

## Our City

If you haven't yet, you may want to find Daniel Moore's article on the FLAP Grant Open House and read it before venturing down this path further. What Daniel's article probably won't tell you are the details that led up to the open house. A few hours before the open house I sat down with Power County Highway (PCH) Commissioner Wade Povey along with PCH Superintendent Don Haskins and other PCH representatives, a representative from the Idaho Transportation Department Corey Krantz, our Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke and the representatives from Western Federal Lands Federal Highway Administration including Daniel Slanina, the project manager. During that meeting the what, who, and when were discussed.

You may recall that the original FLAP grant, submitted almost four years ago, was going to build a road that extended out West Idaho Street across the Highway 39 bypass, around Simplot Soil Builders and then out to Willow Bay. That plan was later changed to a complete rebuild of the intersection at Fort Hall Avenue and the bypass. Both of these plans were summarily dismissed as not being practical or cost effective. What we are left with and what was discussed at the open house is a mere shadow of the two prior considerations, but may well be the best overall solution to the access problem.

Collectively, we have been waiting for a way to access Willow Bay in case of an emergency when a train is stopped at the only existing access point on Marina Road. This spring, if the stars align, that will happen as County Highway and City Street personnel build an "emergency access only" road from the bypass and connecting with Marina Road. The emergency access will be placed in the dip between the Idaho Street Intersection and the railroad overpass on the Highway 39 bypass; that will be the extent of major construction. Pedestrian and bicycle crossing enhancements with early warning systems may be installed at Fort Hall and Marina Road on both sides of Hwy 39.

The early warning systems, if installed, will give oncoming east bound traffic a warning that the crosswalk at Fort Hall and Marina Road is occupied. It will also give those in the crosswalk a warning if traffic is approaching while they are in the crosswalk. Yes, I meant to say "if." You see the initial cost and installation of the signs and warning system is easily paid for by the grant; however, this technology is so new that long-term maintenance costs may be beyond the City's capability to burden. Normally, according to Corey Krantz of ITD, if signs are placed in the State's right of way, ITD pays for their maintenance and replacement. However, since these signs are to benefit foot and bike traffic, it somehow becomes the City's responsibility. I am not sure I follow or agree with that position and it is something that still needs to be finalized between the City and ITD. If in fact the City is responsible in the long term for the signs and warning system and that cost is prohibitive, the emergency access will be the only outcome from this entire process. That being said I hope to reach an agreement with ITD that will allow for the safer crossing of pedestrians and bikers at Fort Hall and Marina Road. I believe it is in the long term best interests of both agencies.

As I listen to the interests of our community during this holiday season I am fully aware that the spirit of the season is not spread as far throughout town as has been the tradition. Superintendent Dahlke is well aware also as it falls to the street department to put up all the holiday decorations. Suffice it to say that the decorations that are worthy of putting up have

been. The others have been worn out by the elements. New banners and decorations will be out next season. No bah-hum-bug please.

On a merry note, my family and I quite enjoyed the evening last night as we took in the sights and sounds of the season and perused the cheer spread throughout town. Our favorite picks are as follows: Kids' choices include 353 Autumn Way and 2218 Falls, Reggie's choice was definitely 741 Bennett, "Ya have to give it to Santa stuffing a basketball!" Nana's choice goes to her standby favorite at 216 Adams. Some other worthy efforts include in no special order: 825 Fillmore, 538 West Park, 545 East Park, 739 Bennett, 627 Bennett, 104 Shirley Lane, 107 Shirley Lane, 110 Sunset, Corner of Taylor and Falls, 575 Hillcrest, 743 Tyhee, 315 McKinley, 155 Johnson, 260 Monroe, 200 Hillcrest, 350 Adams, 355 Washington, 352 Lee Street, 353 Autumn Way and 21 Hillcrest. Well done one and all! There are many more outstanding efforts; see for yourself!

Until next week...