

**ARCHES HOTSPOT REGION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 27, 2020**

The Arches Hotspot Region Coordinating Committee held its Regular Meeting on the above date. Per Executive Order 2020-5 issued by Governor Gary R. Herbert on March 18, 2020, this meeting was conducted electronically. An anchor location was not provided. An audio recording of the meeting is archived at <http://www.utah.gov/pmn/index.html>. A video recording is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkgVqqwwVIw>.

Regular Meeting—Call to Order and Attendance: Committee Chair Wells called the Regular Meeting to order at 2:04 PM. Participating remotely were Committee Members Wes Shannon, Mike Duncan, Karen Guzman-Newton, Curtis Wells, Kalen Jones, Jaylyn Hawks, and Evan Clapper. City staff participating remotely were Assistant City Manager Carly Castle, Communications and Engagement Manager Lisa Church, and City Recorder Sommar Johnson. County staff participating remotely was Community and Economic Development Director Zacharia Levine. UDOT staff participating remotely were Region Planning Manager Jeff Sanders, District Engineer Jared Beard, Region 4 Traffic Operations Engineer Robert Dowell, and Region 4 Deputy Director Monte Aldridge.

Approval of Minutes: May 13, 2020

Motion: Committee Member Guzman-Newton moved to approve the minutes from May 13, 2020. Committee Member Clapper seconded the motion.

Discussion: Committee Member Duncan stated there were a couple items in the minutes that did not reflect what he said. Committee Chair Wells asked if Committee Member Duncan wanted to amend the minutes before the vote. Committee Member Duncan said the vote could proceed.

Vote: The motion passed 7-0 with Committee Members Clapper, Guzman-Newton, Shannon, Jones, Wells, Hawks, and Duncan voting aye.

Citizens to be Heard:

Assistant City Manager Castle stated that UDOT was having difficulty joining the meeting. She said there were four public comments received since the last meeting. Committee Chair Wells inquired if the comments had been acknowledged. Assistant City Manager Castle indicated that they had. The following public comments were received:

Ruben Villalpando-Salas: "Ideas/concerns for the community that come to mind: Once off-main blocks are decided and planned for, brainstorming/sky-blue think about what areas can/should be used for in the future. Santa Fe, NM's Canyon Road comes to mind as their "art" road. Discussion on the overall Moab Valley and what areas can be used for the future development of an urban center apart from downtown. I've got some cognitive dissonance for Moab's Downtown - it's congested now, and ultimately I believe that it should/will continue down South 191 (especially with the college coming), but how do we make progress South if a majority has already been taken up for private property? As well, how is economic development boosted when a majority of these areas are already taken up for residential property? AS a citizen I am all for right turn only side roads, especially if they will mitigate future parking problems. Especially with the knowledge that this will only affect a limited amount of roads. (I like what's been done in front of City Hall). Are there any plans to extend the bike path north of town from Lion's Park? There is a lot of undeveloped area from where the path ends to the Rock Shop. It would also help if all feedback is posted on a public excel sheet so that the community can review other ideas and give input on those as well."

Eve Tallman: “I hope this is not a misdirected (misguided?) email but some friends and I were discussing the question of how to use the Hotspot Funds and we floated the idea of building roundabouts at some key intersections on 191 that could keep traffic flowing more smoothly. 1) At the Colorado River bridge (River Road and Highway 191). If not a roundabout, perhaps a no-stop southbound merging lane such as installed at the entrance to Arches National Park. 2) At the new USU Aggie Blvd intersection with 191. Install a roundabout. 3) At 5th West. In Arizona, several successful large roundabouts on state highways accommodate semi trucks and tourist traffic, including at the turnoff to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon (Highways 89 & 64), in Cottonwood and the Verde Valley (highway 260), and in Payson (highway 87). I recommend you check these roundabouts in person! A road trip would be nice.”

Lara Derasary: “I am writing to express support for both downtown improvements and recreation parking. I like the idea of a shared use path in Spanish Valley, but It’s not as much of a priority for me in the short term as are reducing traffic congestion and creating a safer, more pedestrian friendly downtown. If there is a way to have trailer lots both north and south of town, in my mind that would be ideal. I respectfully disagree with Mike that these won’t be used by many without some sort of shuttle/transport system. Nearly all of the trailers I see are pulled by trucks or SUVs which get disconnected and provide the owners with ready transport without their trailer. In addition, many of these trailers are carrying recreational vehicles which often seem to be the chosen mode of transport around town. The exception to not needing transport from a dispersed lot might be RVs, but in my mind these aren’t generally our biggest congestion problem downtown. If created, we might have to encourage the use of dispersed lots (e.g. advertise their existence, disallow trailer parking downtown except in designated spots and clearly mark where trailers can park) and discourage/enforce trailers not parking where they’re not allowed such as in angled parking spots.”

Brook Indries: “I would like to see the Shared Multi-Use Path coupled with the South Recreation Parking Area. This would provide parking for big cars and trailers south of town, and reduce noise and friction down town and surrounding neighborhoods. The multi -use path would benefit residents, as well as tourist. Residents will have an alternative to driving or un-safe biking if they live in Spanish Valley and noise levels would be decreased, which would benefit quality of life for residents and quality of vacation for tourists. The multi-use path and south recreation parking would encourage biking and exercise in the tourist demographic that would otherwise drive (jeepers, razors, etc), and instigate carpooling with groups that would otherwise each drive their own cars to get dinner downtown after 4 wheeling. Really, the most important thing would be signage. Prompting travelers with clear signs on how to behave in Moab is the single most important thing to do. You want people to not bring their cars downtown? Encourage carpooling from trailheads or other parking lots that are already established. Thanks for considering my comment.”

Committee Member Reports

Committee Member Shannon stated the Downtown Business Alliance had a gathering that included Committee Member Guzman-Newton and Committee Chair Wells. He said they created a pamphlet for the workshop on Friday, May 29, 2020.

Committee Member Duncan said he was hoping to ask Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) Region 4 Deputy Director Aldridge about the potential future of the North and South recreation parking. He is interested in knowing if UDOT would fund operational expenses for a couple years. City Recorder Johnson said UDOT was about to join the meeting.

Committee Chair Wells stated he shared a report encompassing the work and discussions from the beginning to present. He said hopefully the report helps keep everyone on the same page moving forward.

Discussion to Further Define and Evaluate Main Street Improvements & Downtown Improvements: Off-Main Street Parking and Urban Design Components

Discussion: Committee Chair Wells stated he recirculated the initial feedback document from UDOT regarding the Main Street improvements. He reminded the Committee that Main Street improvements is considered a separate project from off-Main Street parking and urban design redevelopment. He said the Committee needs to propose a combination of components from the feedback document which UDOT will analyze for feasibility. He said a good goal for today's meeting is to agree on multiple proposals for UDOT to analyze. He stated the four projects do not show a significant reduction in congestion. He said the parking on Main Street is a major contributor to congestion, so he would like one proposal to include removal of parking on Main Street. He said he would also like a proposal with Main Street parking included for comparison. He said that, if the Committee can find a way to adequately address the congestion reduction, it will provide more flexibility to move forward with other projects that are lacking in the congestion reduction requirement.

Committee Member Clapper said the removal of Main Street parking has been a contentious issue in the past. He expressed interest in seeing what might replace some of the parking. He said the parking currently creates a barrier between the sidewalk and the highway traffic. He said one opportunity is to replace the parking with drop off areas. He added that the areas could be utilized by a shuttle or transit system in the future. He said it is beneficial to show what could replace Main Street parking.

Committee Chair Wells agreed with Committee Member Clapper about including public transit design in the projects. He said the off-Main Street improvements can create additional parking for Main Street businesses, which is an added benefit. He added that the UDOT feedback document indicates that mid-block crossings for pedestrians is a non-starter, so it should not be added to the proposals. He inquired if anyone would like to suggest some components for the Main Street improvements proposal.

Committee Member Shannon stated that, as a business owner and representative of the Downtown Business Alliance, his goal is to keep the parking on Main Street. He said it is vital for safety and the health of the businesses. He requested clarification from UDOT regarding the parking on Main Street. Committee Chair Wells said the idea is to include the removal of Main Street parking for modeling purposes to gather data. He reiterated that the removal of parking on Main Street is not on the table right now.

Committee Member Duncan agreed with Committee Member Shannon that business owners are vehemently opposed to the removal of parking on Main Street. He said he is not in favor of continued study on that topic. He stated the focus should be on removing left turns on Main Street through the downtown area and adding bulb outs at intersections, pedestrian-friendly options, and off-Main Street parking. He added that he would like to ask UDOT about North and South recreation parking operational expenses before the meeting is over. He clarified that left turns do not need removed at every intersection in the downtown area. Committee Chair Wells clarified that off-Main Street parking is considered a separate project from Main Street improvements. He asked Committee Member Duncan to expand on the pedestrian amenities. Committee Member Duncan said a center median would be narrow if it does permit a left turn at

the intersection. Committee Chair Wells confirmed that the removal of left turns, bulb outs at intersections, and a center median are the proposed components.

Committee Member Kalen said the removal of left turns will create controversy, and the model should be used to figure out how many left turns need removed to eliminate friction in balance with the public outcry. He said if the removal of left turns were consistent over a couple of blocks, it would be possible to move the travel lanes closer to the middle to an elevated median. He said this could create additional space for sidewalks. He said the public outreach and modeling will be critical. He added that he is in favor of mid-block bulb outs because it will add valuable pedestrian and bike parking space. He said he understands UDOT's concerns and suggested having the mid-block bulb outs offset. He suggested an elevated concrete planter on the outside edge to further discourage people from attempting to cross the highway mid-block. He added that, from the beginning, there have not been shovel-ready projects to apply the funding to. He said it has been a scramble to create projects that fit the mold. He suggested keeping higher level goals in mind like safety for Main Street. He said the on street parking is not necessarily safe for drivers and driver side passengers as they exit vehicles on a state highway. He said another goal is to enhance economic activity downtown. He requested input from the community and economic development staff regarding if the parking on Main Street is required to enhance economic activity downtown.

Committee Chair Wells reiterated that the primary use for the funds must be congestion mitigation. He verified with Committee Members Jones and Duncan that the following are components for the Main Street improvements proposal: removal of left turns, mid-block bulb outs, and center median/elevated median. Committee Member Jones suggested adding consistency in downtown design. He also clarified that corner bulb outs should be on the list. He said he would like to see the mid-block bulb outs, but it may be more challenging to weigh the pros and cons.

Committee Member Clapper suggested implementing a frontage road. He said a citizen comment also suggested the idea of roundabouts. He added that the farthest North stoplight at the bridge could add a large roundabout at the river road/Highway 191 intersection. He said 500 West and Highway 191 could also add a roundabout. Aldridge stated the downtown area's biggest challenge is space. He said the current lanes are eleven feet wide; typically, lanes should be twelve feet wide with a fourteen foot center turn lane. He said there is not enough room for a frontage road, parking, and median. He said the roundabout on the North end is intriguing, but he does not know if the congestion problem will still exist once the Highway Widening Project is completed. UDOT Region 4 Traffic Operations Engineer Dowell said roundabouts function well to calm traffic but the current congestion issue primarily calms traffic already. He added that roundabouts could be considered on the South end. He said the roundabouts would need two lanes.

Committee Member Guzman-Newton requested adding safer crosswalks in the downtown area. Committee Chair Wells requested clarification on that suggestion. Committee Member Guzman-Newton said it has been brought up in City Council meetings to have a lighted crosswalk to increase visibility at night for pedestrian traffic. Committee Member Duncan proposed adding audible signals for people that are visually impaired.

Committee Member Hawks indicated support for having the removal of Main Street parking in the initial analysis. She said that, if enough off-Main Street parking can be created, it could replace the parking on Main Street. She said there are examples of other cities that do not offer parking in the downtown area, and people are willing to walk to where they need to go. She said

it could also provide an economic opportunity for someone to have a shuttle service. She suggested a bike lane to replace the parking on Main Street, because it would increase safety.

Committee Chair Wells agreed that project decisions need to be data-driven. He stated that UDOT is lending analyzation resources, and he would like to take the opportunity to acquire data. He said he wants to see the comparison between the proposals with and without Main Street parking.

Committee Member Duncan suggested removing left turn lanes for southbound traffic at 100 North and 300 South. He said northbound traffic could remove left turn lanes at 100 South and 400 North. He requested the Committee consider where left turns can be removed.

Committee Member Clapper said projects one and two are inseparably linked. He said a flow study will be needed to analyze removal of parking and left turns. He said project two is not strong enough to stand alone. Committee Member Duncan agreed with combining both projects. Grand County Community and Economic Development Director Levine offered support for viewing both projects as a downtown improvements package. He said it is important to think of trade-offs with respect to the goals of the funding. He said he supports some analysis of eliminating Main Street parking through the lens of trade-offs. He requested Committee Member Shannon communicate the underlying interests of the downtown businesses. He said the position is to maintain parking on Main Street, but the underlying interest is accessibility for customers. He said there may be trade-offs with an end goal of mutual gain for all the different interests. He added that Main Street business owners are not the only stakeholders for the downtown area. He said it is important to consider the economic opportunity of off-Main Street parking as well.

Committee Chair Wells requested input from UDOT. Aldridge said he agrees with Grand County Community and Economic Development Director Levine regarding trade-offs and multiple stakeholders. He said UDOT, if left to its own devices, would probably do something like what Committee Member Hawks proposed to improve capacity. He said the question is to define what is acceptable to this Committee and UDOT will move forward to model that to determine if it reveals a project that meets the criteria.

Committee Chair Wells inquired if anything else needs added to the proposal. Committee Member Clapper asked if the widening of the sidewalk on the West side is included. Committee Chair Wells said it could be included but it increases congestion and reduces pavement width. Committee Member Clapper said that, if a pedestrian finds it difficult to walk two blocks, they will circle around three times to find a place to park. He said people avoid downtown at certain times of the day because it is impossible to walk shoulder-to-shoulder down the sidewalk.

Committee Chair Wells requested a straw poll for who is in favor of including the removal of Main Street parking in the analysis of proposals. Committee Chair Wells, Committee Members Clapper, Jones, Hawks all voted yes. Committee Member Shannon indicated that he is opposed to the removal of Main Street parking in the analysis of proposals. Committee Member Guzman-Newton said she is not opposed if it is a give-and-take. Committee Chair Wells said there is a majority in favor of including the removal of Main Street parking in the analysis. He inquired if anyone wanted to add anything else.

Committee Member Duncan requested to pose a question to UDOT. He said the North and South recreation parking for oversized vehicles is not as beneficial to the City and County without a shuttle system to bring people to the downtown area. He inquired if UDOT would consider funding the operational expenses of a very small prototype shuttle system from either

the North or the South. He clarified that the shuttle system could be two small vans to provide service as often as possible. He said Committee Members Clapper and Guzman-Newton have pointed out the school district bus barn as a potential place to rent. He said that, after two years, the operational expenses would become the responsibility of the City and/or the County.

Committee Chair Wells clarified that the purpose of the discussion is the scope of Main Street improvements. He said it is established that public transit can be accounted for in the project designs. He invited Aldridge to respond to Committee Member Duncan's question, but said there will be a more in-depth conversation at another meeting. Aldridge said the short answer is that UDOT does not fund operation and maintenance costs. He said that decision applies throughout the state.

Committee Member Clapper said the story map from the first Hot Spot funding committee includes shared use paths with connections to canyon pathways and Mill Creek pathways. He said if downtown is being considered as a whole, those shared use paths could be included. He added that safe routes for kids to get to school will eliminate a lot of vehicle traffic on Highway 191.

Scheduling the Next Meeting

Committee Chair Wells suggested a follow up call/Zoom meeting with UDOT, City staff, and County Staff to compare notes. He said he appreciates everyone's engagement and contributions. He confirmed that the next meeting will be on May 29 at 8 AM. He said it will be a walking field trip beginning at City Hall. Committee Member Clapper inquired if a member of the Downtown Business Alliance could attend this meeting. He asked if UDOT would attend as well. Aldridge said he was not aware of the field trip, and he would have to check his availability.

Committee Member Jones said he is unclear what the scope of downtown improvements is. Committee Chair Wells said his understanding is that Emma Boulevard and the parking behind Wells Fargo are not included in the analysis of the Committee. Assistant City Manager Castle said it is the Committee's decision regarding what to include. Committee Member Jones recommended that the parking near the post office and Wells Fargo could benefit from government funding. Committee Member Clapper said that area could be included in the field trip on Friday. Committee Chair Wells said there could be another field trip to focus on those additional opportunities. Assistant City Manager Castle said those areas could be reconsidered, but they are extremely complicated projects. She said there have been negotiation issues with property owners. She said the Emma Boulevard project is an endeavor, but it can be discussed at a future meeting. Committee Member Jones said Emma Boulevard could be discussed with UDOT in relation to the traffic flow studies and congestion reduction. Committee Chair Wells stated that he is trying to honor UDOT's request to identify four projects by the end of August and stick with them. He said the Committee will discuss expanding upon those projects and if there should be some flexibility.

Committee Chair Wells verified with Assistant City Manager Castle that the following meeting will be June 10 at 2 PM.

Adjournment: Committee Chair Wells adjourned the meeting at 3:29 PM.