

IDAHO FALLS REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
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April 29, 2009

Special Meeting
Minutes

Council Chambers

Call to Order: Lee Radford called the work session to order at 3:05 p.m.

Members Present: Lee Radford, Tom Hally, Dave Radford and Linda Martin.

Members Absent: Robert Barnes, Greg Hill, and LaMar John.

Also Present: Renee Magee, executive director; Jan Blickenstaff, grants administrator, City of Idaho Falls; Mayor Jared Fuhriman; Sharon Parry and Ida Hardcastle, Council members; Roger Christensen and Lee Staker, Bonneville County Commissioners; Shirley Chastain, executive director, Kevin Cutler, Greg Crockett, Jeff Neiswanger, Idaho Falls Downtown Development Corporation (IFDDC); Chris Fredericksen, City engineer, and approximately ten interested citizens.

Discussion of Memorial Drive Concepts: Lee Radford introduced Hall Hutchinson and Jeff Carrier, Pierson Land Works for a presentation and a question and answer session. A handout of the Power Point presentation was distributed to the attendees. The purpose of the work session was to review the initial five concepts as well as the revised comments resulting from an earlier meeting called by Mayor Fuhriman. The intent for showing the initial options was to bring all the participants of the meeting up to speed.

Carrier explained the intent of concepts was to bring the Greenbelt closer or into downtown Idaho Falls and work with all the stakeholders in the process. Option 1 uses the existing infrastructure yet invites people to cross Memorial Drive. All concepts use a round-about at E Street and Memorial Drive. With Option 1, the point was to make infrastructure changes minimal, provide a gateway, and calm traffic. Both sides of Memorial Drive have parallel parking with roughly 45 spaces on each side. The 35 foot parkway is a passive space with a path in the center. The street provides space for vendors. The green represents open space: it can be programmed as turf or pavers.

Dave Radford asked if Pierson Land Works had concepts for replacing the parking. Magee responded no, they had not been asked to find replacement parking. Replacement parking was being handled by others.

Option 2 reduces the street area for pedestrians. At intersections, the width has been reduced to 24 feet by curb extensions while Option 1 has pedestrian refuge areas with a median.

Option 3A and 3B are more radical departures. Memorial Drive is no longer a thru-street in Option 3. A number of circulation challenges are created as well as access issues for law

enforcement, parks and recreation, and the courthouse. Turn around areas allow drop-off for adjacent uses and for special events. In all of the plans, the existing Greenbelt path is undisturbed.

Option 4 allows access to the courthouse and parks and recreation. It allows through street and a large amount of green space. Twenty five parking spaces were provided on each side with Option 4. The majority of such spaces are on the west.

Having reviewed the first options considered, Hutchinson and Carrier began to discuss the revised options. Option 1 has parking removed from the west side and a parking area on the north end. Providing parking on the north end maintains open space in the central portion of the Memorial Drive right-of-way. Legion Drive was closed to allow redevelopment of the street into parking. A pedestrian crossing can be provided at Legion Drive. Parry asked if the parking area on the north could be increased. Carrier explained the parking lot design was driven by alignment with existing drives on the eastern side but the lot could probably be expanded, especially if green space is reduced or mature trees are removed. Hardcastle asked about parking on the south end of Memorial Drive, and Carrier responded the issue was reducing the distance near Snake River. Chastain reminded participants the purpose was not to relocate parking on Memorial Drive but to add green space and link downtown to the Greenbelt. Other locations were available for parking replacement. Lee Radford asked about the reduction of turning lanes at Memorial Drive and Broadway. Carrier explained the purpose was to make the intersection more pedestrian friendly and Fredericksen confirmed the change at the intersection could be made.

Option 2 has a promenade to assist with access to the court system and parks and recreation as well as emergency access. The promenade will be a pedestrian corridor. Sixty spaces will be provided with Option 2. Option 2 allows for more pedestrian activity at Broadway. Chastain asked if Memorial Drive can be moved to the south at Broadway. Carrier replied a plaza could be provided on either the west or east of Memorial Drive at Broadway.

Christensen asked if the participants had discussed these concepts with the judges and court administrator. Good access is needed to the sally port. Christensen was also concerned about access to the parking lot for the courthouse. He is hoping access will not be limited to Capital Avenue and D Street. Access is needed to Memorial Drive. Christensen stated Bonneville County was hoping to open Legion Drive and provide more parking north of the courthouse. Lee Radford confirmed the court system needed close parking for employees and jurors.

Option 3 is a significant departure from earlier concepts except original Option 5. Option 3 is a curved road pattern with a park like feel. All connections are still achieved with exception of Legion Drive. There may be issues with maintenance. Option 3 provides a feel of driving through an urban park. Dave Radford noted more parking spaces were lost with this option. One of these open space islands may be parking. Staker liked the access provided with Option 3: access to the sally port, garbage collection, and western parking area. From the perspective of access, Option 3 is better. Lee Radford confirmed access to sally port is important. Carrier

noted one of the concerns of the parks and recreation director is design of the irrigation system with Option 3.

Parry asked about curb extensions on Option 1. Carrier explained curb extensions provided pedestrian safety as well as areas for landscaping, benches, and other amenities. Hutchinson explained curb extensions provided traffic calming and pedestrian safety. They also allow an opportunity for more creativity with the streetscape.

Crockett is concerned about visitors to the parks and recreation center and the need for adjacent parking. Hutchinson stated Option 1 is the most favored with Dave Christiansen, Parks and Recreation Director. Christiansen will look for shared parking after hours. With Option 1, there is short term parking available in front of the recreation center. Handicapped accessibility is also an issue. Christiansen did say we need to consider noon activities in the design. The Mayor reminded the participants the location of the recreation center and law enforcement may change in the future.

Carrier stated he could look at parking on the east islands in Option 3. Dave Radford felt the problem with Option 3 is that the road splits the activity area and the visitors to the green space. Fredericksen noted the curve was suggested to calm traffic. The idea was to soften the road near the River. Chastain suggested one curve be removed and the Memorial Drive be brought to the west at Broadway. The idea is to provide plaza space on the downtown side of Memorial Drive to attract visitors to downtown. In response to Lee Radford, Fredericksen confirmed the lane configuration at Broadway is the minimal lane configuration.

One suggestion was made by an attendee to have parking on the south and north with a building in the center area and Memorial Drive on the east. The building could be used for public and private events.

Carrier explained how Option 3 and the other options made Memorial Drive pedestrian friendly. The distance a pedestrian has to cross has been significantly reduced. It is easier to enter downtown if you are pedestrian. Carrier explained he envisioned Memorial Drive as a tree lined street with Option 3 and the road could be closed off for public events.

Hardcastle pointed out the difference between Option 1 and Option 3 is the curves in Option 3. Dave Radford noted Option 1 has more than twice the parking spaces available. Hardcastle noted the issue with irrigation and maintenance is reduced with Option 1. Hardcastle clarified the green space is about the same on Option 1 and Option 3. Hally asked if the curved road was more aesthetically pleasing. Carrier noted it was the concept which deviated the most from the existing. Hutchinson stated he understood Memorial Drive was established for a parade route. Option 3 reduces the formality and make the street more parklike. Staker pointed out Option 1 puts the green space closer to the River and does not break it into smaller pieces. He sees Option 3 as wasted green space.

Chastain noted Option 3 is traffic calming and vendors can be located in the islands created by

the road. Option 3 allows more intimate designs stated Carrier. Dave Radford asked about impact to the Veteran's Memorial with Option 3. Carrier suggested a drop-off could be developed for the memorial. Hutchinson noted the original design for Memorial Drive, Legion Drive, and the Veteran's Memorial had been compromised by the existing central area parking.

Parry asked about providing parking on the west side of Memorial Drive. Carrier explained the downtown group asked the parking on the west side be removed. Magee said the description provided about the west side parking on Memorial Drive was "a train of parking" which separated downtown from the Greenbelt. Steve Carr was concerned parallel parking re-created a barrier between the River and downtown. Parry stated parking on the west side provides parking for those visiting the Greenbelt.

Cutler noted the curvilinear design, while slowing traffic, does consume area to be used for park amenities. Cutler suggested Memorial Drive be brought back to the east side of the right-of-way to provide access for the courthouse and create a greater block of space for amenities such as an amphitheater and interactive fountain. Cutler clarified Option 3 could be modified by arching Memorial Drive to the east at the courthouse. Cutler illustrated the design for the participants. Carrier summarized the design as closer to Option 1 on the north end with an arch to the south so the road was adjacent to the Greenbelt on Broadway.

Radford thanked everyone for their attendance as well as the discussion of issues and suggestions for design. The work session was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Renee R. Magee

Attachment: Copy of Power Point presentation