

Mason County Planning Advisory Commission

May 16, 2016

(This document is not meant to be a verbatim transcript)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Vicki Wilson, Kevin Shutty, Deb Soeper, Rob Drexler, Bill Dewey

Excused: Steve Van Denover

3. Regular Business

a. Adoption of Agenda

Agenda adopted as written

b. Approval of Minutes

No changes. Kevin made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Motion seconded by Vicki. All in favor motion carried.

c. Public Comment

None

4. Hearing -2016 Comprehensive Plan Update

Presentation of the Transportation Element Draft prepared by SCJ Alliance

Presenters: Loretta Swanson, Public Works and SCJ Alliance

Loretta began by prefacing the draft of the transportation plan then introduced Thera Black from SCJ Alliance.

Thera gave a brief explanation regarding how the plan was drafted. She discussed the two public meetings held and gave a list of highlights from those meetings which included traffic, long range planning for Allyn, and the Belfair UGA. She noted that the Belfair area presents some interesting issues. The first is that State Route 3 is a highway of statewide significance, meaning the level of service standards do not apply. This means that SR 3 would be exempt from needing a concurrency ordinance. Another issue is the fact that the construction is driving people to use other routes that were not meant to handle a large volume of traffic. She went on to address concurrency ordinances around other areas of the county and discussed updates. Thera said another issue from the public meetings is the question of what happens to SR 3 once the bypass is built. Specifically, is the Department of Transportation (DOT) going to relinquish it to Mason County or will DOT retain SR 3 and the bypass. Thera said she did not have an answer at this time but would pass it on to Loretta once she had an answer.

Thera then stated that the comment period was still open until May 20th, then handed out a comment matrix she created so the PAC could see some of the other concerns.

Rob asked if Thera could go through and show the PAC some changes she made in the document. Thera began by showing how she grouped goals together, saying it is much easier to read now. She then pointed out the Transportation System Inventory on page 20, which Vicki said she appreciated. Thera discussed the traffic forecast and the changes in volume. She said that though the traffic counts are from 2012, they are still significant. Vicki asked if data existed showing the amount of vehicles a road was originally designed to handle on a daily basis. Thera noted that there is data, but it is per hour versus per day. She asked Dave Smith, Transportation Engineer for Mason County what the amount was. Dave answered that normally, the roads within the county are set up to handle between 800-1000 vehicles per hour.

At 6:50 p.m., Rob opened the floor for public comment.

Marilyn Vogler spoke first saying she appreciated the comments made about Mason Transit. She said that mass transportation needs to be looked at as an economic necessity. Marilyn added that many residents in a low income community rely on public transportation. She noted that she was disappointed in how low Mason County ranks in bicycle safety because bicycle tourism is part of economic growth and tourism.

Constance Ibsen discussed the bypass and connectors. She said that if there are too many connectors on the bypass, then traffic will not be improved. Constance then said that there are roads to nowhere being built within the county, meaning that they only go to a few houses and are rarely used but have to be maintained by county. On page 17, she read 5.1 aloud, which states "Reduce environmental impacts on the natural environment". Constance said that she would like to see Mason County become a no spray county. She stated that Jefferson County has not sprayed for almost 20 years, and has seen positive results. Finally, Constance addressed the prioritization of the projects noting that many projects proposed in the past have never actually seen the light of day after their proposal.

At 7:02 p.m. Rob closed public comment.

Rob asked what was needed of the PAC due to the fact that public comment was still open. Loretta suggested holding the hearing open until May 23rd so they would have more time to go through the materials, including the comments received from Thera. She said that if any additional comments came in, she could forward them via email. Loretta said after the hearing on May 23rd, the goal was to have the PAC motion to move the Transportation Element forward, even with suggestions or changes, to the Board of County Commissioners.

Vicki asked if Thera could address some of the questions asked by Constance. Thera agreed and spoke about the connector issue. She said that DOT has only allowed a maximum of 2 connectors for the Belfair bypass, mainly for transit and emergency services. She suggested that once the location of the connectors is decided, that the land use of the area be looked at to prevent the crowding that Constance discussed. Thera said that when Yelm had the 512 bypass put in, they changed the surrounding zoning to prevent issues.

Loretta stepped in regarding the prioritization of projects, noting that the two representatives from the Transportation Improvement Program Citizen Advisory Panel (TIP-CAP) were not able to make it, and that this task will actually fall to them. She said that once recommendations are made by TIP-CAP, they are taken to the commissioners for the ultimate decision.

Rob stated that this document is meant to be used as guidance, but is not the final say in all projects.

Teri King asked who would be paying for the connectors on the Belfair bypass. Thera said that DOT will not pay for any connections, they only authorize the number allowed. Melissa McFadden from Public Works added that in order to decide upon the number of connectors, an environmental review was done. If that number was to be changed, the DOT would need to go through the review all over again. Rob discussed the information he knew of, and assured Constance that he has only heard of two connectors and nothing more due to the fact that the county will be paying for them.

Bill questioned Marilyn Vogler about bicycle safety. Specifically, if there had been any effort to prioritize wider shoulders for bike lanes. He added that if a road has a poor rating and needs to have shoulders added that perhaps it should be done at the time of repair. Marilyn said she was unsure if there had been any effort, but said that perhaps the bicycling clubs should be contacted for more information. Loretta said that when funds are available for new roads or reconstruction, they are also doing work on drainage, right of way acquisition, etc. She added that if funds were set aside for maintenance only, they would not be allowed to do any widening without looking at the previously mentioned issues. Melissa McFadden discussed the difference between putting in a bike trail and allotting a wider shoulder. Both, she explained, have their own challenges. Bill asked how likely funding for maintenance would be on both options. Melissa said that dedicated road funds could be used for the shoulders. If a bike trail was designated as an important transportation connector then it may have funding.

5. New Business

None

6. Adjournment

At 7:27 p.m., Rob continued the hearing until May 23, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.