

Chapter 8: Transportation, Circulation, Parking, Public Transit, & Bike/Pedestrian Facilities

Introduction

Transportation facilities have historically played a significant role in the development and shaping of cities. To help meet future demands and achieve balanced growth, the City has adopted specific goals and policies designed to improve overall circulation in Hamilton and to address circulation issues that concern the City at the present time.

Hamilton's Transportation Plan

The Hamilton Area Transportation Plan is the result of the City's desire to conduct an in-depth analysis of their transportation system and develop a short-term and long-term needs assessment. The Plan incorporates the following components:

- ☑ Development of transportation district analysis boundaries within the City and fringe areas of the County;
- ☑ Research of the character of socio-economics and projected growth;
- ☑ An examination of the current system operations and potential deficiencies;
- ☑ A safety analysis;
- ☑ Development of recommended improvements; and
- ☑ A financial summary of funding sources for transportation improvements and project implementation.

The Study Area

The study area boundary encompasses the entire city limits and includes unincorporated county areas north, east and south of the city.

Public Involvement in the Transportation Plan

In order that unbiased and comprehensive guidance was provided to the transportation planning consultant, the City



The remainder of the "Transportation and Circulation" section is excerpted from two documents adopted by the Hamilton City Council: the *Hamilton Area Transportation Plan*, issued in June 2002 and prepared by Morrison Maierle, Inc., and the *Hamilton Comprehensive Master Plan*, adopted by the City Council in 1998.



formed the Hamilton Area Transportation Steering Committee (TPSC). The TPSC group consisted of representatives for the City, Ravalli County, local commerce, development and builders, and public works. During the planning process, representatives of local maintenance, emergency services and transit providers were consulted. The public participation process included an open-house meeting early in the planning process to solicit input on problem areas and issues of concern, a formal meeting to present the preliminary findings and take public comment, and the final public hearing to adopt the plan.

Street Classifications

The future roadway system in Hamilton is defined using a classification system that describes a hierarchy of facility types. The desirable goal for every classified street section is that it carry the designed volume of traffic at the desired level of service.

Principal Arterials: **U.S. 93**

Function: Mobility

A four-lane divided roadway with a typical right-of-way width of 120 feet and curb-to-curb pavement width of 100 feet.

Major Collectors **SR 269 (East Side Highway)**

SR 531 (Main Street)

Minor Collectors (All other local collector streets in Hamilton)

Function: Land access/Mobility

Collectors are intra-community highways connecting residential neighborhoods with community centers and facilities.

Local/Residential Streets (all remaining residential and commercial streets)

Function: Land access

Primary function of local/residential streets is access to abutting properties. Local streets include a variety of designs and spacing depending on access needs. Local streets typically have low traffic volumes and provide internal circulation and

Roadway Facility

Designations:

The categories of roadways included in this classification system differentiate the size, function and capacity for each type of roadway.

There are three basic categories in the hierarchy, ranging from "Primary " with the highest capacity to "Commuter Roadway" with the lowest capacity. Each is summarized below:

Primary Arterial

A four-lane divided roadway with on-street parking, with a typical right-of-way width of 120 feet and curb-to-curb pavement width of 100 feet.

Secondary Arterial

A four-lane undivided roadway, with a typical right-of-way width of 80 feet and a curb-to-curb pavement width of 60 feet.

Commuter

Roadway A two-lane undivided roadway with a typical right-of-way width of 60 feet and a pavement width of 40 feet. This category of roadway is designed for access to individual parcels in the City.

access to residential development boundaries and small community facilities.

State Highway Function and Layout

U.S. 93 splits the City into two distinct halves. High traffic volumes on U.S. 93 and the wider highway section hamper the ability for east-west vehicles to enter or cross the state highway. Likewise, the highway provides a substantial barrier to pedestrian movements. This issue turns out to be a significant focus of the system evaluation and corresponding recommended improvements.

Accident Analysis Findings

Accident records for the past three years indicates that, in general, accident rates for Hamilton City collector streets have been relatively average. However, accident rates along U.S. 93 and Main Street are noticeably higher. Nearly 69% of the recorded collisions occurred on U.S. 93, while 16% occurred on a four-block section of State Road 531.

Signal System Analysis Findings

The four signals in Hamilton (three on U.S. 93 and one on Main Street) are functioning adequately or have been scheduled for upgrades in the near future. In the process of evaluating locations for level of service, it was determined that new signals may be warranted at two locations on U.S. 93: one at Pine Street and another at Ravalli Street.

Existing Roadway Network

On the arterial system, primary north/south arterial travel is provided by Highway 93, with two lanes in each direction. Secondary east/west travel is provided by Main Street, Fairgrounds Road and Golf Course Road. Each of these facilities currently operates with one lane in each direction.

Existing Traffic Volumes and Levels of Service

The heaviest daily volumes on the arterial system occur on Highway 93. Moderately heavy traffic volumes are also noted on Main Street, Fairgrounds Road and Eastside Highway.

Recommended Improvements to the Hamilton Transportation System

The Hamilton Area Transportation Plan developed a number of recommended improvements to the transportation system. They are divided into three main categories: site projects, corridor/safety projects, and corridor development projects. The projects are fully described in the plan itself, available at city offices, and are only briefly described here:

① Site Improvement Projects

Fairgrounds Road/SR 269 (East Side Highway)

Project: Construct a development driven traffic signal and realign the Airport Access Road to the Fairgrounds Road intersection. Evaluate speed zones for possible relocation of the 50-65 mph speed transition further to the north along SR 269.

Kurtz Lane/SR 269 (East Side Highway)

Project: Widen the northbound and southbound sections of Kurtz to add: a designated northbound left turn lane, and a designated southbound right turn lane. Remove or trim existing vegetation along Marcus Street to improve sight distance.

Adirondac Avenue/Fairgrounds Road/Highway 93

Project A: Modify the signal phasing to allow for protected through-right-left movement on westbound Fairgrounds Road.
Project B: Develop a protected left turn lane on west-bound Fairgrounds Road and a protected right turn lane on northbound U.S. 93.

definition

Level of Service

for the circulation system is more precisely determined by examining peak hour intersection volumes. The circulation element uses peak hour volumes as a basis for determining appropriate capacity needs.

The City of Hamilton has established LOS "D" as the lowest acceptable Level of Service for peak hour intersection volumes. This performance standard was used as the basis in defining the highway circulation plan contained in this element, and would be applied consistently for evaluating Growth Policy land use and circulation system changes.

Pine Street/U.S. 93

Project: Construct a traffic signal that could significantly improve the level-of service to Pine Street.

Ravalli Street/U.S. 93

Project: Construct a traffic signal and establish a designated pedestrian crossing.

Golf Course Road/U.S. 93

Project: Reconfigure the east leg of Golf Course Road to provide a designated westbound right turn lane. In addition, provide north/south protective phasing on U.S. 93.

② **Corridor Capacity/Safety Projects**

Big Corral Road - Golf Course Road to SR 269 (East Side Highway)

Project: Widen the street section to a collector standard with curb, gutter and sidewalk. Also improve the roadside safety through the removal of trees and relocation of power poles in the immediate vicinity of the road.

Kurtz Lane – Golf Course Road to SR 269 (East Side Highway)

Project: Widen the facility to a collector street section, to include curb, gutter and sidewalk. Existing trees along the alignment may need to be removed.

Daly Avenue – Golf Course Road to SR 269 (East Side Highway)

Project: Develop the street to a collector standard with curb, gutter and sidewalk. The design should prohibit on-street parking.

Old Corvallis Road – Fairgrounds Road to Riverside Cutoff

Project: Develop the street to a collector standard with curb, gutter and sidewalk. An existing two-lane bridge will need to be replaced to accommodate vehicles and non-motorized use.

Seventh Street – Adirondac Avenue to Desta Street

Project: Replace the pavement and construct curb, gutter and sidewalk to a local collector standard.

SR 269 (East Side Highway) – Freeze Lane to U.S. 93

Project: Install center left turn lanes at Kurtz Lane, Daly Avenue and Skeels Street.

Ravalli Street – U.S. 93 to Daly Avenue

Project: Widen the street to urban collector standards with two lanes of travel, on-street bike lanes and sidewalks.

Freeze Lane – SR 269 (East Side Highway) to Fairgrounds Road

Project: Widen the roadway to a minimum of 60 feet residential collector standard; provide adequate travel lanes, on-street parking, curb, gutter and sidewalks.

③ Corridor Development Projects

Kurtz Lane - SR269 (East Side Highway) to Fairgrounds Road

Project: Develop the street to an urban collector standard with minimum of two travel lanes, on-street parking and bike lanes, curb, gutter and sidewalks.

Providence Way – North of Fairgrounds Road

Project: Require developers to develop this road as an urban collector street with a minimum two travel lanes, on-street parking and bike lanes, curb, gutter and sidewalk.

Skeels Street Extension – SR 269 (East Side Highway) to Fairgrounds Road

Project: Extend the street to Fairgrounds Road and construct to commercial collector standard.

Connector Road – U.S. 93 to Old Corvallis Road

Project: As property and opportunity become available, construct a public street connecting the State highway with the collector street.

Goals and Policies for Transportation & Circulation

Goal

Provide a transportation system that supports the Land Use element of the Growth Policy and facilitates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods throughout the City of Hamilton.

Policies

Promote the orderly completion of the planned circulation system through the improvement of substandard roadway segments and intersections, and the construction of missing roadway links and related facilities.

Participate with other agencies in defining and implementing a Traffic/Circulation Management Program for Hamilton.

Maintain circulation system standards for roadway and intersection classifications, right-of-way width, pavement width, design speed, capacity, and associated features such as medians and bicycle lanes.

Provide advance notification to area residents of scheduled special events including identification of any removal of on-street parking or planned street closures, and recommendations for alternative travel routes.

Goal

Provide a circulation system which supports existing, approved and planned land uses throughout the City while maintaining a desired level of service on all streets and at all intersections.

Policies

Maintain a citywide Level of Service (LOS) not exceeding LOS "D" for intersections during the peak hours, unless the City determines an exception is warranted on an interim basis.

Identify and improve roadways and intersections that are approaching or have reached unacceptable levels of service through the execution of a citywide annual traffic count monitoring program.

Goal

Ensure that the location, intensity and timing of development is consistent with the provision of adequate transportation infrastructure and standards.

Policies

Incorporate phasing policies and requirements in development plans and in future Comprehensive Master Plan updates to achieve timely provision of infrastructure, particularly transportation facilities, to serve development.

Circulation improvements to be funded by new development in a manner that maintains the specified performance standards.

Require new development projects to mitigate off-site traffic impacts to the maximum extent feasible in order to maintain the City's preferred level of service standard.

Utilize a citywide traffic forecasting model to determine immediate and cumulative impacts on the City's transportation system due to proposed developments and to serve as the traffic share technical basis in establishing a Circulation Improvement Financing Program.

Require new development to install traffic signals at intersections on arterials which, based on individual study, are shown to satisfy the minimum traffic signal warrants. Additional signals must improve safety and the efficient movement of vehicles with no deterioration of the existing levels of service at the intersections.

Require that driveway access points onto arterial roadways be limited in number and location in order to ensure the smooth and safe flow of vehicles and bicycles.

Goal

Support development of regional transportation facilities which ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods from within the City to areas outside its boundaries, and which accommodate the regional travel demands of developing areas outside the City.

Policies

Maintain a proactive and assertive role with adjacent cities and regional, state, and federal agencies dealing with regional transportation issues affecting the City.

Work with adjacent communities to ensure that the traffic impacts of development projects in these cities do not adversely impact the City of Hamilton.

Identify safe and expedient travel routes for emergency evacuation of the City.

Goal

Encourage a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) system to assist in mitigating traffic impacts and in maintaining a desired level of service on the circulation system.

Policies

Pursue transportation management strategies that can maximize vehicle occupancy and minimize average trip length.

Require that proposals for major, new non-residential developments include submission of a TDM plan to the City.

Encourage industry to use flex-time, staggered working hours and other means to lessen commuter traffic.

Encourage the use of multiple occupancy vehicle programs for shopping and other uses to reduce midday traffic.

Support national, state and regional legislation directed at encouraging the use of car pools and vanpools.

Promote ridesharing through publicity and provision of information to the public.

Goal

Designate primary truck routes that sustain an effective transport of commodities while minimizing the negative impacts on local circulation and on noise-sensitive land uses.

Policy

Evaluate adequacy of designated truck routes on an annual basis and make modifications as required.

Parking

The City's 2003 Revised Zoning Ordinance addresses the requirements for off-street parking:

*CHAPTER 17.100
OFF STREET PARKING AND LOADING*

The purpose of off-street parking requirements is to provide convenient and safe access to property, reduce the need for on-street parking and thus congestion on streets, alleviate hazards with access to traffic generating business and industrial uses, provide adequate and safe parking for residents and business customers, protect residential uses from the undesirable effects of abutting traffic and maintain the traffic carrying capacity of the road system serving the jurisdiction.

The City's Public Works Department has also established Standards and Specifications for off-street parking design and construction. Those standards are available from the Public Works Department.

Goals and Policies for Parking

Goal

Provide sufficient, well-designed and convenient off-street parking facilities throughout the City.

Policies

Develop and implement a Parking Management Plan or other program that identifies parking requirements.

Consolidate parking, where appropriate, to eliminate the number of ingress and egress points onto arterial.

Continue the use of public/private joint-ventures to provide funding sources for parking facilities.

Public Transit

In June of 2002, the Ravalli County Council on Aging (RCCOA) published the *Ravalli County Transit Development Plan Update 2003-2007*. The report focuses on transportation for the general public and special need groups (the elderly, disabled, and school-aged children). Included is a description of the communities in Ravalli County, a review of existing transportation providers in the study area, a transit needs assessment of the area, and concludes with a set of recommendations.

In order for all residents of the community to think the transit service was not limited to the elderly and people with disabilities, the RCCOA changed the name of its general public transit service to Ravalli County Transit. For some residents of the area, these services are their only link to work, shopping, health care facilities and other necessary services.

Based on a thorough public involvement process, including meetings with stakeholder groups, regional goals and objectives were developed for the *Transit Development Plan Update 2003-2007*, and adopted by the Transportation Advisory Committee.

Regional Transit Goals for Ravalli County

Goal #1: Preserve and maintain the existing transportation system, emphasizing safety and efficiency.

Goal # 2: Increase mobility by providing an improved and integrated multimodal transportation system.

Goal #3: Coordinate land use and transportation decisions to ensure that the region's social, cultural, and economic vitality is sustained for current and future generations.

Goal #4: Ensure that the transportation system complements and enhances the natural environment of the Bitterroot Valley region.

Goal #5: Make the most efficient use of limited transportation funds.



The information contained in this section on Public Transit is excerpted from the *Ravalli County Transit Development Plan Update 2003-2007*. For a more detailed look, or to obtain a copy of this document, contact the Ravalli County Council on Aging at 363-5690.


Goal #6: Solicit broad public input on all aspects of regional and local transportation plans, projects, and funding.

Recommended Services to be Provided


- Continue to pursue Public Service Commission (PSC) authority for service from Ravalli to the Missoula urban area.
- Begin Highway 93 commuter service from Hamilton to Missoula.
- Expand Ravalli County Transit's PSC license in order to be able to transport the general public.
- Begin North County Demand-Response service for local north county service and also trips to Hamilton.
- Expand C.A.R.T to five days per week.
- Support MR TMA in a Reverse Commute campaign.
- Pursue funds for a Youth Shuttle and After School Transportation.
- Continue coordination between the Ravalli County Transit and other local agencies.


Implementation of the Plan

The Transit Plan identifies steps to be taken within the next five years as well as longer-term actions to meet future transit needs:

 Ravalli County Transit, under the umbrella of Ravalli County Council on Aging, should remain as the general public transportation provider.

 Missoula County and Ravalli County should form a two-county transportation district as permitted under Montana State Law.

 MR TMA should establish a Transit Coordinator position for service in Ravalli County.

 Ravalli County Transit and the TAC should continue to lobby state decision makers on the need for rural public transportation.

definitions

C.A.R.T.:

Community And Rural

Transportation, a private nonprofit agency that provides intercity public transportation in Montana and Idaho.

MR TMA:

Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association

, an agency that helps coordinate carpooling, ride matching, vanpooling, and more.

PSC

Public Service Commission

TAC

Transportation Advisory Committee

Rail Service

Rail service for Hamilton is provided by Montana Rail Link (MRL) and consists only of freight movement on less than a daily basis.

Aviation Facilities

The Ravalli County Airport, known as the Hamilton Airport, serves the City of Hamilton and Ravalli County. It is approximately one mile east of Hamilton and Highway 93. The airport sits on the valley floor with a single primary access provided via the Eastside Highway (SR 269) south of the intersection of SR 269 and Fairgrounds Road.

Hamilton Airport is a general aviation (non-airline) airport serving the residents of the Bitterroot Valley. It currently has a 4200-foot paved runway and parallel taxiway with fixed base operators and several aviation related businesses operating at the site.

The *Montana State Aviation System Plan* published in 1995 identified Hamilton Airport as B-1 small aircraft airport, capable of handling aircraft in Approach Category B: approach speeds of 91 knots to 120 knots and airplane Design Group 1: up to but not including a 49 foot wingspan.

The Hamilton Airport is a destination airport with less than 3% of the Ravalli County population using the airport. It also serves as a fire-fighting base for the Bitterroot National Forest. The Forest Service bases helicopters and single engine attack aircraft at the airport.

Currently the growth of the Hamilton Airport is to be decided by the voters of Ravalli County.

Goals and Policies for Public Transit

Goal

Promote and ensure a high-quality public transit system.

Objective

Continue to support and assist the Ravalli County Council on Aging in furthering its goals to expand public transit opportunities, particularly those that benefit Hamilton.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The majority of the sidewalks inventoried exist in the older urban area of the City (west of Highway 93). East of Highway 93, except for newer subdivisions, there are few pedestrian facilities. This is due in part to the predominantly rural and suburban nature of the area and that development restrictions have been historically less restrictive in the county.

Within the City, fewer than half of the streets have sidewalk facilities. Most of the sidewalks existed through the center of town in the original platted city streets. On most streets pedestrians are limited to traversing along paved or dirt shoulders.

No designated bicycles routes exist in the study area. Although there appears to be a fair presence of bicyclists who use the City streets, there has not been an overwhelming interest in developing designated routes.

Goals and Policies for Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Goal

Provide a citywide system of safe, efficient and attractive bicycle and pedestrian routes for commuter, school and recreational use.

Policies

Develop citywide standards for construction and maintenance of bikeways and pedestrian walkways.

Maintain existing pedestrian facilities and require new development to provide pedestrian walkways between developments, schools and public facilities.

Where appropriate, require proposed developments adjacent to proposed bikeway routes to include bicycle paths or lanes in their street improvement plans and to construct the bicycle paths or lanes as a condition of project approval.

Enhance the “pedestrian friendly” environment in the Central Business District.

Construct safe, separate, and convenient paths for bicycles and pedestrians so as to encourage these alternate forms of transportation.

Require plans for bicycle and pedestrian facilities to give priority to providing continuity and closing gaps in the bikeway and sidewalk network.

Develop programs that encourage the safe utilization of easements and/or rights-of-way along flood control channels, public utilities, railroads and streets wherever possible for the use of bicycles and/or pedestrians.

Ensure accessibility of pedestrian facilities to the elderly and mobility impaired.