



Twin Falls Planning & Zoning Commission Minutes

Wednesday, April 5, 2023, 12:00 PM

203 Main Avenue East
Twin Falls, ID 83301

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Members -

City Limits: Craig Kelley, Chairperson; Marilu Perez, Vice-Chair; Todd Rambur; Cortney Campbell; Grayson Stone

Area of Impact: David Detweiler

1) Confirmation of Quorum/Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Kelley called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM

A quorum was present.

Members Present: Kelley, Campbell, Detweiler, Rambur

Staff Present: Spendlove, Vitek, Palmer-Handley, Strickland, Ebersole

2) Consent Calendar

MOTION: Commissioner Detweiler moved to approve the Consent Calendar, as presented
Commissioner Rambur seconded the motion.

Unanimously Approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

- a) Approval of minutes from the following meeting: March 28, 2023

3) Items of Consideration

- a) Request for a Recommendation to City Council regarding the Round About project on property located at Filer Avenue West and Wendell Street.

Staff Presentation:

Planning and Zoning Director Spendlove reviewed the duties of the Traffic Safety Commission, as part of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley presented the request for a Recommendation to City Council regarding the Round About project on property located at Filer Avenue West and Wendell Street. The need for this project derives from traffic at Martin St. approaching Filer Ave. West and Wendell St. intersecting with Filer Ave. West, which causes excessive queue times at Wendell and Martin St. causing frustrated drivers and a higher likelihood of aggressive driving and accidents. Filer is a 30 mph road, with no signals to phase traffic, causing traffic to become spread out and inefficient. The implementation of a round-a-bout will serve as a traffic calming measure to reduce speeds and a way to combine 2 problem intersections into 1 high efficiency intersection. In the past, these 2 intersections have sufficed to service the area. However, as the west side of Twin Falls continues to grow, these intersections will become more congested.

From Traffic Count Data:

- Max Daily Traffic on Filer, west of Sparks of 7506 vehicles and Average Daily Traffic of 6142 vehicles
- Max Daily Traffic on Martin, south of Filer of 4635 vehicles and Average Daily Traffic of 4448 vehicles

It is anticipated, with increased traffic flow a traffic control solution will be warranted on at least one of these T intersections. A round-a-bout keeps traffic flowing with yield signs rather than stop signs, which further increases capacity of roadways, reduces speeds on Filer, and keeps drivers moving rather than waiting. A new subdivision has been proposed on the land south of Filer and north of Rock Creek Canyon. This subdivision is expected to create additional traffic on the surrounding roadways, including Wendell, Filer, and Martin, further solidifying the need for an inexpensive, safe, traffic solution. A reduction in conflict points results in fewer opportunities for vehicle collisions.

Conflict points are points where a vehicle's path intersects with the possible path of another vehicle.

- A 5 leg round-a-bout has a maximum of 10 conflict points.
- A T-intersection has 9 conflict points.
- A 4 way stop has 32 conflict points.

Compared to other types of intersections, round-a-bouts have a reduced crash rate as well as a reduced fatality rate, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

- More than 90% reduction in fatalities
- 76% reduction in injuries
- 35% reduction in all crashes
- Slower speeds are generally safer for pedestrians.

A new traffic signal is expected to cost around \$750,000, plus the cost of maintenance and the additional time for a traffic technician to monitor the signal. A round-a-bout could potentially be a more economical decision because of reduced maintenance cost and the potential to solve both intersection issues with 1 solution, costing the City of Twin Falls less in the long run.

According to the 6th edition of AASHTO (A Geometric Design of Highways and Streets), a single lane round-a-bout, which is proposed, has the capacity for up to 20,000 cars a day. This leaves room for future growth in this area and exceeds the current required capacity for known average daily traffic.

Approval Process:

Simple majority vote from the Traffic Safety Commission for recommendation to the City Council.

Budget Impact:

A cost estimate for the round-a-bout has not been developed yet. A cost estimate of \$34,400 has been received to estimate design, survey, and construction cost.

Staff recommends a recommendation to City Council for design and construction of a round-a-bout at the intersection of Filer Ave. W. and Wendell St.

PZ/Questions & Comments:

- Commissioner Rambur asked if the two existing lots on Martin Street will stay as is.
- Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley stated the developer owns the two lots and no decision made at this time if they will remain as is.
- Commissioner Detweiler asked about moving the street off of Marting Street to avoid wasted space. He stated he likes constant traffic movement and including Martin Street as part of this plan.
- Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley discussed how Martin Street will be changed to a one way road north of roundabout to Filer Avenue West, with a right turn only option at Filer Avenue West.
- Commissioner Campbell asked about the traffic and educating the public to use the roundabout.

- Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley stated they can work with consultants to address the education piece at the time of construction, and there are pamphlets available, as well.
- Planning and Zoning Director Spendlove stated he does not believe the roundabout will cause more issues than a four way stop.
- Commissioner Detweiler asked about the existing canal.
- Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley stated the canal will be piped and buried.
- Chairman Kelley asked if there are plans for future roundabouts in the city for traffic safety.
- Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley explained why roundabouts are a good option.
- Commissioner Campbell asked the cost difference between a roundabout and adding traffic signals.
- Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley stated a traffic signal costs around \$750,000, and the roundabout will be far less cost than two traffic signals.
- Planning and Zoning Director Spendlove addressed road construction costs and the cost in replacing technical and electronic components of traffic lights have skyrocketed. He stated the predicted maintenance for a roundabout is less expensive.
- Commissioner Detweiler asked about access for walking traffic.
- Engineering Intern Palmer-Handley stated there will be marked crosswalks at splitter island areas.
- Commissioner Detweiler stated he is in favor of this request.
- Commissioner Campbell asked how much the developer will pay for the improvements.
- City Engineer Vitek stated there will be a land swap for the city to do this project, to be built in conjunction with the subdivision construction, and is a reasonable swap.
- Planning and Zoning Director Spendlove stated the commission's purview does not allow for cost consideration in making decision as the Traffic Safety Commission. The commission's focus on traffic safety, and the Impact Fee Commission will hear this item as well and the recommend appropriate funding to City Council.
- Commissioner Rambur asked the thought process in making Martin Street a one way street and keeping people from turning left on Filer Avenue West to Martin Street.
- Mr. Palmer-Handley stated that intersection is where most of traffic backup is now. He stated people will now have to merge in and out of the roundabout and addressed safety for kids walking to school.
- Commissioner Rambur stated he likes the idea and has had good experience with them in other places.
- Commissioner Detweiler stated he sees this project as a very nice improvement to area.

MOTION: Commissioner Detweiler moved to recommend approval to City Council for the request to pursue the Round About project on property located at Filer Avenue West and Wendell Street. Commissioner Rambur seconded the motion.

Unanimously approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

b) Master Transportation Plan update

Staff Presentation:

City Engineer Vitek presented the draft plan and asked the commission to review and make comments on for a later meeting. He stated the Engineering department will collect all of the comments by the first week of June, at which point another work session to discuss the plan in detail and make appropriate changes. Once all changes have been completed, the plan will be presented with a request to recommend the adoption of the plan to the City Council. He addressed the history of the Master Transportation Plan.

Planning and Zoning Director Spendlove explained the process for a recommendation to City Council.

4) Upcoming Meetings

April Public Hearings and May 3 Worksession are canceled.

5) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:47 PM

Kelli Ebersole

Kelli Ebersole, City Planner