

Vergennes Transportation Task Force – Meeting Notes

Task Force Meeting #14, August 18, 2015 7:00pm

Vergennes Fire Station

Attendees: Shannon Haggett, Margaret Lowe, Steve Lowe, Joe Klopfenstein, Carrie MacFarlane

Shannon presented draft survey forms for the upcoming sidewalk survey. He showed the one-page form that the surveyors would use for each street and stated that he had obtained a list of all City streets from City Manager Hawley. The draft survey included whether or not the street has sidewalks on both sides of the street, an assessment of the sidewalk condition on a zero to five scale, a section for comments and a section for photos of the survey area. He added that Jeff Fritz had sent a comprehensive assessment guide that could be edited down to a one-page set of instructions including visual representations of the five assessment levels. Everyone agreed that this would make sense.

Steve asked if it would be prudent to create separate surveys for streets with sidewalks on both sides, so that the areas could be more easily assigned. Everyone agreed. Shannon said he would use the street list and a map to mark all areas with sidewalks on both sides and to also mark streets that were longer or where there could be changes in sidewalk quality – such as Main Street.

Joe asked if we should also assess the width of the sidewalk in each survey area. He noted that some older sidewalk sections were much narrower than newer sections. He quickly looked up information on sidewalk widths and thought that the standard may be 42". Everyone agreed this would be good to include. Shannon said he would measure the width of new sidewalk and include that in the assessment form.

Shannon then suggested that it might be a good idea to include whether or not the sidewalk was wheelchair-friendly at intersections, as he said he knew of a couple of sections that were not. Everyone agreed and he said he would add that to the assessment form.

Joe asked if we should also include whether or not we should assess if the sidewalk was wide enough for public seating. He acknowledged that this was more focused on sections of Main Street and areas in the Central Business District.

Everyone thought having photos was a great idea, but many were concerned that the surveyors would need to keep track of which photos were for which sections. Shannon said he would include that concern in the instruction sheet.

Shannon said that he would update the changes as discussed and would send copies to everyone for review. He stated that he also wanted to meet with City Manager Hawley and Department of Public Works Supervisor Jim Larrow to ensure that they agreed with the assessment parameters. Steve suggested that it would be beneficial for some of the task force members to do some initial testing of the surveys prior to turning the survey over to the volunteer surveyors. Everyone agreed.

Shannon provided a brief update to everyone on the Strong Communities, Better Connections steering committee meeting that was held on 08/06/15. He stated that there will be some walking tours in September – perhaps to coincide with the Arts Walk to give citizens a look at some of the focus areas. This will be followed up by some workshops shortly thereafter to give people an idea of what changes could be made. He noted that

there will be posters put up throughout the city with the details. Carrie asked if the posters could have pull-offs with the date and time and Joe asked if there could be QR codes on the poster to allow smart-phone users to link to a web-site with more details. Shannon said he thought it might be too late for that, but he would pass along the questions. He then said that staff from Toole Design Group were planning to be in the city on Vergennes Day to conduct intercept interviews and possibly demonstrate some ideas like parklets and bicycle sharrows.

Shannon mentioned that the City Council is still looking for someone to be the Vergennes representative for the Transportation Advisory Committee.

Steve stated that as his schedule permits, he still plans to conduct a traffic study at Addison Four Corners and in downtown Vergennes to better gauge truck traffic on Main Street/Route 22A.

The group agreed to schedule the next meeting of the Transportation Task force in late September. The date, time and location will be determined later.

The meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm.