

From: Kevin Burnes <kevin.burnes@sima.net>
Sent: Friday, October 11, 2019 4:00 PM
To: Karen Swirsky <kswirsky@bendoregon.gov>
Subject: CTAC October 15th Meeting

Karen,

Good afternoon. Please share with the CTAC committee the attached letter regarding a vital project to be added to the Priority Buck list of projects referenced on the agenda for the meeting on Tuesday. Please call or email if you have any questions.

Cordially,

Kevin J. Burnes
President
SIMA Corporation
1231-B State Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805-965-1616, ext. 212
kevin.burnes@sima.net

From: Karen Swirsky
Sent: Monday, October 14, 2019 1:53 PM
To: Kevin Burnes <kevin.burnes@sima.net>
Subject: RE: CTAC October 15th Meeting

Kevin,

Thank you for your letter. It will be placed into the record and posted on the CTAC website for their review.

I did want to provide you with the rationale for why the Project Team is not recommending inclusion of the Robal Road extension in the 2040 Project List.

As you know, the extension of Roble Road is not a new concept. The possibility of a connection was considered and dismissed as part of the original FEIS work. The current modeling work for the TSP does not consider such a connection since the adopted FEIS did not include the connection. The TSP cannot supersede or amend the FEIS without the proper process.

In addition, a forthcoming ODOT scoping process for the North Corridor work will reconsider the connection. As we understand it, ODOT will be selecting a consultant team to assess the connection very shortly. The planning effort should be complete by

Fall 2020. If the connection is deemed as needed, it would be added to the TSP at that time at the initiation of ODOT.

For these reasons, our project team does not believe that CTAC should consider the possibility of adding a US 97/Robal connection to the TSP project list or priority buckets.

Karen



CITY OF BEND

Karen Swirsky, AICP | Senior Planner
Growth Management | City of Bend
541-323-8513
kswirsky@bendoregon.gov



**Cascade Village Shopping Center
63455 North Highway 97
Bend, Oregon 97703**

October 11, 2019

Via Email (kswirsky@bendoregon.gov)

Citywide Transportation Advisory Committee
City of Bend
710 NW Wall Street
Bend, Oregon 97703

Re: Alleviating Traffic Congestion in the Bend North Corridor

Dear Members of CTAC,

On behalf of the ownership of the Cascade Village Shopping Center and other property/business owners in the Bend North Corridor who have joined together informally as the Bend North Corridor Coalition, I am writing you to request the addition of a "Robal connection to the new US 97 Highway Alignment" as a near-term project to the Priority Bucket list of projects. A Robal connection to the new US Highway 97 alignment can be accomplished via a simple off and on ramp on the southbound side as shown in the attached map in Exhibit A.

As you may be aware, ODOT has long sought to realign Highway 97 within the Bend North Corridor and recently received federal INFRA grant dollar to initiate this project. As shown on the attached map in Exhibit A, the preferred alternative alignment for Highway 97 (the "Preferred Alternative") eliminates current Parkway access within the North Corridor at both Robal and Cooley.

A consequence of severing access to the Parkway is that resident, customer, employee, and supplier traffic will have to navigate City streets in order to find another connection to the Parkway. For most, this means they will be funneled down to Empire Ave. Empire is already failing and, even with planned improvements, is not positioned to absorb this additional traffic. The additional traffic from future developments and UGB lands within the Bend North Corridor will only further compound the problem.

A viable solution exists in establishing a connection to the Preferred Alternative at Robal as shown on the attached Exhibit A. The City recognized the significance of the Robal connection when it adopted Policy #33 (see Exhibit B) in its Transportation System Plan (TSP). This policy requires examination of a connection at Robal prior to pursuing any work on the Preferred Alternative. Only recently did ODOT issue a Request for Proposal ("RFP") to study the Robal connection (this RFP also included the study of a northern interchange). Given the current schedule for the City's TSP update and other transportation planning efforts, the results of this study may come too late to receive the consideration it deserves. Future versions of the TSP must continue to recognize the significance of a Robal connection and should plan for this connection even if results from the study are not available in time and/or full build out of the Preferred Alternative does not occur for many years.

The addition of Robal connection as a planned project in the TSP, and specifically a project included on the Priority List, makes sense for the following reasons:

- It reduces congestion and demand on the city street network and particularly the critical Empire Ave. corridor.
- A Robal connection is a quicker and safer way for the fire, life and safety vehicles to get onto the Parkway. Without a Robal connection, emergency vehicles heading south will be subject to delays (particularly during the rush hours) trying to safely navigating through the failing Empire / Hwy 20 intersection to access the Parkway. Any delay in the response time of fire, life and safety vehicles can have grave implications.
- A Robal connection better supports commerce and employment. Ease of access is vital to the economic vitality of the businesses in the North Corridor.
- The City desires a northern interchange instead of a new stoplight on 97 at Grandview as currently contemplated by the Preferred Alternative. However, the only plausible locations for an interchange will be further north of Grandview. The greater the separation between a northern interchange and Empire, the more important a connection at Robal will become.

A Robal connection fixes a key deficiency of the Preferred Alternative, alleviates future protracted gridlock at intersections along the Empire, better distributes traffic within northern Bend, and, in turn, leads to greater reductions in overall congestion. It would be a shame to spend so much money on the Preferred Alternative only to have the traffic congestion simply move from the ODOT facility onto the City system. Spending and design of Highway 97 improvements should target the 90% of Parkway drivers whose trips begin or end in Bend and not the 10% of pass through drivers. It is imperative a Robal connection is added as a planned project within the updated TSP for the betterment of all Bend residents and the long-term livability of the community.

Cordially,

Kevin J. Burnes

Kevin J. Burnes
 President
 SIMA Management Corporation

EXHIBIT A

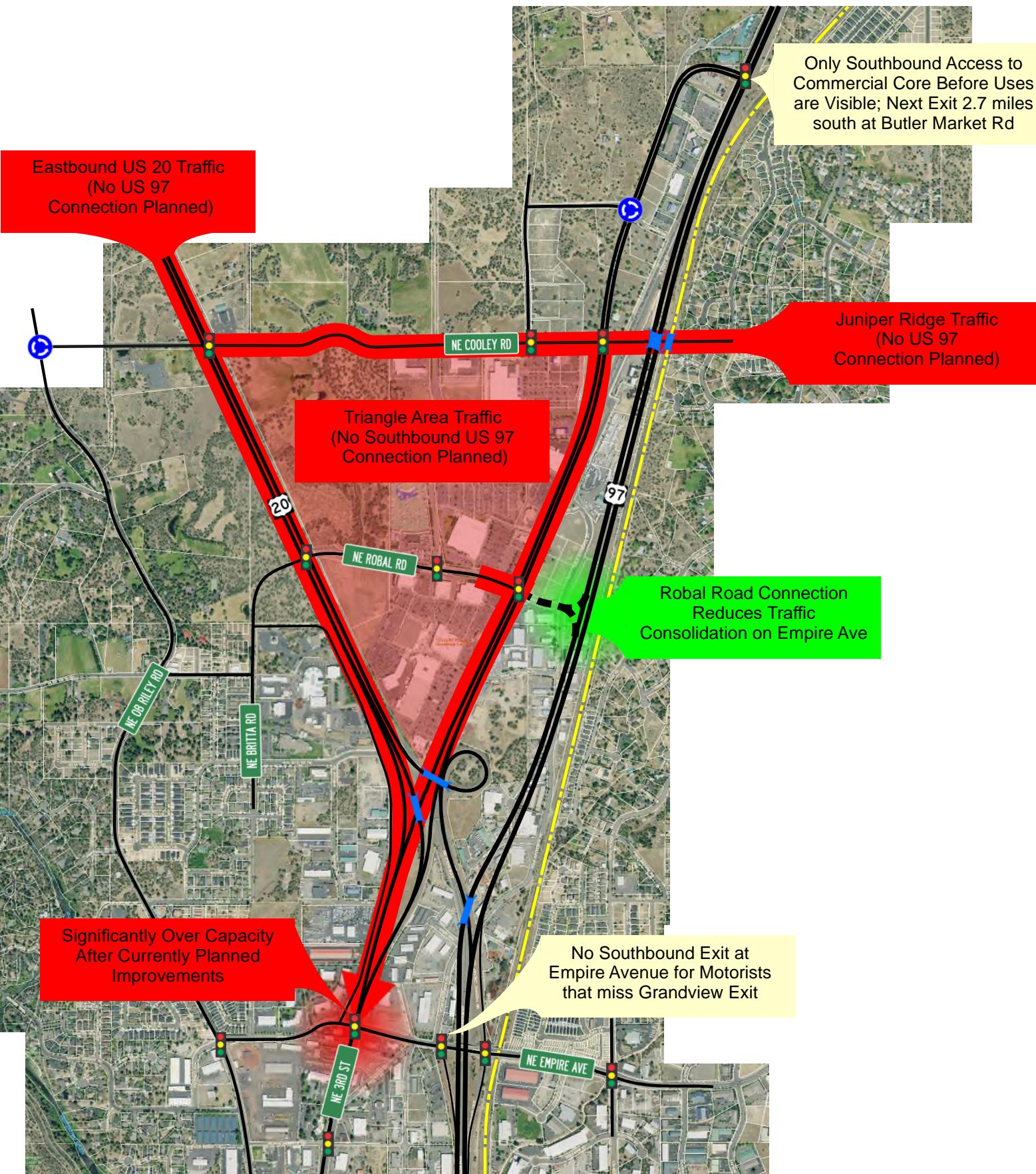


EXHIBIT B

The city recognized the significance of a Robal connection when they adopted Policy #33 to the City's TSP, which provides as follows:

33. The City accepts the findings of US 97 Bend North Corridor Project Preferred EIS Alternative. Prior to design and construction, the City and ODOT will coordinate to conduct two independent project development plans/designs within the study area of the preferred alternative to verify the construction meets the then current needs of both the City and ODOT. One plan development and design will be for the study and analysis, including the impact on any business, of a possible Robal Road connection to the ODOT Preferred Alternative to be completed prior to entering into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for implementation of the US 97 phase of the Preferred Alternative. The other development and design will be for the Empire interchange area to be completed prior to entering into the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for implementing the phase of work that would impact any business, public street, or private driveway access onto Empire Avenue. The final redevelopment of the transportation system at Robal and Empire and the ODOT Preferred Alternative may include some or all of the changes determined in the final design to improve the transportation system and meet the City's transportation needs. The IGAs will conform with the studies and analyses.