

Rattlesnake Neighborhood Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2023

6:15 – 7:45 pm

Missoula Library, Blackfoot Conference Room 410

Introductions: Bob Giordano (Co-Chair), Tom Carlson (Secretary), Emily Jensen, Dan Doyle, Fred Rice, Kirk Henderson, Karen Kaley, Judy Stack, Terri Roach, Jeani Alonzo Adams, Carl Schiess, Ann Smith, David Everingham, Scott Erler, Cynthia Erler, Ross Miller, Steve Sheriff, Jason Wiener, Shane Stack, Ben Weiss

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes: Approved with no changes.

Agenda Review: No changes to draft

Public Comments on Non-agenda Topics:

Lack of sidewalks near Rattlesnake school – Concern for kids walking to and from school along Rattlesnake drive. Note – Segments without sidewalks are identified as an Urgent Priority in the 2021 Rattlesnake Transportation Plan
Update at: <https://rattlesnaketransportation.org/>.

Lack of sidewalks on Woodland Ave. Walk/Bike to School Route. Concern for vehicle traffic amidst numerous kids walking and on bikes in the street.

Old Business (from previous meeting minutes):

Lolo Street bridge rehabilitation project discussion with:

Shane Stack, Public Works Director (sstack@missoulacounty.us)
Missoula County Public Works.

Ben Weiss, Senior Transportation Planner
Bicycle/Pedestrian Program Manager
City of Missoula Infrastructure & Mobility – Planning & Engineering

Project Scope of Work and Planning:

The bridge is owned by the City but, under state law, the County is responsible for the structure and any reconstruction or replacement. The County will look to the City for guidance on design.

The project will be funded by federal funds from COVID relief and other sources. Total costs are estimated to be \$4-5 million.

The 30% design phase should be completed by fall of 2023 and, if funds are available, construction will take place from late spring through early fall of 2024. The bridge will be closed during construction.

A public meeting is scheduled for May 31, 6-8 pm, at the Rattlesnake School gymnasium.

Updated Design:

- Keep current alignment
- Replace bents and abutments on both sides.
- Two – 12' vehicle travel lanes
- Two – 10' non-motorized platforms, raised 6". (The city could designate a portion of this space for bike lanes)
- Vehicle railings either side (concrete or steel)
- All concrete construction

Concerns expressed:

Wider vehicle lanes may increase speeds (current lanes are about 10' wide).

One lane bridge is not adequate for traffic volume.

Realignment of bridge is not possible within the current scope of project.

Lack of year-round painted and signed crosswalks at Missoula Ave. and Woodland Ave. is a potential hazard for pedestrians.

Vehicle speed continues to be excessive.

North side sidewalk is not linked to existing sidewalks except for narrow path west of the bridge.

Building a sidewalk on the north side of the bridge may lead to a future public easement or right-of-way for a sidewalk on the north side of Lolo Street and conflict with preservation of the historic Orsdale stone wall.

Not building a non-motorized platform on the north side:

- precludes future options
- forces westbound pedestrians to use the south side of the bridge and potentially cross Lolo Street at either the Missoula Ave or Woodland Ave. intersections.
- does not address a current safety issue that occurs when westbound vehicles are delayed by a slow westbound bicyclist traveling uphill just after a curve and across the bridge which limits sight distance for drivers.

Concrete construction lacks visual appeal.

Alternate construction materials may raise maintenance concerns. (Shane will ask the consulting engineers for options.)

Railings should separate vehicle traffic from non-motorized platforms.

Lolo Street residents and property owners were not directly notified about the project or this meeting.

Bicycle and pedestrian safety on Lolo Street and Greenough Drive and striping changes
– Discussion with Ben Weiss

Lolo Street:

An Edge Lane Road (ELR) was proposed in the spring of 2022, but it met opposition from residents.

An ELR has been implemented elsewhere and it can help slow traffic.

City did not repaint double yellow lines or bike lanes after summer chip seal project. Monitoring indicates that vehicle speeds were not reduced. (Double yellow lines are not required for Lolo Street.)

Bulbouts at Gilbert Street will remain.

The fire department is opposed to any physical impediment (traffic calming circle, speed tables, etc.) to slow traffic on collector streets.

Greenough Drive:

Changes were made to the pavement striping north of the existing east side sidewalk and across Cherry Gulch after the chip seal project was completed in the summer of 2022.

The changes allowed for a northbound bike lane but eliminated the southbound bike lane and forced bikers to share the travel lane with vehicles.

A new sidewalk segment will be built along with the new Greenough Heights development north of Cherry Gulch.

There have been reports of close calls between vehicles and bicyclists.

Ben would like to hear more input and recommendations for both Lolo Street and Greenough Drive prior to the striping season which begins in late May.

The discussion will continue at the May 9 committee meeting.

Other topics (if time permits): Not discussed

Emergency Evacuation Planning - Missoula County Office of Emergency Management

Ice on sidewalks along Van Buren Ave. under the I-90 bridges

I-90 westbound entrance ramp – need for improved safety at pedestrian crossing.

Urgent priority projects from the transportation plan update.

Transportation Plan approval process - Lower Rattlesnake Neighborhood Council

Proposal for possible advanced warning to identify when trains are on the tracks at the Greenough Crossing.

New business: Not discussed due to time constraints

Public Comment: Not discussed due to time constraints. Note – public comment was taken at the beginning of the meeting.

Next Meeting:

Date, time, and location:

May 9, 2023, 6:15 - 7:45 pm, Rm 402, Missoula Public Library,

Agenda items:

Disaster Mitigation and Emergency Planning for the Rattlesnake Valley with Adriane Beck, Director of the Missoula County Office of Emergency Management

If time permits:

- Lolo Street Bridge reconstruction
- Lolo Street and Greenough Drive pavement striping

Rattlesnake Transportation Committee – Mission and Purpose

The Rattlesnake Transportation Committee is a subcommittee of the Upper and Lower Rattlesnake Neighborhood Councils. Members of the committee are residents of the neighborhood who volunteer their time to gather monthly (October – June) in public meetings to promote safe, efficient, equitable and accessible transportation options for residents and visitors of the Rattlesnake Valley. Everyone is welcome to attend the meetings and participate to help discuss issues and identify potential solutions to be considered by the Missoula City and County staff.

The committee can be contacted at: rattlesnaketransportationplan@gmail.com

Rattlesnake Transportation Plan

In 2019 the committee began work to update the 2011 Rattlesnake Valley Transportation Summit Study. Working alongside the Missoula City Office of Neighborhoods, a process was put in place to gather input and feedback from residents of the adjoining upper and lower rattlesnake neighborhoods and identify priority issues and potential solutions.

In November of 2021 the Rattlesnake Transportation Plan Update was completed and can be found here: <https://rattlesnaketransportation.org/>