

## Oakland County – City of Pontiac Livability Assessment

### Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting #2

The Crofoot  
1 South Saginaw  
Pontiac, MI 48342

January 19, 2012  
7:30AM – 9:30AM

#### Meeting Notes

1. **Introductions and Background:** Bret Rasegan (Oakland County Planning) started the meeting and indicated that there have been some comments that previous plans were not being reviewed as part of the study. He stated that all the previous planning efforts are being reviewed and incorporated into this study. The purpose of this study is to look at the transportation aspect, which hasn't been done in any of the other studies. He concluded by handing over the presentation to Barbara Arens (Parsons Brinckerhoff) who will go over the summary from the previous meeting.
2. **Summary of CAG Meeting #1 Comments:** Barbara Arens (Parsons Brinckerhoff) started the presentation (attached) by summarizing the responses to a questionnaire from the previous meeting. She stated that there was a lot of good feedback and that all of it is going to be used in moving forward in the study. There is a summary of the results of the questionnaire that was also provided to attendees (attached). Overall, there were a lot of positive responses about wanting the City of be vibrant and wanting to increase the amount of pedestrian and bicycle activity within downtown.
3. **Engaging Public and Moving Forward:** She then turned it over to Elnora Austell (E Austell Associates) who reviewed the public involvement plan with the group. She indicated that there needs to be more outreach done other than just postcards and newspaper announcements. She proposed bringing in something else to the Public Workshop that could be an attraction, such as the Mayor, City Council President, or businesses. She is also proposing to do a one page newsletter that could be handed out and distributed by members of the PAT and the CAG. She would also like to use Churches and the City for distribution. She asked the group to give any ideas on distribution and provided clipboards for attendees to provide the information.

There was a comment made that usually people come out to oppose any changes, perhaps if the Team gave this group more information on the project, they could deflect some of the opposition. There was a concern that there is already a determined outcome and some people feel like their opinion does not matter. Bret indicated that there hasn't been a determination on what to do with Woodward Avenue and the point of these meetings is to get additional feedback.

Another comment was made that there have been so many studies and people are burned out on the number of studies and meetings. There needs to be some action done and the community doesn't need another study of the same thing. The Team needs to integrate into the presentation and the newsletter how this project is different and emphasize that this is a traffic study that hasn't been studied before.

There was a comment made that someone from the City should speak at the event, that could draw more people to the meeting.

A question was asked how many people is the Team looking for in attendance. Bret indicated that they would like to see around 100 attendees, with a mixture of businesses and residents.

A comment was made that someone should go to the City Council meetings and make a presentation and talk to the President of the City Council and the other members. We should also distribute the newsletter and the meeting announcement to Barbers and Beauty Salons. We should also get a list of events within the community and start to attend those and give information at those events. We should also attend the Downtown Business Association meetings and the Citizen District Councils through the City Council members.

Another comment was made that there have been too many studies. There have been several that have stated to make Woodward Avenue a boulevard and turn it to two-way. Another person stated that businesses are hurting now and long-term solutions are not going to work, they need things done sooner. Barbara Arens indicated that the study will give short-term and long-term solutions and recommendations. There are some things that could be implemented fairly soon with some lower costs that could help the community, while a longer-term recommendation that is higher cost could come later.

The last comment is that many of the other studies that were done didn't get into the details, they were mostly high level. The point of this study is to get into the detail and provide various recommendations. This group is eager to see things happen.

- 4. Existing Conditions Overview** – Barbara Arens continued the presentation by giving additional information on employment and population changes within the last ten years. There was also additional information given on transit within downtown, including the existing SMART routes and the new Amtrak station.

There was a question on where there were other Amtrak stations and how busy the other Amtrak stations are in Royal Oak and Birmingham. There was also a question on what a sustainable for a train station. Tom Coleman (Parsons Brinckerhoff) indicated that over 100 people getting on and off is considered a sustainable train station. A question was asked if high speed rail will impact the train station. Barb Arens indicated that the high speed rail is supposed to end in Pontiac at this train station and there is currently a study underway to determine the ridership impacts. Another question was made on whether a dinner train could be run out the train station. Barb indicated that it could be possible, but the business would have to work with the company that owns the railroad line to get adequate time on the track.

There was a lot of discussion about how to get more information about the transit station, such as what is available there and when the trains are arriving and departing. There was also discussion about what other services are there (taxis, Greyhound, SMART). The business owners could provide information and possibly make it grow, however, it also needs to be accessible to downtown. There was a question on who is using it and how they are getting there and where they are going. Barb indicated that there typically aren't surveys that are done, but Amtrak may be able to provide information about where they are going. There was consensus that there has been a lack of communications with the transit center and a suggestion that perhaps the Chamber of Commerce could do a tour of the facility.

Sarah Binkowski (Parsons Brinckerhoff) continued the presentation and gave an overview of the laneage, one-way streets, and signals along Woodward Avenue and within downtown. She also gave a summary of the number of crashes and the amount of congestion within downtown and some travel patterns. She concluded with a presentation of a Synchro Traffic Model, which will be utilized to test various roadway alternatives along Woodward Avenue and within downtown and the impact that it will have on congestion.

5. **Group Work Sessions** – Tom Coleman concluded the presentation by indicating that that purpose of the work sessions is to ensure that all the roadway alternatives have been considered. There are three alternatives that are shown on the maps on the tables and then a space for the attendees to add their own alternative. The groups will work for around 20 minutes and then report back on any changes or comments.

6. **Groups Report Back** – There were three groups that reported back:

Group #1 indicated that they would like to modify Alternative #3. They would like the loop to remain one-way with a road diet and then also connect Saginaw Street back in south of the Phoenix Center and have that be two-way. They saw this as a phased approach where the road diet could be implemented sooner and then when decisions have been made with the Phoenix Center (10 years out perhaps), then Saginaw could be connected again.

Group #2 stated that they wanted to do a phased approach with doing a modification of Alternative #1 first with all of Woodward Avenue being two way and then eventually connecting Saginaw Street in the south as two-way when the Phoenix Center is gone.

Group #3 had more discussion about what to do with all the developable land for each of the proposed Alternatives. Depending on what is done with Woodward Avenue changes what can be done with the land within downtown. There have already been a lot of studies and the boulevarding of Woodward Avenue and making it two way has already been suggested. Another attendee indicated that boulevarding Woodward Avenue may hurt businesses while having a center left-turn lane may make it better. There are positives and negatives to have a boulevard. Regardless of what is done, there would need to be communications with businesses about whatever alternative is chosen.

7. **Q&A** – There was no additional questions and answers.

8. Next Steps – Bret had indicated that the next CAG meeting will be March 8, 2012 and that the next public meeting will be the same day.

Please SAVE THESE DATES for upcoming CAG meetings:

March 8, 2012  
Thursday, May 24, 2012  
Thursday, September 6, 2012  
Thursday, January 10, 2013

Please SAVE THESE DATES for upcoming PUBLIC meetings:

March 17, 2012	COMPLETE STREETS WORKSHOP
June 4 - June 8, 2012	VISIONING CHARRETTE
July 19, 2012	ALTERNATIVES MEETING
November 15, 2012	PLAN DEPLOYMENT