

**MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2018 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
109 EAST OLIVE STREET
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Angela Ballantini, Ms. Jill Blair, Ms. Maureen (Reenie) Bradley, Mr. Michael Gorman, Ms. Elizabeth Kooba, Ms. Kelly Rumley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Katherine Browne

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Diana Hauman, Ward 8 Alderman; Mr. George Boyle, City Attorney; Assistant Chief Ken Bayes; Mr. Jim Karch, Director of Public Works; Mr. Philip Allyn, City Traffic Engineer; and several members of the public and media.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Gorman called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

2. ROLL CALL: Mr. Allyn called the roll. With seven members in attendance, a quorum was established.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Public Comments were heard from Ms. Surena Fish. Ms. Fish lines on Wood Street immediately across from the main entrance to Miller Park. Ms. Fish expressed a concern about speeding along Wood Street between Center and Morris, especially during the summer. It is dangerous for people crossing into the park since there is not cross walk. This past summer was an accident where someone speeding hit a parked car, pushing it up into the yard, tried to get away and hit another parked vehicle. Ms. Fish is worried that someone will get hurt. Please consider this during our speeding discussion.

4. MINUTES: Reviewed and approved the minutes of the September 18, 2018 regular meeting of the Bloomington Transportation Commission. Ms. Ballantini motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Blair seconded the motion. The motion was approved by the Transportation Commission unanimously via voice vote.

5. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. TC-2018-04: Discussion of City Speed Limits and Residential Neighborhoods

Mr. Allyn indicated that today is the next step in the discussion. We have returned with information requested previously. In addition, Staff came up with a list of potential targeted solutions to help combat speeding to be discussed today. The intent not being to have a final decision on each item, but simply to gain direction on which items the Commission would like Staff to further refine and which to stop considering.

Mr. Allyn briefly discussed the crash and fatality statistics for the City over the past four years. There have been five fatalities total, two in Fiscal Year 2015, and one each in FY 2016, 2017, and 2018. Of these, the fatalities in FY 2016 and 2018 were pedestrians. There were no bicycle crashes resulting in fatalities. The pedestrian fatalities did not appear to be speed related.

Mr. Allyn briefly discussed the noise analysis. The main takeaway from the data is that there is not a significant difference in noise generated when a vehicles speed is changed by 5 or 10 mph. For example, the change from 30 to 40 mph corresponds to a change in noise of 63 decibels versus 68 decibels. This 5-decibel difference is roughly the same as the sound difference between a running shower and a normal volume conversation. Noise pollution is more significantly impacted by other factors such as pavement type and condition, distance from the roadway, and number of vehicles.

Mr. Allyn stated each of the six items for discussion has its own advantages and disadvantages and quickly summarized each one. The first three items are related in that they are varying degrees of implementation. The first item changes the statutory speed limit City-wide. The second item is similar, but is only applied over an area, such as the defined downtown area or a specific neighborhood. The third item focuses on specific locations of known concern and would likely include physical changes to curb lines, striping or signage. This item changes what we already have. The fourth item involves changes to the City Manual of Practice, which is the set of rules for Developers controlling what they build in our City. Changes would will encourage slower travel speeds. This item will generally only apply to new construction of streets by developers or projects not utilizing any State or Federal funding. The fifth and six items are related to the enforcement aspect. The fifth item increases police staffing, while the sixth utilizes technology in the form of speed cameras similar to the red-light running cameras being utilized in the Chicago area.

Ms. Blair asked for clarification on the crash data. Mr. Allyn indicated that the total crash numbers in the first three rows are the overall totals and include the breakdown numbers for pedestrian and pedal cycles below.

Mr. Gorman indicated an interest in an area speed reduction where a percentage of the residents apply to the City, and then the City reaches out to everyone in the area. The downtown is an obvious area as are some of the residential areas around town. Mr. Allyn indicated that there are some pros and cons to this item. The east side residential areas with limited access points from arterials are easy to define. Older parts of the City with a grid network of streets are more difficult to define.

Ms. Rumley indicated that the first thing we should look at is enforcing the current posted speed limits and see if that is effective. If we reduce the limit from 30 to 25, there could be confusion between Bloomington and Normal on certain streets and will people obey that or continue at their regular speed. As people bring specific locations to us then we can address them and see if there are things we can do.

Mr. Gorman asked about the cost for a viable, impactful traffic enforcement division. Assistant Chief Bayes indicated that to have an impact, 4-6 officers would need to be committed to just traffic enforcement. Currently there are a number of empty positions in other divisions such as drug enforcement and violent crimes. Additional officers would likely fill these other areas first as they are critical to reduce the number of violent crimes in our community. With respect to traffic enforcement, looking at the numbers between 2005 and 2017, there does not appear to be a correlation between crashes and enforcement as measured by tickets issued. Crash numbers seem to run fairly steady regardless of a decline or an increase in enforcement. AC Bayes indicated that roadway design was more effective because it is present all the time as opposed to a police officer who is only rarely present in a given location. For a traffic division of 4-6 officers with appropriate supervision, it would cost approximately \$750,000 per year. This would be after they were able to fill the other higher importance positions.

Ms. Blair asked if similar crash data was available for other communities of similar size. Mr. Allyn indicated that we do not currently, but we can see what we can find.

Ms. Bradley agreed that it would be difficult to lower the speed limit in gridded neighborhoods. She does not believe that a blanket lowering would work here. Normal likely would not agree to lower their statutory speed limit. She thinks that by lowering the speed limit, some drivers would slow to the new limit creating a discrepancy of speed making traffic flow unpredictable. This does not address the issue of what to do in some of the neighborhoods. She would like to see a more targeted approach on specific locations. Lower vehicle speeds in the gridded areas are needed, but it is unclear how an area speed limit change would work since there are not defined boundaries. People would be more focused on the changing speed limits than their other surroundings. Other options may be more effective, low-cost options such as reducing parking at intersections, updating crosswalks and signage, etc. There is concern about ability of effectiveness in the gridded neighborhoods.

Mr. Gorman stated that with regard to the gridded streets, a natural boundary would be the arterial streets surrounding an area. Mr. Allyn indicated that the difficulty comes from the larger number of access points to the area. It is not insurmountable, but it is more difficult. That is where the various criteria of the policy come into play.

AC Bayes asked if the perception is that 30 mph is too fast or that people are driving faster than 30 mph. Ms. Rumley responded that her perception is that people are driving faster than 30 mph. The problem is not the speed limit, the problem is people obeying the speed limit. AC Bayes reiterated that obeying the speed limit would still be a problem with a lower speed limit as it would not likely slow the driving speeds.

Ms. Bradley asked for an opinion on what would slow people down if changing the speed limit will not. What other ideas are there? Mr. Allyn indicated that if you cannot do consistent, heavy enforcement, then you need engineering controls such as curb bump outs, road diets, and other traffic calming. This plays into Item C and to a lesser extent Item D. Item C would have a process of collecting a list of the trouble locations and then addressing each of them with a targeting solution that is appropriate for that location. Some solutions are cheaper, while some are more expensive. In order to do the level of work that is needed to complete a project similar to Front Street in other locations is not sustainable on a recurring basis. We do not currently have the funding or the Staff resources. The engineering would likely need to be outsourced to a consultant. We would need to have a set amount of funding set annually in the budget similar to the annual sidewalk program that would cover both construction and engineering. We would then start at the top of the list and get down each year as much as possible with the funding that is available.

Mr. Allyn indicated that in his opinion, the citywide speed limit change (Item A) would not be very effective based on available data and studies. The area speed limit change (Item B) could be more effective, specifically in the downtown area. It would be an easier thing to do. The Manual of Practice changes (Item D) resets the bar moving forward, but we are not really building new streets any more. The other downside of Manual of Practice changes would be losing the benefit of staying similar to Normal with regard to development requirements if they do not agree to changes.

Ms. Blair asked for verification that these items were not mutually exclusive. Mr. Allyn confirmed that was correct. We could pursue anywhere from one to all of the items. The intent is to focus staff time on the items of greatest interest and eliminate any that the Commission does not feel are worth moving forward. Ms. Blair mentioned that it did not seem that there was much support for the citywide speed limit change.

Ms. Rumley preferred not to do a blanket speed limit change, or even just in defined areas, but indicated support for increased enforcement based on road type with more police on the higher volume roads and focused changes on the problem areas whether that is curb bump outs, road diets,

or signage. Road diets would not need to be necessarily expensive curb changes, but could just be striping.

Ms. Rumley suggested removing Items A (Citywide reduction) and F (automated enforcement). Ms. Bradley agreed with regard to removing Items A and F with some hybrid of the rest of the items. Ms. Bradley asked about the opportunity for special targets higher enforcement. AC Bayes indicated that this was possible through the STEP program as well as use of radar signs. For example, they received complaints of speeding on Broadmoor. They placed signs that confirmed high numbers of violations. Other deployments have shown that there are not a high number of violations. On Ireland Gove Road last spring, there was data to support a significant number of violations that triggered the STEP program being enacted there. AC Bayes coordinates the deployment of the radar signs to determine times of highest violation and then staffs at those times. The Police Department does do traffic enforcement, they just do a lot of other things as well. They can target enforcement; they just need to know where. There is already a list of places they are looking at.

Mr. Gorman also expressed support for removing Items A and F and requested discussing Item C further. Ms. Ballantini and Ms. Kooba confirmed support for removing Items A and F. Ms. Blair confirmed removing Item A, but asked about the costs between Items E (traffic division) and F (automated enforcement). Mr. Allyn indicated that Item F was likely cheaper than Item E. Ms. Blair indicated that she did not love the cameras, but thought that it might be an effective and lower cost alternate to Item E. Mr. Gorman recognized that they may be effective, but thought that during previous discussions, the legality was unclear. Mr. Allyn indicated that in Illinois, speed cameras currently are only allowed in construction zones and in Chicago school zones and park districts. Moving forward with this item would initially consist of recommending that the City Manager and Council and/or other local elected officials petition the state representatives to change the state law.

Mr. Gorman stated that with respect to funding on Item C (targeted engineering changes) Safe Routes to School grants would be a good source of funding that could both improve school walking routes as well as install curb extensions or other similar features to increase safety for pedestrians overall. A large portion of the City is within the required distance of a school. He suggested policy level changes that both encourage this sort of engineering change and look at a longer-term plan for where we might make these types of changes in the future. Mr. Gorman suggested looking at Bryan Street in Normal where most intersections were installed with planters, which help keep people from parking too close to intersections as well as slowing people down as the perceived lane width is smaller. It also improves the pedestrian experience by decreasing the time to cross the street. We should look for opportunities to do this Citywide.

Ms. Rumley expressed support for exploring the Safe Routes to School funding tying into both Items B (Area Speed Limit Reductions) and C (spot engineering changes). She is not sure that there is a need for Item D (Manual of Practice). We should look by neighborhood to identify locations and apply this funding. Ms. Rumley favored moving forward with Items B, C, and E. (increased enforcement).

Ms. Bradley indicated that she agreed with getting buy-in from all the stakeholders. Councilmembers should canvas their areas for their top location concerns. Also, get feedback from others such as Connect Transit, solid waste collection staff, police, etc. Get a list gathered, prioritize it, and start knocking locations off and funding allows. Cheaper projects can be combined with more expensive to needed to utilize all funding allocated. Mr. Gorman indicated that the Town of Normal has put out some GIS based crowd sourcing tools for submitting suggested locations. Something similar might be helpful in identifying our locations.

Ms. Rumley asked if there was a heat map available showing crash locations. Mr. Gorman indicated that he had built one a couple years ago using IDOT's data. He will send a link to it to Mr. Allyn to broadcast out to the group.

Mr. Gorman requested discussion of Item D (Manual of Practice). It is his understanding that the Manual of Practice (MOP) is mainly used for new construction, but it also applies to existing streets when doing reconstruction or resurfacing. Mr. Allyn indicated that typically when doing just a mill and overlay, we do not expand the scope of the project to bring the street into full compliance if there is not a problem or a strong reason to. For example, if a street is a couple feet narrower than the MOP indicates it should be based on classification, we will not increase the construction cost by removing and replacing all the curb and gutter and widening the pavement. There have been some cases where there were width issues such as residents pulling up over deteriorated curb and parking with one wheel in the yard because the road was not wide enough. We would replace the deteriorated curb in this case and widen the road to the MOP width. Mr. Gorman stated that he still believed that the MOP was relevant to existing streets within the core of the community because it states what we believe a street should look like even if we do not have to comply with it. It would still be beneficial to identify changes that would help. Mr. Gorman believes that one of the outcomes of the sustainability of street funding discussion is that since narrower roads will be cheaper to maintain, making changes to the MOP is a way to win on both speeding issues and sustainable funding. For instance, look at whether we need to allocate space for parking by default or if it should be on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Allyn confirmed concurrence from the Commission on keeping Item D

Mr. Gorman summarized eliminating A (citywide speed limit change), explore further B (area speed limit change), C (targeted spot changes), and D (Manual of Practice changes), and eliminate F. With regard to E (establish traffic division), Mr. Gorman believed that there was not support on the Council to include an additional \$750,000 in funding and this item should be eliminated.

Ms. Rumley suggested increasing efforts to notify public of the ability to submit speeding complaints and request increased enforcement. AC Bayes agreed with this increased notification, but indicated that they currently are not short on complaints; they are short on officers to address them.

Ms. Rumley suggested dropping Item E from consideration. Mr. Allyn asked if this item could be modified to requested funds for additional radar signs. AC Bayes indicated that they have been purchasing a couple each of the last several years, but could probably use some additional ones.

Mr. Allyn indicated that we would be returning with Item B, C, and D as separate items in the future.

Mr. Gorman asked if the Manual of Practice was available online. Mr. Allyn indicated it was. Mr. Gorman requested that a link be sent out to the Commissioners if possible.

C. Information: October Citizen Comments/Complaints Summary

Ms. Bradley asked about Item 19, the Gill Street cul-de-sac with a number of different signs regarding trucks and yielding that are confusing. She suggested taking down all the signs and starting over. Near that location is the intersection of Vladimir Dr. and Tatiana Court/Keisha Dr. There is not any traffic control on Tatiana/Keisha that stops traffic from going straight out into Vladimir. Could Staff please review this intersection?

Mr. Gorman asked about Item 16, the request for an all-way stop or other enhancement at Stone Mountain and College. Mr. Allyn indicated that we completed traffic counts at the intersection and speed data on College. The intersection does not meet warrants for traffic signals or an all-way stop. We are painting a crosswalk and installing advance-warning signs. We are also talking with Ameren

about installing a second light on the south side of the intersection where the bike train crosses Stone Mountain. Mr. Gorman asked if speed data on College was gathered because it seems that traffic moves very fast on College and wondered about the safety of a crosswalk in this location. Mr. Allyn responded that we did gather it, but did not have the details with him. Mr. Gorman indicated that this might be a good location for the pedestrian activated signs being used on Front Street and asked whether it was to be a regular or high-visibility crosswalk. Mr. Allyn indicated that he could not recall immediately which was chosen. Ms. Bradley expressed concern about the speed limit on College remaining at 35 mph with the presence of the school, the popular park and all the residential driveways. Ms. Rumley echoed concerns about locating a cross walk at this location with the speed on College without using a high-visibility or even raised crosswalk. Mr. Allyn indicated that there currently are a large number of people crossing at this location to get to Tipton Park with no signage or markings. We felt that establishing something to tell drivers about the pedestrians was better than nothing.

Mr. Allyn indicated that Staff is currently working with the Town of Normal to develop defined criteria for the use of several traffic control devices such as Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons so that we have a set process rather than a completely arbitrary system.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Mr. Gorman requested an update on the funding discussion. Mr. Allyn indicated that due to the construction season still ongoing, staff members needed for the next step of providing and compiling historical data on life cycle lengths have been unavailable. Mr. Gorman requested a copy of the outdated hot-mix asphalt aging table that was included in a previous presentation but was not in the packet. Mr. Allyn will send it out.
- B. Ms. Bradley asked if there was an update on the Post Office. Mr. Allyn indicated that there has not yet been a response. Mr. Karch confirmed that he has not yet seen a response.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. None

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Gorman reminded the Commission that there was a reception for members of the City Boards and Commissions at the BPCA that started at 5 pm and encouraged members to head there after the meeting.

Mr. Gorman mentioned that there was a discussing at the previous City Council meeting about adding an additional member to the Transportation Commission that would represent the needs of citizens with disabilities. It sounded like the Council Members were supportive. The time frame that this will be happening is unclear, but there may be a new member sometime in the next several months.

Ms. Bradley asked if this was an assumption that the Commission is not currently able to advocate for the needs of citizens with disabilities. Mr. Gorman indicated that members may not have the same experiences as those who use a wheelchair, for example, and that they could bring a unique perspective. He believed this was sparked by a conversation on social media regarding the sidewalk curb ramp work that was recently completed at Main and Mulberry. Mr. Gorman voiced a concern that Staff is not adequately prioritizing allocation of street Right of Way in the best interests of those who are unable to get around on two feet. Having an additional person on the Commission who can provide that first hand perspective might be valuable. For example, Mr. Gorman suggested decreasing the driver experience by installing a bump out that reduces Main Street to one travel lane

in order to increase the pedestrian accommodations. Mr. Allyn indicated that the work at the intersection was done to bring a non-compliant intersection into ADA compliance. That was done and the intersection is currently compliant. He acknowledged that additional accommodations with impacts to other users and the resources for other improvements would have been possible.

Ms. Bradley stated that she is not opposed to this idea of adding a member with a specific disability, but questioned how it is determined. We are talking about users of wheelchairs. Why not also consider the visually impaired or hearing impaired? There are many concerns that the Commission should be taking into account without necessarily needing every concern specifically represented.

Mr. Gorman stated that it is not the Commission's responsibility to determine who sits on the Commission. Ms. Bradley stated that she is not opposed to adding someone with first hand experience, but rather hopes the Council considers this with a broad brush rather than just focusing on an individual ramp issue.

Ms. Blair stated that any time we can add diversity to a Commission is good. This should not be taken as a negative on what the Commission is currently doing.

9. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 5:16 pm unanimously by voice vote; motioned by Ms. Blair and seconded by Ms. Rumley.

Respectfully,

Philip Allyn
City Traffic Engineer