

**Topic: Traffic/Parking Review (Planning Commission role vs. Transportation Commission role)**

**Date Introduced: November 24, 2009**

**Why on the list:** Concern was raised by the Transportation Commission in regard to the need for their review of traffic studies for individual projects. The idea was that the Transportation Commission could focus their efforts on larger transportation issues and studies, rather than review individual projects which could be done by the Planning Commission.

**History:** The Transportation Commission was formed in 2003, and provides greater focus on the issue of traffic generated by new development. A specific duty of the Transportation Commission is to advise the City Council on matters relating to the operation of the local street system with respect to traffic volumes, congestion, and functional classification. (See the powers and duties of the Transportation Commission in the attached documents.)

**Decision Points:**

1. Duplication of duties.
2. Streamline the process for developers. Having the Planning Commission consider traffic studies would require one less meeting to attend for developers, consultants and the public.
3. The streamlining of the process would result in an extra meeting for staff (city engineer) to attend.

**Options:**

1. Continue with the existing process with continued review of traffic studies by the Transportation Commission.
2. Recommend that the Planning Commission review all traffic studies as part of their review of development projects.

**Section 1225 -Transportation Commission**

**1225.01 Policy and Establishment.** The Council finds that the creation and operation of a street and transportation system is an integral part of the long-term vision for the City. The Council also finds that congestion on the regional roadway system and the failure of that system to accommodate the continued growth in traffic volumes has created and exacerbated traffic volumes, speed and congestion on local streets; that such volumes, speed and congestion are adversely affecting the quality of life of the City's residents; that businesses located in the City are adversely affected by the inadequacy of the regional system to move people and goods; and that improving the local transportation system is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and strategic plans of the City. Therefore, the Council hereby establishes the Transportation Commission (the "Commission").

**1225.02 Purpose and Duties.** The Commission shall:

- A. Advise the Council on matters relating to the operation of the local street system with respect to traffic volumes, congestion, and functional classification, but not maintenance activities, of the City.
- B. Review and comment on plans to enhance mass transit opportunities in the City.
- C. Review the findings of the Local Traffic Task Force and offer recommendations for implementation.
- D. Evaluate methods for traffic calming and other speed and volume mitigation measures and recommend their implementation where appropriate.

**1225.03 Membership.** The Commission shall consist of ten members appointed by the Council. The Council shall endeavor to appoint members such that the Commission is reflective of the different geographic areas of the City. One member of the Commission shall also be a member of the Planning Commission. One member of the Commission shall also be a member of the Bike Edina Task Force or any existing similar organization, or shall otherwise have an expertise or interest in bicycling as a mode of transportation. One member of the Commission may be a high school student, who shall serve as a non-voting member of the Commission. Members shall serve until a successor has been appointed. All members of the Commission shall be residents of the City and shall be appointed for a term of three years except any student member shall be appointed for a term of one year, commencing on a date determined by the Council. Upon termination of a member's term, that member's successor shall be appointed for the remainder of such term. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation and may resign voluntarily or be removed by a majority vote of the Council pursuant to Section 180 of this Code. Commission members who discontinue legal residency in the City may be removed from office by the Council.

**1225.04 Meetings.** All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public, be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, and otherwise be held pursuant to its bylaws. The Commission shall hold its regular meetings on such fixed date and in such fixed place as it from time to time shall determine. The minutes of all meetings shall be recorded and a copy thereof transmitted to each member of the Council.

*History: Ord 2003-09; 7-15-03; amended by Ord 2003-14 12-16-03; Ord 2005-07 7-19-05; Ord 2008-05, 04-01-08*

*Cross Reference: Section 180*

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES NOVEMBER 24, 2009

**TOPIC:** Role of the Transportation Commission in development review

**DATE INTRODUCED:** November 24, 2009

**DISCUSSION 11/24/2009**

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### **Introduction**

Planner Teague addressed the Commission and informed them at a past joint meeting with the Transportation Commission it was found there appears to be the perception of a duplication of duties between the Planning Commission and the Transportation Commission. The Transportation Commission was formed in 2003 with their main focus on the bigger picture; the daily operation of a street and transportation system, and to also provide advice to the City Council on the impact of new developments on the City's street system. This advisory status would take the pressure off the Planning Commission when considering development plans that impact City streets.

Planner Teague explained the process as it exists today requires that new development proposals are heard by the Transportation Commission and after their review and recommendation the proposal proceeds to the Planning Commission. This process created another step an applicant has to go through. Planner Teague said at this time the Commission needs to decide if the process should be continued as is, or should the process be streamlined by removing the Transportation Commission as a step in the development process and have the Planning Commission review all traffic studies as part of their overall review. The Planning Commission would forward their recommendation on to the City Council for their review and action.

Commissioner Brown said in his opinion this is a good question. If the Commission was granted full review authority over traffic studies and found during a development review process that more traffic, etc. information was needed the Planning Commission could forward their concerns to the Transportation Commission and have them render an opinion. Concluding, Commissioner Brown noted that he served as Planning Commission liaison on the Transportation Commission, and in his opinion the development process would be streamlined if the Transportation Commission was implemented more as an advisory board on development projects at the request of Staff, Commission or City Council.

Commissioner Schroeder stated he is the current Planning Commission liaison to the Transportation Commission and it appears to him if the Transportation

Commission is required to deal with each development project a lot of time is taken away from the larger transportation and roadway issues.

Commissioner Scherer said she understands the issue of redundancy, adding in her opinion the process is redundant. She pointed out that the present process requires that the Transportation Commission weigh in on all development proposals and make a recommendation to the Commission and Council. Historically, both the Commission and Council continue to discuss traffic, etc. even though the issue was studied and reviewed by Engineering staff and the Transportation Commission. Commissioner Scherer reiterated in her opinion this is a duplication of effort, adding that she recommends that the process be streamlined by eliminating development review from the Transportation Commission unless directed.

The discussion continued with Commissioners acknowledging that in the past the public expressed concern that when a development proposal was heard that included a traffic analysis that analysis was conducted by a traffic consultant chosen by the applicant. The expressed concern was that the facts delivered by the developers consultant may not be accurate, and may favor the applicant. The Commission further noted however; that times have changed and at this time the City has the tools to review all traffic studies and render its own opinion. Commissioners also stressed that if the Transportation Commission review was eliminated input from the Transportation Commission would still be needed on certain development proposals and when the City “tackles” the Small Area Plans.

Commissioner Carpenter asked Planner Teague what information the Planning Commission would receive if the Commission were to suggest that review by the Transportation Commission be eliminated. Planner Teague said the Commission would be supplied with everything needed to make an educated decision from both the applicant and City staff.

It was noted by Commissioner Schroeder that both the Transportation Commission and the Energy and Environment Commission have not been granted review authority, adding in his opinion this creates two separate categories. Those with review authority and those without.

Chair Fischer said it appears that the Commission is in favor of eliminating the Transportation Commission as a step in the development review process.

### **Action**

**Preliminary Draft Recommendation to eliminate the Transportation Commission from the Development Review process unless a specific referral is requested by Staff, Planning Commission, or City Council.**



specific project had the TC stamp of approval? Chair Fischer responded it was helpful, adding he doesn't want to convey the impression that the Planning Commission wants to "control everything". He reiterated that the goal of the ZOUC is to streamline and clarify the development review process. Mr. Workinger said in his opinion the role of the TC is vital, adding the TC has value with their expertise.

A discussion ensued with Commissioners acknowledging the benefit of development review at the TC level; however, a piece in the TC review process is missing and that piece is public input. It was pointed out that the Planning Commission and City Council conduct the public hearings and with many projects traffic impact plays a very important role in the discussion and decision. Residents have expressed confusion when the Commission and Council refer to a recommendation from the TC when they weren't aware the project they were interested in was previously discussed at a City level.

Mr. Bonneville, 4378 Browndale, and member of the TC said that in his opinion the TC should be involved in the development review process; however their role needs to be more clearly defined. Continuing, Mr. Bonneville pointed out the City Council appoints residents with applicable expertise to the various boards and commissions, adding the talents of Edina's residents should be used. Concluding, Mr. Bonneville acknowledged the question if where the TC fits in the development review process and suggested that the PC and the TC get together to establish criteria for development review.

Commissioner Scherer agreed that clarification is needed on the role of the TC in the development review process, but noted the TC is an advisory board without public notice. Commissioners agreed with that comment. Continuing, Commissioner Scherer said in her opinion establishing the PUD as the development review threshold for the TC would be a good place to start. Concluding, Commissioner Scherer said if there is an issue with the relevance of the TC that should be addressed at the Council level and if the Council deems that the TC continues its development review the Council should consider assigning them a public process.

After further discussion the ZOUC suggested that either a joint session is needed between the PC and TC or a member of the PC attends a TC meeting to discuss the relevancy and the role of the TC in the development review process.

Chair Fischer reiterated what the ZOUC is trying to do is to establish a more transparent, easily understood, and streamlined development review process. He reiterated in no way should anyone take away from these work sessions that the Planning Commission is attempting to "take away" anything, pointing out the City Council has the final authority for any changes to the Zoning Ordinance.

**Action:**

**The Zoning Ordinance Update Committee recommends that the previous recommendation to eliminate the Transportation Commission from the development review process be tabled until sometime in January 2010. Chair Fischer said this will allow the TC time to discuss their role as it relates to development review. Chair Fischer said minutes would be provided to the TC on the discussion this evening. Chair Fischer said if possible a member of the Planning Commission would also attend January's TC meeting.**