes to Highway 99E, there are opportunities for non-motorized connections from some neighborhood streets to the corridor.*

Allison then described various tools that could be utilized to improve the corridor, such as:†

1. Marked pedestrian crossing treatments at intersections, with signals that can help pedestrians cross more safely
2. Special pavers that can be used to increase visibility to motorists
3. Pedestrian refuge islands (a protected “break” in the center of the roadway, to allow bikes and pedestrians to cross in 2 separate actions)
4. Bulb-outs – an extension of the sidewalk into the vehicular right-of-way
5. Sidewalk design to create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly area
6. Buffered sidewalks, with a 4-6 foot buffer zone of trees and landscaping, which will beautify the corridor and buffers pedestrians from traffic

* The consultant team’s presentation to the Planning Commission, which includes a summary of Technical Memorandum #4, is available on the project’s website: <http://www.woodburn99e.com/meetings.html>

† A handout illustrating the tools was provided at the meeting. This handout can be found on the project’s website: <http://www.woodburn99e.com/meetings.html>. A more detailed explanation of the tools is included in Technical Memorandum #5, available from the project’s website: <http://www.woodburn99e.com/documents.html#techmemo>

7. Bike lanes (5-6 feet wide and well-marked)
8. Pedestrian-oriented streetlights - lower lights that illuminate the walkway for pedestrian safety
9. Gateways (There are many types of possible gateways, such as statue art, archways, buildings, etc.)

The Commissioners then gathered around a 10 foot map of Highway 99E and made location-specific recommendations for improvements. Their comments were recorded on the map and will inform the draft alternatives that the consultant team develops in the next phase of the project.

After some discussion of specific issues on the corridor, the Commissioners returned to their seats and Allison asked for their feedback on each type of tool she presented. She first asked for comments about pedestrian crossings. The Commissioners' comments included:

1. Pedestrian refuges are a good idea to improve safety, the question is how many and where they should be located.
2. In siting pedestrian refuges, the consultants should look at what the attractions are that people are trying to cross to get to. If these are too dispersed, crossings will be dispersed and pedestrian refuges may not be very helpful since people won't walk out of their way to use one. People cross illegally even near signals to avoid going out of their way.
3. One option would be to include just a few refuges (e.g. two between Hardcastle and Safeway, one between Hardcastle and Lincoln, two or three south of Lincoln). Another option would be to locate one every few blocks – build enough so that they are convenient much of the time and they get used.
4. Specific locations mentioned where crossings are more concentrated include the Jehovah's Witness church between Hardcastle and Safeway, a laundromat at Cleveland, and near Gary's Autobody.
5. The type of crossing that is used on Lancaster with flashing lights works well.
6. The people who are most likely to need the crossings may not be represented at the meetings, but need to address their needs.

The next topic was sidewalks, bike lanes, and streetscape features. The Commissioners' comments included:

1. There should be continuous sidewalks from north to south.
2. Utility poles blocking the sidewalk are a common problem in the corridor. It would be helpful to underground the utilities and get the poles out of the way in the north as well as the south part of the corridor.
3. ODOT will require bike lanes, so there is no choice on whether to include them.
4. Buffered sidewalks would be preferable, but there isn't enough room to fit them within the existing right-of-way, so it will be a question of trade-offs and how much impact there would be to properties and businesses.

5. Hasn't ODOT changed their policies on "curb-tight" sidewalks? (The consultant team clarified that while ODOT policy now has a preference for buffered sidewalks, curb-tight sidewalks are still acceptable.)
6. What is the right-of-way needed to accommodate all these features, including sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.? (The consultant team responded that the roughly 90 foot right-of-way that currently exists on the north end of the corridor represents roughly the minimum to accommodate four travel lanes, a center turn lane, sidewalks, and bike lanes.)
7. Don't add garbage cans, benches, etc. along the corridor – they create a service and maintenance issue.
8. Bus stop improvements are a nice idea, but are not a priority. If transit service is not going to increase, it's not worth investing in the stops unless there is special funding for it from another source. There are some locations where improved stops may be more worthwhile, such as near Key Bank and Lincoln.
9. Reducing the number of lanes on Highway 99E south of Lincoln may create traffic problems – it's already busy in the afternoons.

The next topic was multi-use trails and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. The Commissioners' comments included:

1. Consider off-street bicycle/pedestrian paths.
2. A bike trail was proposed through Woodburn that would go all the way to Aurora.
3. There is an existing footpath to the Young Street Grocery, but it crosses the railroad.

The next topics discussed were site development and zoning. The Commissioners' comments included:

1. Shared parking may be needed.
2. Putting parking behind the building and to the side may be good, but need to keep options open for developers.
3. Some requirements in the Woodburn Development Ordinance promote buildings set back from the street. Goodwill, which was built recently, has its entrance oriented to the parking lot rather than the sidewalk.
4. Many lots are too shallow to redevelop if the right-of-way is expanded.
5. If any rezoning of existing residential neighborhoods is proposed as part of an alternative, a lot more outreach will be needed to those neighborhoods.

The next topic discussed was access management. The Commissioners' comments included:

1. Access consolidation is most important, but also most challenging, in the core area of the corridor.
2. Existing opportunities for cross-over easements were mentioned, including between Bank of America and Linda's, and between Do It Best and Los Cabos.
3. Property owners get territorial – if they aren't getting along, they will have conflict over shared access or shared parking.

4. Lot consolidation or land assembly may be appropriate at the intersection of 99E and Young.
5. The community is not willing to consider medians. They should not be included in the plan.

Frank Angelo closed the workshop, reminding everyone watching on live television that this was a part of various preliminary discussions and that no firm decisions have been made concerning the Highway 99E corridor.

Meeting

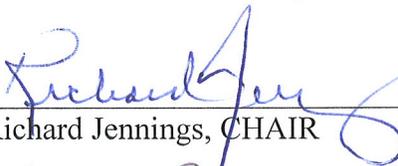
Sign standards have been updated, and a staff member is going from business to business in Woodburn, educating owners about the new sign standards and handing out informative flyers.

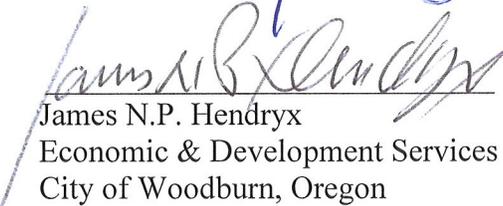
The City Attorney is presently working on the best time interval for sign amortization.

The next Planning Commission meeting/workshop will take place on Thursday, April 28th.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jennings made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.

APPROVED  Date 04/28/2011
Richard Jennings, CHAIR

ATTEST  Date 05/02/2011
James N.P. Hendryx
Economic & Development Services Director
City of Woodburn, Oregon