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Jim D. Hansen, President  
Sara M. Baker, Vice President  
Rebecca W. Arnold, Commissioner  
Kent Goldthorpe, Commissioner  
Paul Woods, Commissioner

December 3, 2015

To: Todd Tucker, City of Boise  
Planning & Development Services  
150 N. Capitol Boulevard  
Boise, ID 83701

Subject: BOI15-0424/ Boise State University Master Plan/ CPA15-00005

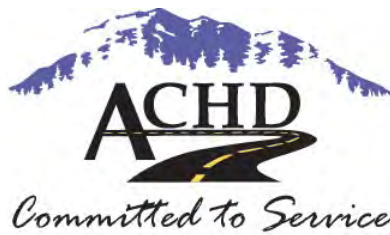
On December 2, 2015 the Ada County Highway District Commission approved the attached letter for the above referenced project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (208) 387-6144.

Sincerely,

Christy Little  
Planning Review Supervisor  
Development Services

cc: Christy Jordan, Boise State University



Jim D. Hansen, President  
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December 2, 2015

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The Ada County Highway District (ACHD) is in receipt of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment for Boise State University, for incorporation of their updated Master Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan. ACHD staff has reviewed both the Master Plan, and the accompanying August 24, 2015 Transportation & Circulation Overview from Kittelson & Associates, and the October 28, 2015 Boise Avenue Feasibility Overview.

#### **1. Master Plan Update 2015**

- a. ACHD is not recommending "approval" of the Master Plan, but is only providing comments to the City and Boise State University for future consideration and planning purposes. ACHD is not commenting on the proposed land uses, only the Transportation & Circulation component of the plan; more specifically the key corridors in and around Boise State University, such as University Drive, Beacon Street, Boise Avenue, and Capitol Boulevard.
- b. Any changes to the ACHD rights-of-way, either physical or operational, will require Commission approval in the future as the University moves forward with implementation of their plan.
- c. The Master Plan was last updated in 2008. The newly adopted Master Plan has a 20 to 30 year build-out. Build-out is contingent upon growth and enrollment of students. The existing enrollment at Boise State University is approximately 22,000 students. This Master Plan has the capacity to accommodate up to 35,000 students, over the next 20 to 30 years.
- d. The Master Plan focused on 5 "Visions":
  - Need for stronger identity and cohesion for faculty and programs
  - Consolidated facilities
  - Expanded central campus pedestrian space (with vehicles and roads moved to perimeter)
  - Non-traditional, diverse student body engaged in cultural life on campus
  - Vibrant residential life for all freshman (even those not living on campus).
- e. The key themes and goals of the Master Plan related to transportation include:
  - Reinforcement and development of a strong pedestrian-oriented environment
  - Development of comfortable bike routes to and through campus
  - Creating strong pedestrian and bike connections between the campus and the surrounding neighborhoods, parks, and downtown Boise

- Connecting the central quad to the Greenbelt and River
- Transition of vehicular traffic from the center of campus (i.e. University Drive) to the perimeters of campus in the future; and
- The creation of a transformed transportation connection to Boise Avenue along the southern campus boundary including a modified intersection with Capitol Boulevard.

## 2. Existing Agreement

- a. ACHD and Boise State University entered into a Right-of-Way and Property Exchange Agreement in 2010, and it was adopted by ACHD as Resolution No. 954. The Agreement outlines commitments and requirements of both agencies and is attached for reference.
- b. Highlights of the agreement include:
  - If ACHD approves a vacation request by Boise State University, the right-of-way is vacated without compensation.
  - Boise State University is required to dedicate right-of-way/easements on Beacon Street; and is required to widen Beacon to accommodate bike lanes in both directions, and center turn lanes at street intersections where necessary.

## 3. University Drive – East End

- a. In 2012, Kittelson & Associates prepared a traffic analysis to demonstrate that the closure of University Drive to vehicles is feasible, and can be mitigated. That analysis also showed that only a small percentage of vehicles travel on University Drive through campus, and a large percentage are traveling to parking garages and specific destinations on campus. Prior to any changes to University Drive that would restrict vehicles, or prior to submitting a vacation application, the 2012 traffic analysis should be updated.
- b. The applicant indicates a near-term desire to transform a portion of University Drive east of Lincoln Avenue to a “multi-modal plaza”. The applicant has provided ideas for strategies to de-emphasize vehicular traffic on this segment, but closures or partial closures have also been mentioned. Prior to any request for closure, partial closure, or vacation of public right-of-way, ACHD will require additional traffic analysis from Boise State University to determine if the restriction is viable, and to identify specific improvements to mitigate the impacts of the proposed changes to the roadway network.
- c. The restriction or closure of a public street should not be considered until Boise State University has worked with ACHD and Boise City to provide a phased approach to addressing the University’s concerns about safety and need for traffic calming, while allowing vehicular use.
- d. Restrictions or closures of University Drive will require vacation of the roadway.
- e. If operational changes to University Drive are approved by ACHD, implementation of those measures cannot occur until the Broadway Bridge replacement project has been completed.
- f. The Master Plan states that one operational and management strategy would be “Implementing a system of removable bollards or managed gates at the two ends of the University Drive segment that could be managed to open and close the roadway to vehicular traffic at appropriate times.” This could only occur if the road and right-of-way were vacated to Boise State University. ACHD Legal staff has confirmed that this type of restriction of a public street is not allowed by Statute.
- g. Prior to any changes to University Drive that would restrict vehicles, Boise State University should widen Beacon Street to its planned 4/5 lane road section with bike lanes; and should construct all required mitigation, as identified in an updated traffic analysis (such as impacts to the Beacon/Broadway intersection).
- h. All costs associated with changes to, or vacation of University Drive, shall be borne by Boise State University. These costs include, but are not limited to, obtaining necessary right-of-way, design, construction, traffic materials, signage, etc...

#### **4. University Drive – Central segment and Capitol/Boise Intersection Feasibility**

- a. The Master Plan shows that the central segment of University Drive (Lincoln to Brady) will be converted into a pedestrian mall and all vehicular traffic removed from it. The west end of campus would continue to be served by University Drive east of Capitol Boulevard; and a new east-west street would be constructed south of the existing University Drive. In order for this new campus circulation to work, the intersection of Boise Avenue/Capitol Boulevard will require significant reconfiguration.
- b. Prior to converting this segment of University Drive to exclude vehicles, Boise State University will have to apply to vacate the right-of-way.
- c. Prior to vacation of right-of-way the applicant will be required to provide further analysis regarding circulation, operations, and feasibility of the proposed street and intersection improvements. Boise State University should work with ACHD to determine the detailed scope of the analysis. If it is not feasible to construct a full intersection at Boise/Capitol to serve the new east-west street, then this conversion of University Drive may not be feasible.
- d. As properties develop along the future east-west street, the applicant should set aside property to be converted to right-of-way in the future, and all buildings should be located accordingly. This should include appropriate building set-backs from the future right-of-way in accordance with Boise City code.
- e. The applicant will be required to obtain and dedicate at no cost to ACHD, right-of-way for the new east-west street, and for all associated improvements, including but not limited to, the Boise/Capitol intersection. The applicant will be responsible for all costs of design and construction.
- f. A new intersection at Boise/Capitol will significantly re-distribute traffic in the area, including on Boise Avenue where there are single family dwellings, and other housing. The applicant will be required to provide an analysis of Boise Avenue, including, but not limited to, a need for center turn lanes, bike lanes, pedestrian improvements and signalized pedestrian crossings; and will be required to construct any necessary improvements, prior to closing University Drive.

#### **5. Signal at Belmont/Lincoln**

- a. The Master Plan includes a new signal at the intersection of Belmont and Lincoln. The purpose of the signal is to discourage use of University, and allow easier access from the Belmont Street area to Lincoln Street, and then out to Beacon.
- b. A signal warrant analysis will be required before a new signal can be considered.
- c. If approved, the applicant will be responsible for all costs associated with the new signal including all traffic signal materials.

#### **6. Bike/Ped Connectivity Off-Campus (to get to the campus)**

- a. The plan did not examine ways to improve connectivity to the campus; other than projects already planned for, and funded by ACHD, such as the Beacon/Manitou pedestrian signal, and the Royal Boulevard extension.
- b. For example, could the Greenbelt on the west side of campus, and west of campus, be enhanced to encourage greater use of the greenbelt and increased connectivity to the student housing and parking west of Capitol Boulevard? Enhancement of an existing facility could reduce the number of crossings, and improve level of service on Capitol Boulevard. Boise State University should explore in more depth the possibility of constructing a secured tunnel under Capitol Boulevard; again, in an effort to reduce the bike/ped conflicts with vehicles.
- c. Boise State University will be required to widen Beacon Street to accommodate bike lanes and to provide improvements necessary to provide greater pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the south of Beacon Street as warranted.

## **7. Circulation**

- a. The Master Plan shows that Belmont Street will not extend to Broadway Avenue and will dead-end at Grant Street. A future parking garage is shown on the plan in this location. Connectivity is critical in this area for all modes of transportation, and is a key component of ACHD policy, and enhances circulation.
- b. Because Boise State University intends to restrict or eliminate other public streets in the area, the need for connectivity and circulation is critical, especially in the areas around University/Broadway and University/Capitol, where the existing east-west movement will be re-directed.
- c. Belmont Street should be extended to Broadway Avenue on its current alignment. The proposed parking garage should be reconfigured or relocated.

## **8. Costs**

- a. Boise State University is required to pay for all improvements and mitigation measures to implement this plan and associated requirements.
- b. Boise State University is required to obtain and dedicate any rights-of-way necessary to implement this plan and associated requirements.

## **9. Implementation**

- a. If Boise State University seeks to make changes to the roadway(s) that are not associated with a development application (i.e. University Drive), or requests ACHD to make changes, Boise State University should submit a detailed written request to ACHD (Attn: Christy Little) and also the City of Boise. This also includes right-of-way vacations. ACHD will evaluate the requests and determine if additional analysis is necessary and next steps. Staff will make a recommendation to the ACHD Commission, who will act on requested changes to the operations and management, and ownership of existing roadways.
- b. ACHD will review development applications in conformance with District Policy, and for consistency with this Master Plan. Depending on the size and location of a development application, ACHD may require a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) or further traffic analysis. District policy will be applied to all development applications, and includes (for example): right-of-way preservation, improvements to adjacent streets (such as curb, gutter and sidewalk), driveway locations, or mitigation measures.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (208) 387-6144.

Sincerely,

*Christy Little*

Christy Little  
Planning Review Supervisor  
Development Services

cc: Christy Jordan, Boise State University

