

MEETING NOTES

To:	Stan Snodgrass	Attendees:	Russell Bragg, OK Foods Jeff Dingman, City of Fort Smith Carl Geffken, City of Fort Smith Bill Hanna, Hanna Oil Rodney Ghan, Ghan & Cooper Stan Snodgrass, City of Fort Smith Chad Adams, ARDOT James Arbuckle, Halff Brian Vines, Halff
From:	James Arbuckle		
Subject:	Fort Smith Downtown Traffic and Truck Study Working Group Meeting		
Meeting Date:	May 23, 2019		
Location:	Riverfront Amphitheater Meeting Room		
Minutes Date:	June 4, 2019		
AVO No.:	033964.001		

Item	Description	Action
1.	<p>Agenda</p> <p>An Agenda was handed out to all participants. Agenda topics included</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening Remarks 2. Summary of Public Engagement 3. Needs Assessment Results 4. Study goals and Performance Measures 5. Preliminary Framework for Alternatives 6. Next Steps <p>A PowerPoint presentation was utilized to present information on each topic and is attached to these notes as a reference.</p>	
2.	<p>Public Engagement Summary</p> <p>A. An overall summary of the Public Engagement Phase was presented. Key dates and activities were noted. They included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 26, 2019 - Public Open House held at River Park Events Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over 30 Attendees • Feb. 27, 2019 - Stakeholder interviews at City of Fort Smith Offices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Met with 9 organizations • Mar. 28, 2019 – On-line surveys made available to public and trucking industry reps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 560 responses received <p>B. Key Findings from Public Feedback were provided and included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Issues exist along Garrison including vehicles running red lights and unsafe pedestrian crossings 	

- Local truck industry representatives that rerouting truck traffic will have a significant financial burden
 - Congestion and safety conflicts at intersections where left turns aren't protected.
 - Non-local freight drivers don't often follow designated truck routes
 - Truck routes aren't designed for ease of access.
- C. Survey Questions and Responses
- Survey questions and responses are presented in attached PowerPoint presentation.

3. Needs Assessment

The results of the Needs Assessment were presented. This part of the presentation focused on 4 topics.

A. Freight Truck Traffic

Graphics depicting existing truck routes through the city as well as locations of freight generating business were displayed.

B. Vehicular Roadway Performance

Graphics depicting current (2020) peak period congestion, developed from the Arkansas Travel Demand Model (TDM), and future (2040) peak period congestion were presented to the committee. Two main areas, Garrison between 4th and 6th as well as the Garrison/10th/11th & Towson road intersection.

Current travel time values versus future travel time values were presented. It was noted that e segments were deemed unreliable under future traffic volumes in the AM and PM peaks. They include:

- Garrison – Westbound from US 64 Bridge to N 11 St.
- Garrison – Westbound from N 11th Street to Towson Road
- Towson - At the approach to the Garrison Ave. intersection

C. Safety

This presentation focused on safety data collected. Crash data received from the Fort Smith Police Department for years 2015 -2018 was presented. Overall crashes fluctuated 6% up and down for the timeframe reviewed. Crash hot spots were noted and intersections in the downtown area that had the most crashes were identified. The top two intersections included:

- 11th St & Towson/Garrison – 52 crashes
- 6th St./Garrison Ave – 42 total crashes

Crashes that resulted in fatalities and crashes that involved pedestrians and cyclists were also noted.

An overall map depicting roadway deficiencies was presented. Four locations were depicted as being deficient when considering congestion, travel times and crashes. They include:

- Garrison from 4th through 6th
- 10th/11th, Garrison & Towson intersection
- 14th Street and Rogers intersection
- Towson and I Street area

4. Study Goals and Performance Measures

The Study Goals were reiterated from the initial kickoff meeting. They include:

- Safety
- Develop a Balanced Solution
- Economic Vitality
- Preserve Downtown Character.

It was noted that since Garrison was a State Highway under the ownership and oversight of ARDOT where federal funds could be used for future improvements that federally mandated Performance Measures would need to be considered in tandem with goals. Performance measures and their applicability to this project were presented and included the following topics:

- Safety Performance
- Travel time Reliability
- Freight Reliability
- Infrastructure Reliability

See attached PowerPoint presentation for specifics.

5. Preliminary Framework for Alternatives

The consultant sought feedback from the working group on 4 topics that influence the development of alternatives:

Parking

A question was asked about parking in the downtown area, specifically along Garrison. Most felt that parking in downtown was adequate but could go away in certain areas in order to improve traffic flow and safety. One person suggested that parking be allowed in the middle of the roadway with lanes and bike lanes on the outside. One person noted that getting in and out of their car was an issue under the current parking system and suggested the consideration of reverse parking. Another person noted that parking was not an issue, walking was the issue.

Partial Closure of Streets

The working group was generally open to the potential that street segments could be closed in order to facilitate an alternative. However, concern was expressed about the impact a partial closure would have on traffic flow. If a partial closure created problems this would be a significant deterrent to any proposed alternative. One person asked if the closure could be repurposed and reused. The response was that this could certainly be accomplished. Another person suggested adding removable ballards to test areas in the entertainment district.

Potential Impacts to Existing Buildings and Infrastructure

A group was asked about their feelings on the impacts an alternative could have existing buildings. Consensus was that this could be a reality. One acknowledged that existing buildings may have to be taken while another noted that it depended on the building and the net overall effect.

Weighting

The project goals were reviewed, and the group was asked to rank and weight each goal as to its importance in evaluating alternatives. Weighting based on discussions broke down as follows:

1. Safety: Weighting=40%
2. Develop a Balanced Solution: Weighting=30%
3. Economic Vitality: Weighting=20%
4. Preserve Downtown Character: Weighting=10

After much discussion consensus was that safety should be the top priority. Priorities varied on the next 3 goals but shook out as described above. Exception was noted that downtown Ft. Smith was not the economic center of the region.

6. Next Steps

Alternatives will be developed over the next two months and then presented to the working group.

This concludes the Meeting Notes. Our goal is to provide a complete and accurate summary of the proceedings of the subject meeting in these minutes. If you feel that any of the items listed above are not correct, or that any information is missing or incomplete, please contact Half Associates so that the matter can be resolved, and a correction issued if necessary.