



**MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, June 15, 2006
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Warren Plante, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Geof Workinger, Dean Dovolis

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Joni Kelly Bennett, Marc Usem

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Lillehaug, Sharon Allison

I. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Plante.

II. New Business

a. West 70th Street (France Avenue to York Avenue) Traffic Study

Lillehaug said the City initiated a traffic study at this location to analyze potential geometrics improvements, operational and access issues, and safety improvements in response to the recent West 70th Street area re-development applications received by the City.

Three concept layouts (A, B and C) were developed by Chuck Rickart, Project Manager and Lynn Kiesow, Project Engineer, of WSB & Associates, Inc. Lillehaug said alternate C was developed after receiving feedback from the land and business owners. To date, no negative feedback or objections have been received regarding alternate C. Staff is recommending approval of alternate C. The current layout is preliminary; a more detailed design will be done later.

Plante asked what impact the plan for West 70th Street is going to have on the modeling that is planned for Southdale and the surrounding areas. Lillehaug said the modeling accounts for this plan and the modeling will grow on what was used by WSB and other traffic consultants.

Rickart explained that there have been 29 crashes in the area over the last three years. He said four lane roadways without turn lanes tend to have more accidents. When a third lane is added for turning, crashes are reduced and a roundabout will decrease crashes even more because the left turn lanes are eliminated. He said the level of service on this type of road is based on delay – how long a driver sits at an intersection waiting to turn. Existing conditions shows the peak hour of 4:30 p.m. to be the worst and some access issue getting out of Target.

Plante asked where the accidents occurred, considering that there are few entry/exits. Kiesow explained that most were rear-ended accidents which are common on roads without turn lanes. Workinger asked if they could get a layout of exactly where the accidents occurred to

help them determine if a roundabout is actually safer than a four-lane roadway and also how many pedestrian accidents have occurred. Kiesow said there was one pedestrian accident. The accident locations could be provided at a later date.

Alternate A includes left turn lanes at Target and the Galleria; bus pull out lane, sidewalks for pedestrians, and raised medians with landscaping; Alternate B includes a roundabout at Target and the Galleria entrance point and a second one at the west Galleria/Branden Square access point. The Galleria business representative did not like the second roundabout because vehicles backing out of parking spaces would block cars coming in from 70th. Alternate C has three roundabouts with no access into the Galleria on the west end. Rickart said roundabouts typically slow traffic, unlike stop signs where drivers tend to speed up when moving off, and they are also pedestrian friendly because pedestrians only cross one lane at a time. He said an overpass was considered for alternate A but studies show that pedestrians tend not use overpasses.

Some negative aspects of having three roundabouts are: not adequate room for bus pull outs; getting from France to York Avenue will be a little slower; and snowplowing will be slower and drivers will have to be trained on plowing around the roundabout. Semi-trucks will be able to navigate the roundabouts adequately.

Lillehaug was asked what he liked about alternate C. He said they are eliminating a three-quarter intersection which is not usually the safest; the design works well with planned redevelopment; and it provides an opportunity for a crosswalk mid-block.

Workinger said the roundabout slows traffic down, creates a safer environment and better access from north to south off of W. 70th. He does not believe it will help pedestrians, although the slower traffic should make it safer to cross W. 70th.

To sum up the benefits that will be realized, Wanninger said it will be safer for pedestrians, greatly improved access from the businesses, slower moving traffic, and improved aesthetics.

Dovolis said the green space in alternate C helps to soften the area and Thorpe said the sidewalks connect both sides together. The commissioners asked if there are roundabouts in the twin cities that they could look at. Lillehaug is going to put together a list of locations to send out via email.

Thorpe motioned to accept staff's recommendation because alternate C will make it safer for pedestrians, greatly improved access from the businesses, slower moving traffic and improved aesthetic. Seconded by White.

Plante asked if any consideration has been given for a roundabout at York. Lillehaug said no; it would be more significant because it would involve the county and has right of way implications.

Ayes: 6 (Wanninger, Plante, Workinger, Thorpe, White, Dovolis)

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 (Bennett, Usem)

Motion carried.

Wanninger congratulated Lillehaug for a job well done in introducing a new and different concept and explaining it in a way that they could understand.

Lillehaug said the next step is to work out agreements with the county regarding turn lanes, prepare feasibility for the ETC and Council and get Mn/DOT's approval. He said a timeline has not been established yet, but they need to be mindful that the Westin Galleria and Target are modifying their plans to accommodate this project and they are planning on opening in approximately 2008-2009.

III. Handouts

a. Upcoming Transportation Commissioner Calendar

June 19 – Final SAC meeting to review the draft report and make recommendations to the ETC. This meeting is no longer the “Final” SAC meeting since Minneapolis will not hold their open house until June 27 relative to the NE traffic study.

Wanninger suggested the following issues for discussion at the June 19 meeting:

- Parking – he said they need to come to an agreement regarding parking so that it can be included in the report.
- There are two categories of things to be done: 1) normal infrastructure replacement and Houle and Lillehaug can explain what these are and they will continue to handle these; and 2) traffic calming measures. He said #2 will most likely be controversial and should be separated from #1.
- Assuming there is a recommendation to move forward, the process in the policy was designed to deal with an issue on a particular street. He suggested formulating a process that would have a more comprehensive approach.

Plante asked if the Council will be allowed to push this off. Wanninger said they will have to point out to them that the issues have been around for a decade and that traffic consultants were hired to gather data and, while the solutions are not perfect, it is the best that can be done and they need to act on the ETC's recommendations.

June 27 – City of Minneapolis' Open House sponsored by Councilmember Hodges.

June 29 – Final SAC meeting, followed by a special ETC meeting.

July 5 – Study presentation to Council.

July – More to come on the West 70th Street Traffic Study; the consultant will be identified and project scope presented to the ETC.

Plante said he is concerned about the lack of a long term vision that identifies what type of street West 70th is – residential, commercial, freeway, etc. Dovolis said there are two approaches and they are both policy questions that need answering. He said one approach is to preserve it as a residential street and the other is to make it a commercial connector. Plante suggested that the consultant be given a framework in which to work. Wanninger said consultants work best when they know the policy that they're working with.

IV. Approval of Minutes

a. May 15, 2006

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

p. 3, top line: 'keep **faith**,' not face; paragraph 2, delete "He suggested probably a website where they can list what they are working on" and replace it with **He indicated that the city's website list projects being working on.**

p. 3, bottom line: "...more aesthetically pleasing **and superior function.**"

p. 4, paragraph 3, second-to-last and last full lines: change "somewhat" to **potentially** and "fix the problem" to **widen the roadway.**

p. 5, Speed Limit Policy Motion: to clarify the motion made and voted upon, "Bennett moved that the ETC recommend that the City Council adopt changes to the City speed limit policy to permit reduction of speeds on residential street segments from 30 to 25 mph, on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with Minnesota law."

p. 6, paragraph 3, under Open Discussion: change "taking out" to **tearing down** and insert "a number of **homes and** businesses."

Plante motioned to approve the minutes with the corrections. Seconded by Dovolis. White and Thorpe abstained.

V. Planning Commission Update (Commissioner Workinger)

Reviewed and accepted a report from the Housing Task Force. There were no land use issues on the agenda.

VI. Open Discussion

Regarding bicycles on sidewalks, Lillehaug said MN statute allows bicycles on sidewalks, however, cities can restrict them in commercial areas but Edina has no restrictions.

White said she attended the Southwest Transit Way PAC meeting and they are getting ready to start their "Vote Yes" campaign to get the state to dedicate all of the vehicles' sales tax to road and transit improvements. She said a southwest alternative route is being planned for September.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned. A special meeting is scheduled for June 29, 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Community Room, City Hall. The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 20, 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Community Room, City Hall.