



**MINUTES OF THE
Edina Transportation Commission**
Thursday, January 15, 2009
Edina City Hall
4801 West 50th Street
Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Les Wanninger, Paul Mooty, Steve Brown, Geof Workinger, Tom Bonneville, Jennifer Janovy, Julie Sierks, Jean White, Marc Usem

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Warren Plante

STAFF PRESENT:

Wayne Houle, Jack Sullivan, Sharon Allison

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by chair Workinger.

II. Comments

a. Chairman Comments

Chair Workinger explained that the sole purpose of the meeting was to consider the Greater Cornelia Area/West 70th Street Traffic Study Advisory Committee's recommendation to the ETC, and for the ETC to then formulate a recommendation to the Council.

Chair Workinger thanked Commissioners Brown and Wanninger for organizing and leading the Study Advisory Committee for the past two years. He also thanked the ETC, residents in the study area and the City of Richfield for their participation.

b. Public Comments - None

III. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular Meeting of November 20, 2008

Commissioner Wanninger made a motion to approve the minutes of November 20, 2008, with one correction. The second paragraph under Item V. Approval of Minutes, should say "Commissioner Wanninger said he recalls *a communication from the City Manager that SAC minutes are to be formally approved.*" The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bonneville.

IV. Old Business

No old business – December's meeting was cancelled.

V. New Business

a. Greater Cornelia Area/ West 70th Street Traffic Study

Assistant City Engineer Sullivan explained that over the last two years, the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Greater Cornelia Area/West 70th Street Traffic Study, met eight times and have formulated a recommendation for the ETC. Mr. Sullivan said the recommendation

consist of 11 components that will help to lower speed, reduce volume and increase safety along the corridor. The SAC's recommendation is as follow:

1. Removal of free right on north bound Hwy. 100 to east bound 70th Street.
2. Creation of a school speed zone around Cornelia Elementary School.
3. Installation of a "smart" signal system along the corridor; new traffic signal at West Shore Drive, pedestrian crossing at Wooddale Avenue and modifications to the existing signal at Cornelia Drive.
4. Parking to remain along corridor where applicable.
5. Left turn lanes at West Shore Drive, Wooddale Avenue and Cornelia Drive.
6. Install improved signage at the west end of the corridor to redirect motorists to use alternate routes to access locations further east.
7. Pavement rehabilitation or reconstruction to quiet roadway.
8. Enhance landscaping along the corridor.
9. Explore possibilities for offering turn-a-rounds on private property.
10. Study a roundabout to replace the "T" intersection of W. 70th Street and Valley View Road.
11. Further evaluation of roundabouts at the intersection of W. 70th Street and Hwy. 100.

Mr. Sullivan explained the SAC's reason(s) for each of the recommendation as follow:

1. The intersection at Hwy. 100 and W. 70th Street is controlled by Mn/DOT and the free right allows uninterrupted flow of traffic to the east with negative impacts to residents entering and exiting their driveway, etc.
2. The speed zone would also be on some side streets, not just W. 70th Street.
3. This is probably the most complicated component. It would consist of both traffic signals being interconnected with a pedestrian activated crossing.
4. Alternative was to have bike lane.
5. These left turn lanes serve as safety bay as drivers wait to make their turn. A continuous left turn lane was discussed but did not materialize.
6. Signage for alternate routes for drivers leaving Hwy. 100 and heading east bound; placement of signage still to be determined.
7. Existing roadway is concrete and it would be reconstructed using bituminous asphalt.
8. Could include center islands, pedestrian lighting, etc.
9. Approximately 25 of the 48 properties directly on W. 70th Street have a turn-a-around driveway which allows them to access the street facing out. Explore the feasibility of providing turn-a-around to the other property owners.
10. & 11. Requires further study/evaluation to determine feasibility.

Chair Workinger asked each commissioner to comment on the above recommendation. Their comments are as follow:

Commissioner Wanninger used a 'carrot' and 'sticks' approach to describe what happened with the NE Edina Traffic Study. He said an assumption was made that drivers wanted to take West 50th Street and France Avenue (carrot) but they used the neighborhood streets (sticks) because those streets were faster. The main recommendation was to improve traffic flow on West 50th Street and France Avenue and this was accepted; additionally, improvements were approved to prevent drivers from using the neighborhood streets (sticks). However, the sticks approach which would affect everyone, were eventually defeated by some residents, while the

carrot approach that gave positive incentive to do what you would like drivers to do were widely accepted.

He said the current recommendation, items 1-9, which he described as calming is a carrot approach to make traffic behave the way it should while increasing travel time, going slower, etc. is a sticks approach. He said SAC member Shotwell, resident and Transportation Commission member for the City of Richfield, suggested a carrot approach to give people an incentive to use Crosstown instead of using West 70th St., (a route often used by drivers going to Richfield). He said this could be done by adding an extra lane on Hwy. 62 in both directions, between Hwy. 100 and Valley View Road. The extra lane on east bound Hwy. 62 would allow drivers to get to Valley View Road quickly and on to West 66th or West 69th, etc. to the business district, etc. The reverse would work for those leaving the business district and heading to Hwy. 100. He said this is a positive incentive for drivers and it does not impact the residents.

Commissioner Wanninger proposed that staff, consultant and Mn/DOT study the feasibility of adding a lane on east bound and west bound Hwy 62, between Hwy. 100 and Valley View. He said this could become Item 10a in the recommendation.

Commissioner Usem suggested adding background information on each of the 11 components so that Council can more completely understand them. He suggested using a chart that would list each component, elements each component is addressing and the expected outcome. He also recommended changing “study a roundabout” to “install a roundabout” in Item 10 to remove ambiguity.

Commissioner Janovy said she is advocating for bike lanes. She recommended speed radar signs within the school zone that would flash “your speed is,” and reduce the speed limit to 20-25 mph when school is in session. She said when school is out the speed limit would go back to 30 mph; or, if bike lanes are installed it would be 25 mph.

Additionally, she expressed concerns with information in the document if they are voting on the recommendation as well as the document. Specifically, she said the paragraphs on the Origination/Destination (OD) study could be misunderstood based on the numbers. She said the OD study was done May 2007, but the paragraph referenced a count of 900 cars taken the year before to create a percentage of thru traffic or local traffic. Also, they were never told the number of cars stopped. She said actual numbers would be clearer.

Commissioner Bonneville said he is in favor of Items 1-9 as recommended because they outline the more immediate actions that need to be taken, whereas the engineering studies would be 2009, with implementation in 2010. He said Items 10 and 11 are future phases that should be studied but voted on separately for implementation. Regarding Item 4, parking along the corridor, he suggested adding ‘no parking’ close to intersections with left turn lane. Regarding Item 6, install improved signage, he said to think about going in both directions and that it could take a while to read the signs. Regarding Item 7, quieting of roadway, he said he is not comfortable with removing the asphalt because the road does not appear to be in bad condition. Regarding Item 8, landscaping, he said this should involve the Planning Commission and City Planner because they would be more equipped to have a landscaper draw up the plans and forward to Engineering for approval. Regarding, turn-a-rounds, he said the Planning Commission may also be involved because this would involve site planning issues and if

encouraging others to add turn-a-rounds, there should be standards set by the Planning Commission to prevent them from paving their entire front yards.

Lastly, he said it is important to look at the Crosstown but the money to add additional lanes is huge and the lanes would create a problem when drivers drift over and then have to move back as they are getting close to the bridge, on both sides.

Commissioner White said when Items 1-9 are implemented that local and regional drivers will notice the changes and change their driving behavior. She said she is for drivers having choices if they want to drive a calmer street instead of a freeway. She also said West 70th Street should be made to feel welcoming, yet safe for the neighbors. She concurred with Commissioner Bonneville regarding a discussion on Crosstown. She said the improvements, with the exception of the reconstruction, does not appear to be too expensive.

Commissioner Sierks said Items 1-9 will control the volume and speed on West 70th Street but questioned the impact on other traffic. She said changing Crosstown would help.

Commissioner Brown had no comments.

Commissioner Mooty said he likes the idea of having extra lanes on Crosstown but improvements to the bridge at France may be more important. With 19,000 vehicles expected in the future, he said West 70th Street will continue to be very busy but the recommended components will help to manage the traffic. He said the process was important, challenging and frustrating at times but everyone seems to be on board. He thanked Commissioners Brown and Wanninger for chairing the SAC.

The following are comments from the open discussion:

Discussion ensued about the roundabouts – studying versus installing them; or, adding extra lanes on Crosstown. The consensus was that the roundabouts could be more easily constructed given the fact that Crosstown would require multi-agency planning, and as noted by City Engineer Houle, a similar project on Hwy. 100 and Hwy. 394 took approximately 20-30 years from planning to completion. Mr. Houle also suggested that Mn/DOT would probably do more than just adding extra lanes on either side. Chair Workinger asked Mr. Houle if the Crosstown improvements should be kept as a possibility. Mr. Houle responded that they can keep it if they feel strongly about it.

While it was noted that the roundabouts appear to be more feasible and would serve as a visual cue for entering a neighborhood, the Commissioners expressed uncertainty about the impacts they would have, level of support for roundabouts, as well as which of the two recommended roundabouts is more important. Studying/evaluating the roundabouts to determine benefits and consequences were suggested. It was noted that the Valley View Road and West 70th Street roundabout had strong support and therefore, the language should be strengthened to prioritize it.

The discussion then focused on implementation of the recommended components. Commissioner Bonneville suggested implementing Items 1-9, then measuring the results and if problems are solved, there isn't a need for roundabouts. He said to be patient with the completion of the Crosstown improvements and measure the results again after the project is completed. He also suggested an off ramp on northbound Hwy. 100 and West 70th Street.

Phasing the improvements in three stages was suggested. Commissioner Wanninger said everyone agrees with doing Items 1-9 so this would be Phase I; Phase II would be measuring what happened as result of implementing Items 1-9 and current Crosstown project should be completed by then; and Phase III would be prioritizing and implementing Items 10-12. It should be noted that a consensus was reached to add the Crosstown lanes as Item 12. Consultant Cote said there are extensive data to use as a baseline for measurements.

Chair Workinger asked the Commission to prioritize Items 10, 11 and 12 and to come up with a recommendation for these items. Commissioner Wanninger suggested adding a sentence to note that Items 10, 11 and 12 would be evaluated upon completion of Phase I, that all 3 would be studied at the same time, and that the status of the current roadway may need additional improvements.

Commissioner Janovy, representing the Edina Bike Task Force, discussed bike lanes. She handed out a document titled "Federal Highway Administration University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, Lesson 15: Bicycle Lanes" (July 2006) that talks about retrofitting streets with bike lanes. She said West 70th Street is identified as a primary bike route in the Bike Plan, which is included in the City's Comprehensive Plan. Furthermore, resident surveys showed majority support for Options 1 & 2 which both included bike lanes and 57% supported bike lanes in a separate question on the same survey. Additionally, 47% said parking should not remain on both sides, while 33% were unsure. She said further that the survey showed stronger support for parking on one side of the street – 48% to 34% and no agreement where parking should be.

Commissioner Janovy said it is possible to do bike lanes, retain parking on one side and have the left turn lane. She said this would give the Council an opportunity to pass a resolution for 25 mph speed limit and it would be in conjunction with the school zone. Also, West 70th Street is being considered by Three Rivers Park District for an off-road trail.

During the bike lane discussion that followed, City Engineer Houle said there is inconsistency on roadway widths for bike lanes. He said Mn/DOT is in favor of 10-ft lanes but State Aid will not approve a 10-ft lane. Commissioner Brown noted that residents directly on West 70th Street were very clear in not wanting encroachment on their yard or parking. He also noted that the surveys were sent to many residents not living on West 70th Street.

Commissioner Janovy made a motion that it not be an either (parking) / or (bike lanes); that the recommendation be to retain parking, and acknowledging that they would also like bike lanes and for staff to determine feasibility of both.

The motion failed for a lack of second.

Commissioner Janovy made a motion to include permanent radar speed signs that tell drivers how fast they are going. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. All voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Plante, who was not attendance, asked that the commission consider increased enforcement on West 70th Street. Staff will invite the Police Department to a future meeting to talk about this issue.

Commissioner Bonneville made a motion that Items 1-9 be implemented as soon as possible, and that staff rewrites the items more clearly; furthermore, future Items 10 and 11 could be studied for potential implementation; and that Item 12 is studied because it is outside the parameter of the SAC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wanninger.

Commissioner Usem made a motion for a four phase implementation with the Valley View Road roundabout as phase 2 and Hwy. 100 & Crosstown as phase 3 or 4. Seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Commissioner Janovy said while she supports everything she would not be voting favorably on the recommendation because bike lanes were not included.

In a roll call vote, the following commissioners voted aye: Commissioners Mooty, Brown, White, Bonneville, Usem, Wanninger and chair Workinger. Commissioner Janovy voted nay. Commissioner Sierks was not present for the roll call. Motion passed.

VI. Planning Commission Update (Commissioner Brown)

None.

VII. Bike Edina Task Force Update (Commissioner Janovy)

None.

VIII. Open Discussion

Commissioner White announced that the Southwest LRT is meeting next Wednesday morning at St. Louis Park City Hall to discuss more alternative lines.

Meeting adjourned.