



**MINUTES OF THE
Special Meeting of the
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, September 7, 2006
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Community Room

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Warren Plante, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Joni Kelly Bennett, Marc Usem, Dean Dovolis

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ellen Cerf, Geof Workinger

STAFF PRESENT:

Wayne Houle, Sharon Allison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by chair Wanninger. He said a letter of resignation was received from Commissioner Cerf, the ETC's student representative. He also noted that Steve Lillehaug has moved on from the city of Edina.

II. Old Business

a. NE Edina Transportation Study Final Report recommendation

Wanninger said the meeting was for the ETC to review and approve the NE Edina final study. He said everyone has had a chance to review the public comments and they should discuss and outline for the Council what issues were raised and how they plan on resolving them.

The major issues raised by residents are:

► Calming Devices

- Speed Tables
- Combined measures
- Why reduce speeds below speed limit

Cote explained that the difference between a speed hump and a speed table is that the table is called a flat speed hump and it would either be a version of a speed hump or a speed table and this is a design detail that will be worked out later. No speed bumps are recommended. Bennett said the words were used incorrectly and interchangeably by some and there were those who used the words correctly so they should be careful not to assume that everyone misunderstood the differences; and some people just do not like them.

- Equity of calming devices

The goal is not to have an equal number of devices per street; it's the perimeter of the area as drivers enter and to locate them strategically. The difference between combined measures and the two speed humps is dictated by the width of the roadway at the entry points. The purpose

is for speed control; and at points where there are combined measures is to distinguish that they are entering into a neighborhood and that there is change compared to say 50th Street. Wanninger asked if the measures could cause diversion from one local street to another. Cote said they would be placed north of 50th Street starting with the Browndale Bridge, followed by a speed hump, a measure on Wooddale, Bruce, Arden and Maple; these locations are more effective. 42nd Street was modified to a combined measure because it is wide enough to accommodate a combined measure. Bennett asked where it is going to be located so that it will not interfere with fast moving traffic and residents trying to get into their neighborhood. Cote said this will be taken into consideration when it is being designed and the same goes for Morningside, 44th and Wooddale off of 50th Street. She said they are not currently considering physical barriers at this time such as driveway locations, fire hydrants, etc.; these will be considered during the design phase. Cote said the main purpose of speed humps are to slow drivers down and putting them consecutively creates a gateway effect and lets drivers know that that they are entering a neighborhood.

Wanninger said they are being asked to approve a 'master plan,' that conceptually locates the measures. He said 42nd, Grimes and Sunnyside have high speeds and the consultants and traffic engineers will design specific plans for these streets. The two speed humps, for example, on Sunnyside may be the best design in a location closer to Curve Avenue and it may become a mid-block location but it would be placed at best location coming from France Ave. Bennett said some would rather see stop signs at Curve and Sunnyside instead of speed humps. Cote said she cannot recommend stop signs as a means to slow people down because they are to identify who has the right-of-way at an intersection and to stop if there is a visibility problem for safety purposes. Dovolis said Minneapolis tried this and the stop signs became meaningless because people were ignoring them. Plante said more stop signs were installed in the Country Club neighborhood and there is still speeding. There are reports that people do not come to a complete stop at these stop signs. Beside reducing speed, Cote said in general traffic measures will reduce traffic, to what degree is not certain because there are multiple studies with varying answers but it can deter people from using the local streets because they would rather not deal with the humps. She said the idea is to use a combination of measures to remove the traffic from the neighborhoods. Drivers should be able to go over speed humps comfortably at 25 mph.

Wanninger said 70% of the volume is residents in greater NE Edina so this traffic will still be there; the other 30%, if reduced by 40-60% and 50th and France flows well, drivers will probably make the choice to stay on 50th and also on France. He said this is a combined strategy.

Dovolis ask if there are portable speed bumps that could be used for a test period before permanent implementation. Houle said there are portable speed bumps but they are very expensive.

White said many comments were received from Browndale residents in response to traffic diverting to their street. Cote said the Browndale comments looks as though one comment was passed on to others as a response and the information is incorrect. She said to say that there are no measures for Browndale and that Drexel and Arden are receiving more calming measures is incorrect; she said Drexel, Casco and Bruce do not have any more calming measures than Browndale. Arden and Bruce have two speed humps because of the width of the road, unlike Browndale. She said coming from 50th, Browndale has the bridge which is a traffic calming measure followed by a speed hump and a realigned intersection. At Bridge Lane there is a 4-way stop sign and one also at Sunnyside & Browndale.

Bennett said the comments are not only about number of measures but also equivalency effect of a speed hump vs. a realigned intersection and this was also raised by residents on Bruce and in the White Oaks Neighborhood. Houle said realigned intersections are to slow cars down when they are turning, for pedestrian safety. Cote said the design creates a better 90 degree turning angle. Houle showed examples of what is proposed for the Country Club area as part of the reconstruction project. Bennett suggested that the examples shown become the prototype for designing other neighborhoods and be made available in color because it shows the details better. After discussion, the consensus is to include a couple sample pages in the report and on the web. Houle will chose a couple pages to include in the final report showing measures that residents will see in their neighborhood and in other parts of the city.

UseM said many of the comments seemed to have taken the report literally in terms of placement of humps, number of humps, etc. and he suggested adding a sentence stating that the placement and number of measures in the report is a conceptual plan.

Dovolis moved that they accept the conceptual master plan of calming devices.

Bennett does not believe that all the comments have been discussed in full. Dovolis said some of the comments are getting into the design phase such as not being able to back out of the driveway. Cote said this is a detail that will be worked out in the design phase. UseM asked if they can include quantitative effects that the measures will have. Cote said they can add a general statement that says speed and volume will be reduced because traffic studies quantitative effects are usually based on a variety of factors. Bennett said she does not believe the plan is ready for final approval, except for the Country Club Area, because they do not have an area-wide consensus as to what the problems are. She said the design is not ready for Greater NE Edina like it is for the Country Club. Dovolis said the Country Club has been working on traffic issues for the past 10-13 years while the Morningside and White Oaks are just beginning. **The motion was seconded by Plante.**

Ayes: Wanninger, Plante, UseM, Dovolis, White, Thorpe

Nayes: Bennett

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

► TH100 – should we delay study/project

Wanninger said they supported the St. Louis Park Council when they were considering this project. **Dovolis moved that the Highway 100 project not be delayed. Seconded by Thorpe.**

Ayes: All

Nayes: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

► Scheduled Neighborhood Improvements

- Browndale Bridge – safety issues

Houle said the bridge is structurally sound but some modifications/repairs such as widening of the lanes will be done within the next one to two years. A variance was received from the state because the width of the lanes does not meet state standards. The new widths will be safer but at the same time will not be wide enough for drivers to speed over the bridge. The bridge

will continue to serve as a calming device even with the wider lanes. **Dovolis moved to support the renovations to the Browndale Bridge. Seconded by Bennett.**

Ayes: All

Nays: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

- Utility Improvements in Country Club
 - Realigned Intersections
- West 44th Street
 - No widening planned

Houle said a resident printed out a needs analysis from the state's website that shows a general idea of what the needs might be for W. 44th in say 20 years. When a needs analysis is completed, it is done under the assumption that everything will be replaced. As plans are made for local roadways, the needs analysis is not taken into consideration; it is a tool that is required by the state but is never used by the city. Houle said there are no plans to widen W. 44th or take out trees. He said the state does not approve of calming devices such as raised speed tables on state aid roads so a center island with a crosswalk might be better for this area. Cote said both options are still on the table, the center island/crosswalk and sidewalk on the south side. Bennett said comments were received regarding widening the west end of 44th at Brookside to put in a center island; and she asked about bump outs at the intersections. Houle said they cannot change turning movements on a state aid road and Cote said there has to be a noticeable change in the width for them to be effective and a small bump out is not worth the cost.

- Cross-walk at Kojetin Park

Wanninger said the Park Board should be responsible for having sidewalks along the perimeter of all parks. Commissioners and staff were informed W. 45th provides access to the park from the west. Bennett said the idea of a mid-block crosswalk with an island would address the sidewalk/crosswalk issue for which many comments were received.

Dovolis moved for approval for W. 44th and Kojetin Park. Seconded by Bennett.

Ayes: All

Nays: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

► Other Areas – south of the study area

Houle said questions were raised regarding what was being done south of 50th. He said areas not included in the study can be studied in the future. Bennett asked about developing a gateway prototype. Houle said he is in favor but the county does not allow them on county roads.

► Sidewalks in other locations

42nd Street (from Grimes to the city boundary) - Bennett said there probably would be support for a sidewalk. She said a petition failed about 10-15 years ago but there are younger families now. There are also two schools in the neighborhood. There is a general consensus that a sidewalk makes sense because of the schools and park. **Bennett moved to approve sidewalks on 42nd St. Seconded by Usem.**

Bennett said there is a trail in Weber Park and she would like to see this system completed. She said the sidewalk from Grimes is not wanted. Cote said the current map showing the sidewalk should stop at Inglewood.

Ayes: All

Nays: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

► Implementation

- How will projects be funded
- How to avoid temporary diversions

Wanninger said funding makes it impossible to do everything all at once and it is more cost effective during road reconstruction. He said they'll need to be careful to not cause diversion. Cote said it's the permanent diversion that they must avoid; she said there will be temporary diversion just like with any regular road reconstruction project.

Houle is recommending that implementation costs be paid for from the general fund because when assessing property owners, he must be able to show benefits to the property based on the assessed amount. He said it is going to be difficult to prove benefits to NE Edina alone because the changes will benefit residents from other parts of the city. Wanninger said this is very similar to the baseball concession stand that was paid for from the general funds. Dovolis said he supports a policy that recognizes that the benefits enhance the livability of the city of Edina and it is not specific to a particular street or properties.

Bennett believes this would set precedent and it would not be a good one. She said there is no public consensus on the problem and the problems varies within the area and to create a citywide payment would encourage perception to prevail over the real problem. She said where speeding exists is questionable with the data collected for example, where devices are desired is not where the greatest problems may be occurring and what's being proposed may not deal effectively as something else. Bennett said a citywide payment removes the people from trying to figure out the value of what they're asking for and it also removes the ability to send in comment for something that was not fully considered and if it is going to be assessed, it gives the people one last chance to oppose something not of value to them.

Dovolis said he does not believe it short circuits the democratic process. He said it avoids the battle of who gets what and who is paying. He said traffic and calming measures are an imperfect science and defining benefits is impossible and divisive. He said he supports the citywide payment. Cote said if she was asked to identify measures as they relate to benefits it would be nearly impossible. She said if traffic becomes less on Grimes Ave due to more people using Hwy. 100, 50th St and France Ave this is a benefit to the residents on Grimes Ave and without doing a very detailed OD study and interviewing every vehicle, she would never be able to tell their origination and destination.

Wanninger said assuming that a design is successful in making it easier to get onto 42nd from France Ave, wouldn't the residents of 42nd benefit as well as those not living on 42nd and who do you assess in such a situation. Houle explained that showing benefits would have to be done similarly to sound wall assessments on a tiered system. Wanninger said if they expect Council to adopt the entire plan, the funding is an important piece. Houle said the city had a surplus of \$1 million last year due to construction permits and this is expected to continue for

the next three years. Bennett asked who is going to pay if a measure has to be taken out. The general fund would also pay for removals. Currently, the residents are assessed for road reconstruction while the city pays for all utility reconstruction (storm sewer, sanitary sewer, water main and curb & gutter). Bennett said if this was on the table before the public hearing on July 31 there would have been a lot of comment on it, but even though cost was a big issue, lack of information negated the public's ability to comment on this. Wanninger asked if the arterials should also be included under citywide funding. The consensus is they should not be included because other funds are available. Thorpe said for areas needing traffic calming and cost is an issue, citywide funding would make it possible. Bennett said public payment for the arterial is good, but for residential measures, it is asking the residents to pay for something that makes it more difficult for them to use certain roadways.

Dovolis moved that arterial improvements be funded through the various funding sources available for arterials and recommend using general funds to support the residential area-wide traffic studies improvements. Seconded by White.

Wanninger asked for staff's reaction to the motion. Houle said the improvements would have to be added to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and they should keep in mind other neighborhoods needing traffic calming such as the high school area and the 70th St corridor. Dovolis said he is pushing for a traffic study in NW Edina. Usem asked if this would create a precedent to do all four quadrants of the city. Wanninger said yes and they should be done. Bennett said there will be a problem if residents are told that they are going to pay for something in one part of town and their neighborhood will not be done for awhile. The consensus is that residents are already paying for projects that are not directly beneficial to their neighborhood, based on other projects that Council has approved.

Ayes: Wanninger, Plante, Usem, Dovolis, White, Thorpe

Nays: Bennett

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

► **Public Safety**

- Lower speed limit to 25 mph

Cote said Lillehaug addressed this in the FAQs covering the current state law. Houle said Lillehaug was unsuccessful in getting support from the MN League of Cities for 25 mph statewide. The objection was based on enforcement and the levels at which drivers feel most comfortable driving. Bennett said she does not understand the opposition because there are 25 mph speed limits in other cities on parkways, etc. Houle said cities with 25 mph speed limit have done so illegally because they are allowed only a ½ mile stretch. Traffic studies have shown that drivers do not abide by the reduced speed limit. Wanninger said if the long term objective is to have 25 mph, one way is through legislation and the next is to conduct tests with clear results that will help bring about legislation. Bennett said more than one Councilmember is in favor of doing a test area and St. Louis Park might also consider it. She proposed using the NE quadrant as a test area. Bennett said this is one thing that they can do area-wide now, when the full plan will not be built until 2011. Wanninger said he likes the idea of working for statewide legislation.

Plante moved that they contact their legislators to sponsor legislation that would lower the speed limit to 25 mph statewide. Seconded by White.

Ayes: Wanninger, Plante, Usem, Dovolis, White, Thorpe, Bennett

Nays: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

- Install stop signs at all intersections
- Vehicle speeds on arterial roadways

► Is there enough data for a good analysis?

Wanninger said based on his experience collecting data, he's learned that you must check your data against common sense and experience and the data collected shows that a significant amount of traffic is diverting through the neighborhoods because using the arterials is slower and there are a few years of anecdotal data that shows that people disregard the unwarranted stop signs that were installed in the Country Club neighborhood. He said there is sufficient data that shows that they should do something on the arterials and slow speeds on the residential streets and while they could collect more data, he believes the rest of the money could be better spent on implementation.

Bennett noted an error on page 9 in reference to 'volume' and school should be schools. Bennett said she is still concerned with the wording of the amount of traffic generated by the area and that Wanninger had summed it up well at a previous meeting but the change was not made. Cote will change the sentence to say 'the remaining 70% of traffic is generated within the study area.'

Wanninger suggested adding a section to the report that shows the ETC's response to the residents' comments so that the Council can see the rational for their decisions. After final editing, the final report will be posted to website. Revisions are: adding the realigned intersections that will serve as the prototype; add sidewalk on 42nd from Grimes to city limits; page 9 text changes; and reword the sentence in reference to traffic generated in the study area.

Dovolis moved that the ETC accepts the final report for the NE Edina Traffic Study and move it forward to Council. Wanninger amended the motion to include that this is the ETC's final report to the Council and as such they are strongly recommending that the Council approve the entire report. Amendment accepted by Dovolis. Seconded by White.

Bennett said she would like to vote in favor of the report but would like to reserve her right to freely discuss those areas in which she has objections. Houle recommended that the ETC do not get into the habit of voting with reserved objections. He said votes should be either yes or no. Commissioners agreed with Bennett.

Ayes: Wanninger, Plante, Usem, Dovolis, White, Thorpe, Bennett

Nays: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

III. Approval of Minutes

Bennett moved to postpone approval of the meeting minutes until the next meeting. Seconded by Dovolis.

Ayes: Wanninger, Plante, Usem, Dovolis, White, Thorpe, Bennett

Nays: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

Other Business

Houle said he would like to invite Jennifer Bennerotte, Communications Director, to attend the next meeting to explain web streaming, a new technology that the city is using to record meetings and then rebroadcast them on the web.

The final report to the Council will most likely be on the agenda for the 2nd meeting of October said Houle. Wanninger asked if the ETC should have a workshop with the Council. The consensus is no; they should go straight for final approval in October and strongly urge the Council to approve the report in its entirety and not send it back to the ETC for reworking.

Wanninger moved to show strong support and gratitude to Lillehaug for the outstanding professional services he's given to the ETC and the professional manner in which it was done. Seconded by Bennett.

Ayes: Wanninger, Plante, Usem, Dovolis, White, Thorpe, Bennett

Nays: 0

Absent: Workinger

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.