



**MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, May 18, 2006
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Marc Usem, Geof Workinger, Joni Kelly Bennett, Dean Dovolis

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ellen Cerf, Warren Plante

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Lillehaug, Sharon Allison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by chair Wanninger.

II. New Business

a. 2006 Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) Scoring and Ranking

The following five areas were scored and ranked as follow:

RANK	LOCATION	TOTAL SCORE
1	Wooddale Avenue (between W. 50 th St. and W. 58 th St.)	633
2	View Lane and Schaefer Road (north of Vernon Ave.)	472
3	Parkwood Road - Cut-through path NW Edina (north of Londonderry Rd. and Lincoln Dr.)	456
4	Schaefer Road* (between Interlachen Blvd. and Parkwood Rd.)	419
5	West 56th Street (between Park Pl. and France Ave.)	360

One NTMP application was received in 2005*. The other four areas are issue areas that were scored and ranked last year and carried over. For Wooddale Avenue, to reduce recorded speeds of 40 mph, Lillehaug said staff is recommending striping the edge of the roadway to make the lanes appear narrower; continued police enforcement; and installing a permanent speed indicator sign. These measures will not divert traffic onto other streets. Staff asked the ETC to approve traffic studies for one or two of the five ranked areas; studies would be done in 2006.

Dovolis asked if the three areas that are close to each other could be done as one study. Lillehaug said it would become a NW Edina study. He said the traffic patterns are different in some areas and a bigger notification area would be created. Dovolis said there may be a need

for a NW study in the future. Current projects includes NE Edina which is expected to go before Council in July; funding is already approved for W. 70th and could begin mid to late summer; and the high school area is in the planning phase with possible construction for summer 2007. Wanninger asked what they should take on as their fourth project.

Dovolis said the NW has almost the same grid system as NE and should probably be done next year. Bennett said by combining the areas, they could avoid piece-mealing. Bennett asked if it makes sense to work on Wooddale, due to safety issues, and 56th because of their proximity to each other. Lillehaug said Wooddale will be getting some safety measures to reduce speed and he could consider other calming devices. Workinger said he is not supportive of the permanent speed indicator sign in a residential neighborhood because it validates that there is a speeding problem that they cannot resolve. Lillehaug said there are temporary speed indicators but if the ETC is not going to use the permanent type, it should be taken out of the toolbox. Workinger said he does not like the permanent sign because it devalues the neighborhood. Before the sign is installed, Lillehaug said the residents would be surveyed to get their feedback and although it is a permanent sign, it could be installed on a temporary basis to see if it is effective or not.

A motion was made by Bennett giving staff authorization to apply the safety measures that were recommended for Wooddale, minus the permanent speed indicator sign. Seconded by Workinger.

Lillehaug said the striping could be done within one month and the permanent sign would take about three months from ordering to installation. Bennett said she thought the permanent sign would not be included (see her motion above).

A motion was made by Dovolis supporting staff's recommendation of police enforcement, striping and the permanent speed indicator sign and for staff to report back within 90 days. Seconded by White.

Workinger asked if the sign would be permanent. Lillehaug said he does not know at this time. For safety reasons, Lillehaug said staff can recommend the sign, but Council makes the final decision. Lillehaug recommended surveying the neighborhood to get their opinion. He said the sign is meant to be permanent but it can be removed.

**Ayes: 7
Nays: 0
Absent: 2 (Cerf, Plante)
Motion carried.**

Dovolis made a motion for consideration of an area-wide traffic study for NW Edina to include 05-C, 05-B, and 05F, in 2007. Seconded by Thorpe.

**Ayes: 7
Nays: 0
Absent: 2 (Cerf, Plante)
Motion carried.**

Bennett said they struggled to adopt the policy and so far they have not done an NTMP study.

Bennett motioned that they do 56th St. since it is small to ‘keep faith’ with the public.

Both Wanninger and Workinger said they disagreed. Wanninger said they have been working on issues. He indicated that the city’s website list projects being worked on.

b. West 70th Street and Metro Boulevard Intersection Improvements

Lillehaug said plans were completed and bids accepted for W. 70th Street and Metro Blvd back in 1996, but the project did not move forward because the bids were higher than expected. MnDOT will be updating the signals at the Hwy. 100 ramp and W. 70th St. and staff would like to update the signals at W. 70th and Metro Blvd at the same time. These signals are outdated and must be updated regardless of what happens to the general area. The project scope will include intersection realignment - one option looked at is a roundabout but this would require buying land for right-of-way, an expensive proposition.

Problems and recommended solutions for the W. 70th and Metro Blvd area are as follows: Rabun Drive – problems getting in and out, some changes in signal will help mitigate this problem; MnDOT would like to install a median and this would divert traffic from Rabun. The design presented by staff includes the median with a left turn lane onto Rabun and the parking lot entry/exit across from Rabun would be right turn in from W. 70th and right turn out onto W. 70th. Currently, left turn is prohibited at W. 70th from Metro and staff would like to change this; the fire department is supportive of the left turn lane. Last year a sidewalk was built on W. 70th along Arneson Acres Park and staff would like to continue the sidewalk so pedestrian can safely cross the street. This would include removing the median island and making a ‘T’ intersection so traffic must come to a complete stop. With the existing design they are only required to yield and usually they are going at high speeds. Some changes would also be made to the cul-de-sac.

Funding for this project is included in the city’s Capital Improvement Program for 2006; staff is expecting this work to begin this summer. MnDOT’s plan approval is anticipated to be July 2006.

Staff asked the ETC to review the general plans and forward comments to the Council.

Dovolis said he liked the roundabout design. He said it would create a more gracious entrance in an area that is becoming a gateway. White asked if the right-of-way costs would equal the signal costs. The signal cost is expected to be \$150,000 to \$250,000. Dovolis said if right-of-way costs is reasonable, he would like to see the roundabout instead of the traffic signal. In addition to needing more rights-of-way, the roundabout would impact a redevelopment which was recently approved by the Planning Commission and Council. If the roundabout is to be built the redevelopment project would no longer meet the parking setbacks. The city would probably have to grant a variance.

Dovolis motioned that the ETC recommend further analysis of the roundabout because it would be more aesthetically pleasing and superior function. Seconded by Bennett.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 2 (Wanninger, Workinger)

Absent: 2 (Cerf, Plante)

Motion carried.

c. West 70th Street (Hwy 100 to France Avenue) Corridor Study – Scope of Study Consideration

Lillehaug presented a draft scope for the ETC's review and feedback. He said the Planning Commission will need to be included in discussions concerning land use. Wanninger asked if the plan is to identify and fix current problems while looking at what may happen as a result. Lillehaug said yes. Bennett would like to see public participation through open house(s) as a priority to get their observation in finalizing the scope. Lillehaug said the scope is meant to include staff, ETC and consultants. Residents would become involved after the scope is identified. Bennett said past experiences have shown that residents' observations would have affected the scope, if they were involved during the identification of the scope of the project. Wanninger said the process worked with the NE study and they were able to gather data and avoid what may have been perceptions and emotions. Bennett said she is talking about information that could be gathered through survey(s), not by committee, from the people who are affected on a daily basis and will continue to be affected by decisions made by the decision-making body. Bennett said it is possible to gather information in a calm and productive way. Workinger said a public gathering process would be beneficial. Wanninger asked what was missed. Workinger said they did not focus on traffic flow from the NE across Morningside and into Minneapolis and there is more traffic than they realized. Wanninger said this is a data collection issue.

Workinger said 70th is a residential neighborhood and they run the risk of changing this if there is a focus on getting to and from the Southdale area. He asked if 66th could be straightened to keep 70th a residential. Wanninger said this could become a part of the scope; he said others have suggested making 66th and 70th one-way streets. He said the data collection is very important in determining what will work. Lillehaug said Plante, as well as some of the Planning Commissioners lives in the area and they can share with the ETC what general traffic patterns are like. Workinger said it was not his intention to enlarge the study, but expand the scope a little and determine if the street is residential or for thru traffic and how much do they want the balance to change.

White said the consultants had the ultimate solution for 50th and France which would involve expanding the roadway; she asked if this would also be done for 70th. She said the rumor around town is that it will be turned into a 4-lane highway. Bennett said the residents are concerned and when a report notes that there is a conflict between land use and transportation needs this would validate their concerns. She said 50th and France is potentially precedent-setting because the decision was made not to widen the roadway even though traffic is over capacity.

Staff is going to hire a consulting firm to do the scope of the study and the same firm would conduct the study. There was a consensus that 66th and 77th could become part of the study area.

NOTE: This discussion by the ETC regarding West 70th Street should not be misunderstood to mean “what is planned” for the area. This is the first of many discussions and it is merely a reflection of what may or could be.

III. Old Business

a. City of Edina Speed Limit Policy – Consideration of 25 MPH in residential areas

Two alternatives were presented to the ETC for consideration: 1) maintain 30 mph with some changes – delete the section that refers to the city not having the ability to change speed limit; and 2) allow the city to lower speeds to 25 mph. Bennett said what staff is suggesting is actually stricter than state law and getting 25 mph would involve MnDOT. She asked why not have the option so the Council can approve or disapprove. Lillehaug said this is the only way to maintain uniformity from one community to the next. Bennett said some areas of NE Edina would be well served with 25 mph and there does not seem to be a problem in Minneapolis with the changing speed limits in areas that goes from 30 to 25 mph. Wanninger said he supports making it more difficult to go to 25 mph. Thorpe said they should be the first city to effect a statewide change and alternate 2 gets them closer.

Lillehaug said alternate 2 is going to be expensive, time consuming, controversial, each request will require Council’s approval and enforcement would have to be worked out with the police department. He said streets such as Wooddale, 44th, etc. cannot be lowered to 25 mph, because they are not considered local roadways, per state law. He is concerned that residents would start requesting reclassification of roadways. Thorpe said the 25 mph may be one way to reduce cut-thru traffic. Workinger said he would support 25 mph on a trial basis but it would be better to have one speed limit.

Bennett motioned to adopt the 25 mph speed limit. Seconded by Thorpe.

**Ayes: 3 (Bennett, Thorpe, Usem)
Nays: 2 (Wanninger, Workinger)
Abstain: 1 (White)
Absent: 3 (Cerf, Plante, Dovolis)
Motion carried.**

IV. Planning Commission Update (Commissioner Workinger)

The final rezoning and plat for 52nd & France (Brownstone) passed. Workinger said they are receiving the ETC minutes but too late. He asked if they could get a draft copy; they meet one week after the ETC. Draft ETC minutes will be distributed to the Planning Commission. Workinger said he is going to bring the Planning Commissioners up-to-date on the NE Traffic Study, W. 70th St. and the 25 mph speed limit policy at their next meeting.

V. Approval of Minutes

a. April 20, 2006

Two corrections were made to the minutes as follow: page 2, 3rd sentence in the motion should read as “Workinger motioned to amend the motion to include *having someone as a point of contact who would be responsible for bicycle use and safety.*”

Second correction is on page 3, 1st sentence: "...each of the *NE* business districts separately,..."

Bennett motioned to approve the minutes with the above corrections. Seconded by Workinger.

VI. Open Discussion

Wanninger said city of Minneapolis' Councilmember Hodges is going to schedule an open house for her residents. The open house will follow the same format as Edina's and will include the ETC.

Wanninger said the Mayor and Council are assuming that the ETC will be reporting to them by July on the NE Edina Traffic Study. A final SAC meeting will need to be scheduled before the June 15 ETC's meeting to discuss what they will or will not support.

Wanninger said there is a parking plan on file for 44th and France that they need to pull it out for discussion with the business representatives because some on-street parking on France will be recommended for elimination and this would to show the Council what alternative parking exists. Bennett said if the plan is from 1990 it will anger residents because it called for tearing down a number of homes and businesses. Wanninger said the plan he's talking about shows the parking capacity in the area which he would like the Council to see and they will make the final decision.

In the 50th and France area, additional locations were identified where parking ramps could be built – Clancy, Lunds, by the Post Office. An alternative suggestion is for people to park at one or two of the nearby churches parking lots and shuttle people back and forth. Wanninger said this would be cheaper and could be put in place sooner than ramps could be built, if an agreement can be reached with the churches.

White said she researched the city's code regarding what can be on the sidewalks and it states non-motorized vehicles. She asked if the city attorney could give a ruling on non-motorized.

White reported that Mayor Hovland and city of Minneapolis' Mayor R.T. Rybak met with Metro Transit regarding a bus route from uptown to Southdale. She suggested a possible meeting with the two mayors and Eden Prairie's mayor to talk about transit for the Southwest.

Workinger asked if the ETC has tried promoting park and ride lots. Not the ETC, but others have and there were objections because the areas that could be used are sports fields which would require change in schedules as well as installing lights at fields. Workinger said they could identify some sites for the Metro Transit. White said Southdale is a park and ride lot but it is empty most of the time. She said Rep. Erhardt has been very vocal about public transportation.

Staff Update:

The Interlachen Trail project will be presented to the ETC in June or July. Safe Route to Schools, a federal program, was recently approved and the city will be working to get some funding from this program.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2006, 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Community Room, City Hall.