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Panel pushes two-way traffic for downtown Fairbanks

by Molly Rettig / mrettig@newsminer.com

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FAIRBANKS — A city advisory panel on Wednesday recommended two-way bridges and two-way streets for downtown Fairbanks. The panel also advised against combining one-way bridges and two-way roads on Cushman and Barnette streets.

The Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System's technical committee, a medley of engineers, planning commissioners, transportation officials and urban planners, evaluates details such as construction and business impacts of plans and makes recommendations to a policy committee.

"We're dealing with everything from construction costs to long-term, what's best in five or 10 years," said Michael Wenstrup, who is on the technical committee as well as the borough Planning Commission. "We think, as far as a long-term plan, two-way traffic will be preferable to one-way traffic."

The committee's two decisions were in response to a recent traffic study by consulting firm Kittelson & Associates that yielded several options but cautioned against melding one-way and two-way traffic patterns on major streets downtown. Consultants said two-way traffic could enliven downtown business but that one-way roads would streamline car and bicycle traffic.

"The (two-way) option is in line with Vision Fairbanks," Wenstrup said, referring to a downtown revitalization plan adopted by the city, the borough and the Downtown Association.

David van den Berg, executive director of the Downtown Association, also said Vision Fairbanks demands the logic of two-way streets.

"The guys who build the roads, who design the projects, are saying 'This is how it should be,'" van den Berg said.

The recommendations echo advice given by the committee in August, Wenstrup said.

The policy committee, which consists of local mayors and elected officials, may consider the recommendations at its next meeting on June 16.

Contact staff writer Molly Rettig at 459-7590.

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« [Lance_Roberts](#) wrote on Thursday, Jun 03 at 07:36 AM »

That's the problem with Community Planning. It's a process that never wants to streamline traffic so that people can get where they want to get quicker. It has an anti-mobility agenda.

So now they want to clog things up a bit so that people will want to shop more in town.

Do you realize that every single business owner wants to improve and increase their business? You don't need to make it happen, just stop obstructing it with

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regulations.

And please get rid of the parking nazi's.

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« [june69](#) wrote on Thursday, Jun 03 at 06:32 AM »

Larmex and Kamen both have valid points, the problem is the reason behind their complaints is exactly why the vision plan needs to be adopted. It does take into account that traffic isnt the only problem with revitalizing the downtown neighborhoods and businesses but it is one thing that does need to happen right along with a bunch of other things in order to get the results that we could from sticking to the plan. People need to remember that developing a community is not going to happen quick, nor should it, and it isnt about a short term goal it about the long term progress. There are ways to keep some of the small town appeal that is part of our history and still allow for change that is properly planned, researched and supported.

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« [Larmex](#) wrote on Thursday, Jun 03 at 05:39 AM »

Visions Faribanks sounds just what it is some smoke induced dream. Two way streets, one way streets, what difference do they make if no one uses them? Those few businesses that are waiting for someone to make them money need to study basic business plans instead of wasting time studing trafic plans when there is NO traffic.

Just ask one simple questing, "Why should I go downtown?" No reason I can think of , other than the call for jury duty, even then I cant find a place to park.

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« [Kamen](#) wrote on Thursday, Jun 03 at 04:34 AM »

I find it incredibly amusing that Vision Fairbanks thinks the reason people don't like to go downtown is because of one way streets and that two way streets will make it all better.

It is the drunks who panhandle and harass everyone they see.

It is the parking nazi's that write tickets like they are coupons for free fun.

Take care of those issues and then, maybe, people will consider going downtown. Big Rays was the only reason to go for me, now I go to their Airport location.

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« [xpipelyner](#) wrote on Thursday, Jun 03 at 04:06 AM »

key phrase.."urban planners"; translation: do-gooders, which translates to increased bike paths and "walking spaces" which translates to increased congestion which translates to screwing up your life more. That's what these people do. Take heart,Fairbanksans, you don't have light r(f)ail yet. Oops, just suggested another dumb idea. 12 miles of track here in the Twin Cities for \$1 billion and \$14 million/year upkeep.

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« [seven51](#) wrote on Thursday, Jun 03 at 01:01 AM »

I'm confused, I always thought that the purpose of building roads, highways and bridges, was to streamline traffic. I guess I'm wrong, the purpose is actually to encourage shopping for business owners who can't stand on their own.

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