



**MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, February 16, 2006
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Warren Plante, Joni Kelly Bennett, Ellen Cerf, Marc Usem

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dean Dovolis, Geof Workinger

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Lillehaug, Sharon Allison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wanninger.

II. New Business

a. Edina's Traffic and Speed Enforcement Presentation, Sgt. Phil Larsen

Sgt. Larsen was invited to give a presentation on speeding and typical enforcement of traffic laws by the City of Edina Police Department.

Sgt. Larsen said they work to identify root causes of traffic problems. He said some major changes that have contributed to increased traffic problems are increased population and density and highways and public transportation has not kept pace with the increase; drivers' behavior and lifestyle – drivers are observed applying make-up, talking on cell phones, using computer, etc.; reliance on increased vehicle safety; separation of highways with medians; longer rush hour (3 to 6 hrs/day of high congestion); and cut thru traffic has increased due to the new profession of traffic reporters advising people to use collector streets instead of highways to avoid congestion.

Sgt. Larsen said most of the calls received by the PD were crime related, but this has changed over the years and currently most calls received are traffic related (a ratio of about 4 to 1). He said there are 50 sworn officers covering 230 miles of roadway and 47,000 residents. Included in the 50 are 3 fulltime traffic officers, one on a motorbike and two in squads. The rest of the officers are asked to do traffic enforcement when they have downtime. Sgt. Larsen said traffic enforcement is done two ways – department directed and self patrol directed.

Department directed is based on complaints from one or more residents. Information is collected including complainant's name, traffic violation and location. The information is then added to the 'hot sheet' and given to officers at the beginning of their shift. An officer is assigned to the location to observe. The officer is instructed to record events during the observation period, including any citations issued. The officer's report is compared to the complaint and the finding is reported back to the complainant. In self patrol directed, the

officers are asked to use their own knowledge and patrol areas that they know to be issue areas.

Data collected for approximately 8 hours (over 30 days) is then analyzed and the area with the highest level of hazardous driving (e.g. 8 citations in 1 hr. compared to 3 hrs.) gets the patrol. Department directed patrol was recently stepped up due to extra funding from the Council. \$20,000 was allocated to be used between the hours of 6 – 9 a.m. and 3 – 6:30 p.m.

Sgt. Larsen said speeding tickets are not typically written for 3-5 miles over the speed limit due to mechanical differences in vehicles. However, going 3-5 miles over the speed limit might be seen as more egregious in a school zone than in a business district.

Sgt. Larsen shared the following statistics: in 2005 they received a total of 26,000 calls and issued 14,200 citations, including criminal and parking/traffic citations (break-out was not available); in 2004 16,935 citations were written (499 criminal; 2429 parking; and 14,007 traffic). Of the total citations written, approximately 2% are challenged in court resulting in the 3 traffic officers spending a combined total of approximately 2 hrs each week in court.

Sgt. Larsen was asked to explain the effect on the PD's budget if the City were to adopt a 25 mph speed limit in some areas. He stated that there is a provision for 25 mph speed limit, however, it must be clearly stated where the 25 mph begins and ends and signage would be costly. He was asked if he believes 30 mph is too fast. He stated that *in* certain situations 30 mph *might be* too fast, e.g. students arriving home from school. He was also asked what revenue is generated for the City from citations. He said when deciding to form a Traffic Department, the Council looked at how many citations would have to be written to pay the officers salary and it was approximately 2,200. Monies from citations are split amongst various agencies and as a result the City probably receive about one-third from all citations. Sgt. Larsen was asked about adequate staffing. He stated that determining adequacy should be based on their ability to handle the number of calls coming in and they are able to meet demand but could always do more if they had more officers.

Some of the hot spots that PD focuses on are 77th St. (business district), 42nd & France to Sunnyside, 54th to 55th St.; 58th to 62nd St; Vernon, Gleason, Interlachen, 50th at Utley Park, etc. Some areas such as 70th St between France and TH-100, are more difficult to patrol because of logistics, parking and getting out safely to follow speeders. Sgt. Larsen said some behavior modification is observed in areas they patrol but how long they last varies. It was noted that the hot spots are streets that are classified as arterial or collector and no local streets were included. Sgt. Larsen said they patrol the local streets but they do not sit and observe unless they receive complaints and they typically do not. Generally, they patrol the streets where the highest number of traffic violations is occurring. It was noted that traffic data collected for the NE Edina Study showed that local streets are getting as much traffic and speeding as arterial and collector streets therefore, the PD may want to consider patrolling the local streets.

III. Old Business

a. Greater Southdale Area Land Use and Transportation Study

Lillehaug said the City Council will formally consider the Greater Southdale Study on February 21st and asked the ETC if they would like to pass on any final comments for consideration. The following information will be passed on to the Council: 1) Staff, along with a consultant will be creating a fluent model of the Southdale area that would allow staff to insert proposed re/developments and see how traffic would be affected. The comprehensive model will include

pedestrians and vehicular traffic and current and future traffic impacts; 2) That the ETC has identified issue areas around Southdale that is being addressed or is pending; and 3) Information on the four criteria that are used to evaluate re/developments.

b. High School/Valley View Middle School/Creek Valley Elementary School Areas – Preliminary DRAFT Layouts and Traffic Data

Lillehaug said a traffic study was done at the high school in 2001 and the data was updated in Dec. 2005. The traffic pattern has remained consistent with the exception of left turns from Antrim. McCauley Trail and Gleason Road does not meet warrants for additional traffic control but there appears to be a delay getting onto Gleason. Additional counts will be completed for verification of the peak p.m. period.

Lillehaug said the school has a traffic advisory group made up of school personnel, residents and the police chief and at a recent meeting City staff presented two options to them as follows:

Option 1 – Keep all three existing entrances/exits but create turn lanes and straight-thru lanes on Valley View between Antrim and Gleason to prevent backups; potential crosswalk at the middle entrance/exit near Chapel.

Option 2 – Close the existing middle school entrance and create a new one that would align with Antrim and move the existing high school entrance over to align with Chapel. Keep existing middle entrance as is. Turn lanes would be created to prevent backups.

Option 2 is the most costly and safest and would provide the least intersection operations. Another option could include traffic signals at congested locations but they do not meet warrants for majority of the day (22 hrs). The school does not want to lose the middle school entrance and while the current layout is not safe due to number of entrances and the fact that crosswalks cannot be safely established because the entrances are not aligned with a cross street, Lillehaug said it might be best to continue with the current set up which includes the traffic control guards but there are liability issues that need to be sorted out.

The next step is to meet with residents who will be directly impacted. The earliest work could begin in summer of 2007 because of the approval process and scheduling of project while school is out of session.

IV. *Approval of Minutes*

a. January 19, 2006

A motion was made by White to approve the minutes and seconded by Thorpe.

V. *Planning Commission Update*

Wanninger reported that he met with the Mayor and Commissioner Dave Byron of the Planning Commission regarding the traffic studies that were submitted to the Planning Commission but may have been overlooked. Wanninger said it's important to have the liaison between both commissions.

VI. *Open Discussion*

It was suggested that a survey of the high school students be done to get their feedback on such things as riding the bus, safety, carpooling, parking permit fee, etc. Cerf volunteered to draft the survey.

NE Study: Lillehaug said a summary of the third meeting will be available at the next SAC meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

The next scheduled meeting is March 16, 2006, 6:00-8:00 p.m., in the Community Room, Edina City Hall.