October 14, 2013

Planning and Programming

TO: ACHD Commissioners, Deputy Directors, Director Wong
FROM: Jeff Lowe, AICP, Senior Transportation Planner
SUBJECT: Fairview Avenue Corridor Management Strategy
Commission Work Session – October 23, 2013

Executive Summary
The Fairview Avenue Corridor Management Strategy is a continuation of a multi-year effort to develop a set of strategies to improve safety and mobility on Fairview Avenue. This briefing is to update the Commission on efforts to date. No direction is being sought at this time. This work session is in anticipation of a public hearing to be held in January to consider an action on the Plan.

Project History
Safety and operations on Fairview Avenue have long been concerns, as evidenced by the ongoing efforts to identify solutions to decrease accidents and improve travel for all users. Since 2007, a number of outreach efforts have been conducted, and documents produced, to address these less than favorable conditions. However, no clear implementation schedule has been adopted and the ACHD Commission and the Boise and Meridian City Councils determined that a fresh approach should be taken. This approach includes reaffirming the project need and goals, involving stakeholders more closely, and using data-driven decision making to align priority issues with effective solutions. It is realized that access management (more specifically non-transverse center medians) is not the conclusive (independent) solution and that a number of complementary strategies are necessary for success. This is evidenced by a number of existing conditions on the corridor:

- Traffic volumes on Fairview are expected to nearly double up to 63,000 average daily trips (currently up to 35,000 on some portions of the corridor) by the year 2035.
- There are nearly 400 crashes along the corridor every year, with 60% of the accidents occurring in roadway segments between the signalized intersections. Fairview Avenue ranks highest in crashes per mile per year (39) when compared to segments of similar streets, including State Street (35), Overland (24), and Chinden (22). Park Center Boulevard, which has a median from Beacon Street to Bown Way, averages only 6 crashes per mile per year.
- In 2035, even after programmed capacity improvements, 10 of the 19 intersections on Fairview will exceed ACHD’s Level of Service (LOS) requirements.
- Gaps in bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including infrequent crossing opportunities, make it difficult for users to travel along Fairview.

With traffic volumes expected to increase and congestion worsening, if the status quo is maintained, significant safety and operational concerns will remain on the corridor.

Keys to Improving the Corridor
The Plan outlines the strategy for improving the safety and efficiency of travel along Fairview Avenue between Linder Road and Orchard Street. The recommendations are broad in nature. Overall, the Plan was developed with the following approach:
**How do we know**  A data-driven process was used to analyze the corridor. Understanding the data allows for appropriate solutions to be applied, basis for evaluation and monitoring of effectiveness, and justification for projects.

**Corridor Strategy**  It is necessary for a complement of strategies to be employed along Fairview, for access management is not the only concern, and not every strategy is applicable to each portion of the corridor. Employing appropriate strategies will result in increased safety and mobility:

- For every five (5) driveways per mile removed, the crash rate is reduced by approximately 4%.
- *Non-transversable medians have been shown to reduce crashes by at least 23%, including a 40% reduction in pedestrian crashes when a center refuge is provided at crossings.*
- Adaptive signal timing improves level of service at intersections, and improves travel time by 9% to 19%, studies show.
- Research shows that major streets with bike lanes lower the risk of injury to cyclists by about 50% compared to roads without lanes.
- Hawk signals reduce pedestrian crashes by 69% at crossings.
- Transit signal priority (for buses) improves the average transit running time by 15% to 25%.

**Implementation**  As improvements (projects) are advanced for implementation, a detailed design effort will be required and further involvement with affected stakeholders will be essential to resolve potential property impacts and refine project designs. The corridor is broken into phases and priority is based on the data collected and analyzed; the roadway segment between Five Mile Road and Curtis Road is the first priority for a number of reasons, particularly the high number of crashes (35% of all crashes in the corridor). Each phase will include a five step process:

- Step 1: Concept design (30%) and public involvement
- Step 2: Present concept design to ACHD Commission for approval
- Step 3: Final Design
- Step 4: Project construction
- Step 5: Monitoring and evaluation

The Plan provides for the continued coordination between the Cities of Boise and Meridian, and ACHD; providing a common message to developers/land owners as applications for development are requested, or public projects proposed, will ensure that improvements are in line with the strategies. In addition, outside of major capital projects, opportunities will arise to make improvements in line with the strategies of the Plan, such as the installation of a bike lane concurrent with an overlay. There are overlays scheduled for portions of Fairview in 2014 and 2015 which can provide these opportunities.

Currently, the next step of this process for a concept design effort is programmed in the IFYWP in 2014 as a placeholder for the first segment (Five Mile to Curtis). If the overall Corridor Management Strategy is not adopted by the Commission in January, this project will be removed or modified pending Commission direction.

**Stakeholder and Public Involvement**
A project team, stakeholders, and the public were provided the opportunity to actively participate in the development, evaluation, and selection of options for the Plan. The stakeholder committee included business and property owners, representation from a neighborhood group, and staff from local agencies. This group provided input in reviewing and prioritizing strategies to address the corridor needs.

In response to stakeholder requests, the resulting plan includes a diverse set of solutions to better address corridor needs rather than relying solely on access management. These solutions do not replace the need for larger-scale capacity-related projects such as those in the CIP. Rather, they complement those projects while
providing immediate improvement to safety and maximizing the efficiency of the existing roadway. In addition, as disturbances caused by construction were a major concern, the strategies are recommended to be combined rather than incrementally employed in order to minimize repeated travel disruptions to businesses. Other strategies during construction to minimize effects on businesses such as night work and incentives to the contractors should be considered.

The strategies were presented to the public at an Open House on August 15th, 2013, for review and comment. The Public had the opportunity to review the data and analysis from the entirety of the project in order to make an informed selection for an option. Comments are included in Exhibit “A”.

**Next Steps**
Staff is presenting this information to the Commission in anticipation of a formal action, as well as to provide an opportunity to address any questions that the Commission may have prior to a public hearing. In early November, the draft plan will be released to the elected officials and the Public for review and comment. The City of Meridian has requested that a joint meeting be held between the Councils of Boise and Meridian and the Commission; the City of Boise has indicated they would consider a meeting. Staff requests that the Commission provide direction on this matter.

October 23: ACHD Commission Informational Work Session
November: Joint meeting? Date TBD
January 22: ACHD Commission consideration for formal action (tentative)

**Attachments:**
Attachment “A” – Comments from the Public
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING #1 SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name:</th>
<th>Fairview Avenue Corridor Management Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Number:</td>
<td>507022.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>August 15, 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting Time:</td>
<td>4:30 PM – 7:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>The Clubhouse Event Center, 7311 W. Potomac Dr., Boise, ID</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepared By:</td>
<td>Sai Sirandas, DKS Associates</td>
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**Attendance:** 73 people signed in

**Meeting objectives:** Elicit public comment on Fairview Avenue Corridor Management Strategy, including:

- Developing a long-range plan to increase safety and reduce congestion with access management (including center-of-the-road medians) as just one element.
- Evaluating and updating information from past efforts.
- Developing an implementation plan that recommends improvements to occur over the next 20 years.

**Comment Summary:**

Eighteen comment sheets were received at the public involvement meeting, and eleven comments were received after the meeting. Comments from these 29 members of the public are summarized below and organized by topic area based on the comment form. Note that not all 29 members of the public provided comment on all topic areas. When similar comments and responses were provided by more than one member of the public, the number of similar comments is shown in parentheses.

1) **Do you agree or disagree with the proposed Fairview Avenue Corridor Management Plan?**

   - Agree (11)
   - Disagree (13)
   - Not Sure (2)
   - No Response (3)

**Why?**

- Medians limit/restrict access to property; Medians will have severe economic impacts (10)
- There is a need for improvements; something needs to be done to improve safety, and existing and future traffic congestion (7)
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING #1 SUMMARY

- Traffic too fast; reduce speed limit (2)
- Needs better signal timing (2)
- Do not agree with reduced driveways
- Concerned about service roads bisecting properties
- Concerned about driveway reduction
- Five Mile Road to Orchard Street (Phase 1 Segment) is already facing economic crisis
- Concerned about traffic noise
- Speed up traffic
- Need more lanes
- Need bike lanes
- Need better lighting
- Plan does not meet its own listed goals (Transportation, Social & Economic)

What do you like about the plan?

- Support pedestrian and bike improvements (5)
- Support the effort to improve safety (4)
- Support bus turnouts (3)
- Public involvement and the exchange of ideas are great. Educational materials are helpful (2)
- Support reducing access conflicts near intersections (2)
- Support reconstruction of driveways (2)
- Support the effort to improve mobility
- Support medians
- Support inter-parcel circulation
- Maintains economic growth
- Support the three-phase approach
- Support proactive approach
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING #1 SUMMARY

- Support driveway consolidation

What do you dislike about the plan?
- Medians will limit access; No medians (11)
- Construction work will impact property (2)
- Needs signal at Wildwood Street instead of Steelwood Avenue (2)
- Bike lanes
- Reduced driveways
- Frontage/Service roads will impact private properties
- Plan lacks specifics
- Do not support red light running cameras
- Implementation could be long and drawn out
- Negative feedback about Curtis Road project
- The eastern portion of the corridor (Five Mile to Orchard) is the most “delicate” area, therefore it should not be considered for Phase 1. Do Improvements In other areas of the corridor before improving the eastern portion

2) Do you believe the appropriate strategies are being applied in each area?

No (7)
Yes (8)
Somewhat (2)
No Response (12)

Please explain
- Do not support medians (6)
- Medians will not work in Idaho because of too many large trucks (3)
- Improve bicycle and transit facilities on other corridors, not on Fairview Avenue (2)
- Apply medians at locations adjacent to undeveloped areas (west of Five Mile) (2)
- Medians are not suitable in areas that get snow (2)
• Consider improving parallel facilities (Franklin Road); Study additional I-84 freeway exits
• Focus on business access
• Educate drivers to avoid using the phone while driving
• Insufficient details on strategies being applied
• Handouts of strategies were not provided at the Open House
• Medians decrease access for emergency vehicles, increase blockages and decrease safety for everyone

3) Are there other strategies we should consider for the corridor?
• Improve transit frequency, longer hours, and introduce express buses (2)
• Develop off-road bike paths (2)
• Severe lack of street lighting from Hickory Avenue to Fred Meyer
• Better to spend money on red light running cameras than medians
• Buffer zone on along both sides of Fairview Avenue, which would include a combination of bike lane and a sidewalk with landscaping and lighting
• Signal timing improvements should be applied immediately. Improve signal timing during non-peak hours
• Add more right turn lanes
• Provide reasonable crossing walking and crossing opportunities to people with children, the elderly and the disabled
• Change the direction of flow during peak hours. Use middle lane as a reversible lane (eastbound in the morning, westbound in the evening)
4) Please rank the following in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least

Average Scores:

- Safety: 1.6
- Efficient travel: 1.7
- Pedestrian crossings: 3.1
- Better sidewalks: 3.3
- Improved access to transit: 3.4
- Bike facilities: 3.6

5) How do you use Fairview Avenue (choose all that apply)?

- Live on Fairview or in neighborhood adjacent to Fairview (11)
- Commuting (10)
- Shopping (9)
- Own/or operate a business along Fairview (7)
- Work at a location on Fairview (2)
- Other (1)

6) General Comments

- Signage and reflectors to help people see medians during snow, darkness and rain
- Consider why people prefer Fairview to the parallel freeway and other parallel facilities
- Business owner suffered through several construction phases over the years. Medians are “business killers”
- One business owner experienced that it was faster to access their old location, which was adjacent to a section of Fairview Avenue with medians than the new location which is now adjacent to a section without medians. However, customers have a perception that the older location was faster and less difficult to access
- The only Open House was held in late summer, with inadequate handouts. Due to this it had poor attendance, and the response time was too short to let others
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING #1 SUMMARY

Know, and the online materials were illegible in many cases. Open House needs to be redone with improvements to allow for adequate input.

- Please listen to the residents instead of trying to convince them.
- Maintain the medians for weed and dirt control.
- Implementing flashing yellow arrows was a good decision by ACHD. It helped traffic flow and reduced engine idle time at the intersections.
- Bike lanes must be separate from the roadway.