



**MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, August 16, 2007
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Warren Plante, Marie Thorpe, Jean White, Marc Usem, Geof Workinger, Hilah Almog, Paul Mooty

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Steve Brown

STAFF PRESENT:

Wayne Houle, Jack Sullivan, Sharon Allison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wanninger.

II. Public Comment

None

III. Old Business

No old business – July's meeting was cancelled.

IV. New Business

a. 6444 Xerxes Avenue

Traffic Engineer Sullivan explained that this traffic analysis was done using the old Traffic Impact Analysis policy because of the size of the area being studied. Sullivan said the current use of the property is residential and commercial with a chiropractic business. The building is 2000 square feet. Access to the property is right-in and right-out only and is accessible from southbound Xerxes Avenue. Parking is allowed on the north side of Xerxes Avenue. The applicants are planning to change the use of the building to commercial only with an audiology center. Access to the site would remain the same.

Sullivan explained that the shift from chiropractic to audiology would result in considerably reduced trips (55 to 24) because patient/doctor time spent together is longer with the proposed new business.

Staff is recommending approval because traffic generated from the proposed use change does not adversely affect the adjacent transportation system. However, staff is recommending as a condition to the approval, that the new owners instruct their patients to use the rear parking on the property solely instead of parking on Xerxes Avenue to prevent site line issues. Sullivan said this is only a recommendation because Xerxes Avenue is a county road. He explained that parking on Xerxes Avenue has not been an issue with the current owners and the new owners have agreed to the rear parking only. Sullivan said, if needed, the City could request that the County make Xerxes Avenue no parking on the north side.

The following is an excerpt from the May 19, 2005 Transportation Finding of Fact requirement for Traffic Studies (comments for this development are indicated in bold):

The Transportation Commission shall consider the following four effects in the evaluation of traffic studies that are warranted by certain zoning, land-use, conditional use permits and final development plan applications prior to the application being submitted to the Planning Commission and Council for consideration:

i) Does the development significantly affect the operation and congestion of the adjacent roadways or intersections and/or result in a traffic hazard?

According to the Traffic Impact Study, no adverse impact to surrounding roadways or intersections shall occur from this Development.

ii) Does the development significantly affect pedestrian safety?

Since the majority of the site remains the same there is almost no change in pedestrian movements and safety from the current site configuration.

iii) Does the development provide opportunities for enhanced transit usage, vanpooling or car-pooling?

The proposed use and limited number of vehicles per day is not conducive to enhancing transit use.

iv) Does the development provide feasible opportunities to address an existing traffic issue or safety problem?

The proposed development does not address existing traffic issues along the encompassing streets. Since no significant traffic increases are calculated from the Development no improvements are required.

Discussion

Workinger said he agrees with the 'no parking' on Xerxes Avenue and recommended putting in the request to the County. Tom Schwartz, President of Audiology Concepts, 7450 France, and the new owner of 6444 Xerxes Avenue, said he supports the 'no parking' on Xerxes Avenue and patients will be informed to use the rear parking only.

Motion

Thorpe motioned to approve the traffic study based on the plans proposed. The motion was seconded by Mooty.

Workinger requested an amendment to the motion to include the request to the County for 'no parking' on Xerxes Avenue. City Engineer Houle recommended that the request be made through the Council to the Engineering Department who will in turn make the request to the County.

All voted aye. Motion carried.

b. Bike Edina Task Force – DRAFT Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan

The draft Comprehensive Bicycle Transportation Plan was presented by Antonio Rosell from Community Design Group. Mr. Rosell explained that the goals of the Bike Edina Task Force are to:

1. Increase safety for bikers;
2. Improve connections within Edina and adjoining community and regional trails;

3. Improve opportunities for active living by creating an environment that allows people to be active as they take care of their daily needs.

Mr. Rosell said they are recommending low cost improvements such as signage which will yield high return. Members of the task force rode all 260 miles of Edina's streets and identified some routes. According to the map presented, the priority routes are in green, while the blue routes are still under evaluation. A north/south route that is outside the scope of this project is along the Canadian Pacific Railroad that will provide an important connection. There is also the northwest/southeast trail along Nine Mile.

Plan completion dates are: September 1 – public draft for review; and September 15 – final draft.

Discussion

Commissioner Usem asked how the task force is differentiating between cyclists with different levels of experience. Mr. Rosell said the ring around Hwy. 100 that connects to just about all the schools in Edina would be signed so that all levels of cyclists would be accommodated comfortably. The core streets are Benton on the north, Tracy on the west to Valley View to Antrim, 70th going east and west towards the Aquatic Center and Cornelia to 66th to Valley View to 58th Street to South View Lane. 58th Street is recommended going east towards Minneapolis' trails.

Commissioner Mooty asked if the streets will require widening in order to accommodate bike lanes. Mr. Rosell said they are aiming for the least controversial measures and therefore, is not recommending any widening of roadways; however, there are some areas where striping may need to be changed. Following the example of Portland, OR, and Europe, Mr. Rosell said colored asphalt can be used to delineate limitations, and in Hennepin County 11 ft. lanes are used to accommodate both cyclists and vehicles.

Commissioner Plante said he would like to see the following in the plan: short and long term objectives; cost of the objectives; and what percentage of the population will be using bikes. Mr. Rosell said the cost is not known at this time and how many people will be bicycling is not known either because the infrastructure is not in place. Commissioner Plante is concerned that in 15 years the population will be 65 and older. Mr. Rosell said in the Netherlands, majority of cyclists are 65 and older and if safety is increased here the older population may get out and ride also.

Commissioner Workinger said the draft is a great conceptual framework, however, it does not identify what is to be done and in what order. He suggested that they identify the first three steps to be accomplished and a high priority should be getting students to and from school safely.

Commissioner White said she likes the tone of the document including the educational component, however, there are some controversial areas in some of the references to Europe.

Commissioner Almog said she rides a lot but her and her peers do not feel that it is safe, especially on Interlachen Blvd.

Commissioner Usem asked what is the impact on parking if the roadways are restriped. Mr. Rosell said they would hesitate to remove parking, especially from commercial areas because

the idea is not to eliminate vehicles but to have both modes of transportation, and in most instances, parking is currently not allowed on both sides of most roadways.

Chair Wanninger said during his recent visit to Amsterdam, he learned that pedestrians are intimidated by cyclists who behave much the same way as motorists do here. He recommended adding stronger language so that pedestrians are safer and include a component that allows residents to offer input. In terms of climate, he said there is significant costs and staffing associated with keeping the trails clean in the winter and he is apprehensive about the number of riders in the winter.

c. City of Edina Comprehensive Plan – Transportation Chapter

Chair Wanninger said the purpose of this portion of the meeting is to provide staff and consultant with questions or issues for them to address prior to the September 20 meeting.

Peter Langworthy, WSB and Associates, said the presentation he is going to give is similar to one given at a joint meeting that included the ETC and therefore, he is going to make the presentation brief to allow for input. The following areas were discussed:

- Introduction
- Existing Conditions (inventory of existing transportation issues)
 - Roadway Overview
 - Problem Locations
 - Safety/Crash Analysis
 - Existing Transit Service
 - Existing Trails and Sidewalks
- Transportation Planning Context (reviews existing policies and documents)
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- Roadway/Network Planning
 - Traffic Forecasting (coordinated closely with Land Use plan)
 - TAZs, regional model, preliminary results
 - Deficiency Analysis/Future Improvement Needs
 - Functional Classification Issues
 - Jurisdictional Classification Issues
 - Access Management
- Aesthetic Design Standards
 - Summarize URS Community Design Information – Transportation Facilities
- Transit Plan
 - Coordination with Metro Transit
 - Potential Shuttle/Circulator Service for Southdale Area and West Edina
 - Evaluate Park and Ride at Hwy. 100 & 50th Street
- Bike Plan
 - Bike Edina Task Force
 - Comprehensive Bike Plan (overview of CDG’s plan)
- Pedestrian – Sidewalks
 - General Pedestrian Accommodation/Safety
 - Sidewalk Policy (guidance needed regarding what to include)
- Non-Motorized Transportation
- Others (freight, aviation)

Discussion

Mr. Langworthy said the Travel Demand Management is still being worked on. He said this and other parts of the document will be ready for the September 6 meeting.

Chair Wanninger said the Travel Volume Forecast for W. 66th Street is not included, but will be needed as part of the W. 70th Traffic Study, from Highway 100 to France Avenue.

Commissioner Plante asked if this would be the opportune time for the City to consider expanding W. 77th Street (A-minor arterial) to accommodate future developments. Mr. Rickart said improvements of this roadway will be addressed in the AUAR study that is currently under way. Chair Wanninger said as the area is developed, the plan should include an efficient way to allow traffic to travel from Valley View Road and Highway 169 to York Avenue and W. 77th Street. He said the City of Richfield has done a good job on their side, both aesthetically and functionally.

Commissioner Plante suggested adding a section that addresses innovative ways to finance the infrastructure with such methods as toll roads, user fees, private sector financing, assessments, incentive to drivers to reduce number of daily trips, etc. Mr. Rickart said the overall Comp Plan does have a financial section and they will need to make sure there are no overlaps. He said incentive to drivers will be addressed in the Travel Demand Management section.

Chair Wanninger asked if they'll be able to tell where significant increases are coming from, if it's a natural growth or related to redevelopment. Additionally, he asked if they can challenge the Met Council's forecast on job allocations. Mr. Langworthy said WSB's staff did look at the Met Council's forecast and they arrived at 1,000 fewer jobs. They will be meeting with them to discuss the findings. In the meantime, after discussion with City staff, some reallocations were done. Mr. Rickart added that earlier today, the Met Council acknowledged that their forecast was too high. Commissioner Usem asked how accurate are the allocations from 10 years ago. Mr. Langworthy said the projections in the 1999 Comp Plan were forecasted to 2020 and in some instances the numbers are higher. Mr. Rickart said forecasting models have gotten better since 1999. They also use historic growth and existing counts and adjustments are made when the numbers appear high. He said in developed cities like Edina there is not usually a significant amount of growth.

Commissioner Workinger asked why don't they use York Avenue as a diverter to relieve the congestion from France and other streets. He said if W. 70th is an arterial B, why not classify York Avenue the same to move more traffic north and south. In response, Mr. Rickart said arterials must connect to arterials and previously this may not have been an option, however, it may be possible now. Engineer Houle said he will mention this to Hennepin County when he meets with them next week because York Avenue is a county road.

Chair Wanninger said the intersections of Highway 62 and France, as well as Xerxes are congested and something needs to be done with the bridges, however, he is reluctant to make suggestions that will increase traffic, especially northbound on France.

Commissioner Plante requested a section that will show how taxes are used to pay for transportation needs. Mr. Langworthy said there will a financial component in the implementation section.

Consensus was reached to remove point 4 from page 3 regarding "Parking" in City ramps.

Regarding sidewalks, Commissioner Usem said there is a policy but how likely is it to be implemented. He said it seems to be difficult to get sidewalks approved.

Commissioner Thorpe asked about speed limits and if it should be noted in the Comp Plan. Engineer Houle said it will be included and that there is a group that was formed to study speed limits.

V. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular minutes of June 21, 2007

The minutes was approved by Commissioner Workinger and seconded by Commissioner Usem.

VI. Planning Commission Update (Commissioner Brown)

None

VII. Open Discussion

None

VIII. Staff Liaison Comments (Sullivan)

a. Valley View Road Configuration

Traffic City Engineer Sullivan explained that this area has been an ongoing problem and State Aid funding is not sufficient to remedy the situation at this time, therefore, the plan is to restripe the roadway to narrow lanes and add a median and crosswalks. The goal is to get this done before school begins.

b. Draft AUAR Update

Public input closed August 15. Comments are being summarized for presentation to Council followed by the start of the 10-day comment period.

c. Benton Avenue/Normandale Blvd Intersection

Roadway will be restriped to minimized confusion.

d. Halifax Avenue Sidewalk

e. Doncaster Avenue Sidewalk

Both were petitioned for by residents and a open house was held on August 15. They will be presented to the Council on September 4 for approval. Funding for Halifax is assessments and 25% by the City and adjacent businesses; Doncaster is assessments and 25% City and School District.

f. Valley View Road – McCauley Trail to Braemar Blvd

A petition was received for a sidewalk but because this is a State Aid road the work must be done in accordance with MN/DOT's specification. This will brought back later this fall.

Other Comments

Roundabouts brochure – Chair Wanninger suggested putting the brochure on the website. He said it is well done and he's had positive feedback.

NE Edina Traffic Study Implementation – Chair Wanninger said he has been receiving many questions regarding the schedule and suggested putting the schedule on the website. Traffic

Engineer Sullivan said he will update the schedule and staff is still working with both Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis to finalize agreements.

Edina Bridges – City Engineer Houle said there are 26 bridges in Edina, 10 are inspected each year and the remaining every other year, including railroad bridges. A private bridge will be added to this list for inspection. The Browndale Bridge is scheduled to be redone in 2008.

Meeting adjourned.