

MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2019 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
109 EAST OLIVE STREET
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Rickielee Benecke, Ms. Maureen (Reenie) Bradley, Mr. Edward Breitweiser (after roll call), Mr. John Corey, Mr. Adam Heenan

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Jim Karch, Director of Public Works; Mr. George Boyle, City Attorney; Assistant Chief Greg Scott, Police Department; Mr. Kevin Kothe, City Engineer; Mr. Philip Allyn, City Traffic Engineer; other staff members and members of the public.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Bradley called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm.

2. ROLL CALL: Mr. Allyn called the roll. With four (later five) members in attendance, a quorum was established.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

4. MINUTES: Reviewed and approved the minutes of the September 17, 2019 regular meeting of the Bloomington Transportation Commission. Mr. Corey motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Heenan seconded the motion. The Transportation Commission unanimously approved the motion via voice vote.

5. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. TC-2019-03: Annual Street Maintenance Program Discussion

Mr. Allyn indicated that Staff has mostly completed the setup of the software. Mr. Kenny Lee, who is the technician working with the software is present and available for detailed questions if needed. The City Manager is also keeping Council members informed of this effort concurrently with the discussions at the Commission.

Mr. Allyn reviewed the information presented in the agenda packet, discussing the various Network variables, Community Benefit variables, and optimization settings. He reviewed the various maintenance treatments that are currently being used by the City and mentioned that additional treatments are being considered for future evaluation. He also reviewed the software hard data inputs and the conditions under which each maintenance treatment is applied. PASER ratings are updated every 2-3 years.

Staff is still in the process of developing recommendations for each of the settings.

Mr. Heenan asked about the expected frequency of the treatments. Mr. Allyn indicated that each year we will be likely be doing a mixture of each of the treatments as they are applied at different points during the life cycle of a pavement. For example, the fog seal is typically applied shortly after resurfacing to increase the longevity of the hot-mix asphalt, the slurry is applied to seal cracks once they develop, overlays are done once the pavement has extensive cracking that needs to be removed and replaced. The amounts and locations of each will vary from year to year.

Mr. Heenan asked if grouping work locations always reduces costs. Mr. Allyn indicated that this is usually the case, but that there may be some unusual situations where it may not.

Mr. Heenan asked whether the monthly feedback data available through the citizen requests and complaints could be transferred into the Community Support element? Could this tool already being implemented eliminate the need for another larger effort of obtaining popular support? Mr. Allyn indicated that we could use the MyBloomington app and other means of resident feedback to collect requests for work on certain streets. However, with the nature of the five-year plan, this feedback likely wouldn't factor into the decision within a reasonable timeframe. It also would add a component that may not make sense overall. For example, should a street with a rating of 5 or 6 be given higher priority than a street that is a 2 or 3 simply because a single person requested it? With the community benefit factors, any values that are desired to be used would need to be hand entered into the system. We currently have over 3,600 segments of streets that would need to have a value assigned to it, even if there is only a small number that would be a higher value rather than a standard default. There likely isn't the ability to input a lot of this data for the program this year. Contracts for resurfacing are sent to Council for award in April from a bid letting in late March. This work will be advertised for bids in early March. To have time to put together the details for bidding, we need to have the list of streets determined by December. However, moving forward in future years, there may be an opportunity to additional data in this area.

Mr. Karch added that Community support and feedback is critical for the transparency moving forward. The difficulty will be getting it integrated. One possible avenue that may be advantageous would be to have the community feedback come through resident interaction with the Council members. Staff could develop a menu of streets for various work tasks and the Council could prioritize them based on what they are hearing from their constituents. Community support and feedback is needed, we just need to find a viable mechanism to get it included.

Mr. Karch summarized the current status of road maintenance. With the recently passed Local Motor Fuel Tax, we now have a sustainable set funding source that allows us to plan beyond a budget for a single year. There will be certain projects that must be forced into the process. Some will be driven by other failing infrastructure (failing water main or sewer under a street will result in it being repaved after the repair), some will be added by the Council for economic or other reasons, such as projects in the Downtown, which has been designated as a high strategic priority. Then there will be a number of projects that the computer program will identify that the Council can adjust based on what they are hearing from the community. This will result in a 5-year plan that we can then plan around as well as give residents an idea on when their street may be redone.

Mr. Breitweiser asked about whether the Community Benefit factors have been defined yet. For example, do we know what "Urban Development" or "Community Support" actually are? Mr. Allyn indicated that they have not all been definitively defined, which is one of the reasons that we do not have any certainly of measurement for these factors. Some like those mentioned are hard to define. Some are easy to define but are unclear on how to quantify. For example, "Access to School" is easy to define as streets that are critical for getting kids to school, but how is that quantified? Is it streets that are on school bus routes? Is it streets that are within a certain radius of a school, and if so, what is the radius? Are there shades of grey knowing that values of 1 to 10 are possible?

Mr. Breitweiser asked about how these unknowns will be rectified. Mr. Allyn indicated that it's possible that staff may not include some of the more abstract variables because they are very hard to quantify and can be viewed as very subjective. The time needed to define and quantify these fields may not be worth it if it has a very minimal effect on the outcome. This does not mean that these factors aren't important, but there should be an understanding that there needs to be a noticeable benefit to justify the effort. Staff will be developing a recommendation on each of these factors, which may be that they not be used or even defined.

Mr. Breitweiser asked if streets are treated differently if they also have a non-vehicle use, such as bike routes. Bicycles are more susceptible to large cracks and potholes than vehicles. Mr. Allyn indicated that

they are currently treated the same as other streets, but that this may be a reason to include the Cycling Route factor. The treatment type choice is only dependent on rating, traffic volume, and pavement type.

Ms. Bradley asked when the software will be ready to run to develop the initial 5-year plan. Mr. Allyn indicated that all the hard data such as PASER Rating, ADT, functional classification, etc. has been entered. The question is whether we have time to incorporate the more subjective Community Benefit variables. Due to timing, it may be necessary to hold on these for now, develop the street list for next year, and work to incorporate the remaining factors as possible for next year. Factors could be added in pieces and the 5-year plan modified if needed. Ultimately the goal though is to have set projects that can be planned for in the coming years.

Ms. Bradley asked if there are other communities that are using this software. Mr. Allyn indicated that the company is based in Canada and has is being used in numerous communities in Canada. City staff saw them in a trade magazine and saw benefit to what they are offering, approached them and worked out an agreement. The fact that there are some differences in how roads are evaluated is one of the main reasons it has taken some time to get it all set up. We aren't aware of anyone else in the US using this software. Ms. Bradley indicated that she views this as a wonderful planning tool that can be used to help determine a strategy for repairing our roads.

Ms. Benecke asked when the 5-year plan will start. Mr. Allyn indicated that the goal is to have the 2020 construction season be year 1 of the plan. Staff has already been working with water and sewer staff to coordinate their projects. The funding for the street maintenance work is coming from the Local Motor Fuel Tax and a portion of the local sales tax and is already included in the budget. These bring in around \$7.2 million with around \$1 million going to sidewalks and about \$300k going to an on-call maintenance contract. This leaves about \$5.9 million that will be broken down into the asphalt overlay and pavement preservation treatments as determined by the software.

Mr. Breitweiser suggested not locking into a 5-year program but updating it regularly. Mr. Allyn confirmed that the intent is not to have 5 years' worth of projects set out with no flexibility to change them as we get into the program. It will be revisited each year as some streets may deteriorate faster or slower than predicted or there may be other unknown factors that come into play such as a new development changing a change in traffic patterns. However, we don't anticipate significant changes in the first several years. Additionally, some key projects will likely get locked in, especially if they involve coordination with other work.

Mr. Breitweiser expressed some concern regarding whether using this software will reinforce biases in work locations based on socio-economic or other similar factors. Mr. Allyn indicated that the benefit of the program is that there is no consideration of socio-economic or other demographic factors in the determination. This is one reason why staff will likely be recommending that the Ward criteria not be used. Since each ward has different characteristics, by prioritizing one over the other, bias could actually be introduced into the process. It would be better to focus the priority determination on hard data such as pavement condition, traffic volume or proximity to a hospital rather than the character of the surrounding neighborhood to fix the worst streets, regardless of where they are located. Mr. Breitweiser suggested that the Ward variable could be used to overcome past bias. Ms. Bradley indicated that the software actually removes any chance of bias by looking at all the streets more systematically with everyone on the same playing field. Mr. Breitweiser mentioned that it was important to not just turn our City over to the software without verifying that it doesn't just reinforce past potential bias. There should be some review to make sure that it is truly objective and neutral. Does there need to be some manual decision making to make sure that it better serves the community as a whole? Ms. Bradley mentioned that the Council members will be able to provide an opinion about the streets within their wards and help with that prioritization to keep everyone on a level playing field.

Ms. Benecke asked for clarification that there would not be a Ward priority. Mr. Allyn confirmed that staffs currently opinion is that that it should not be ward based, but rather based on the objective criteria such as pavement condition.

Mr. Heenan asked for a reconciliation between comments about valuing community support but that the community support criteria would not be used. What are the plans moving forward for community input? Mr. Karch mentioned that this is a transparent process. What is output from the software is objective. Once this project list is determined, the community support component will come as the elected officials then have the ability to shift the priority if they so choose. The software will be used to provide an initial professional recommendation. The process after that will be transparent in that any changes, for example moving a street from year 2 to year 4, will be discussed and decided in a clear and transparent way by the Council. We anticipate this input by the Council would be obtained annually as it has been done in the past. The specifics, such as which month it happens each year, will be worked out as we go through the process this first year. The goals are to communicate as best as possible and utilize consistent funding to effectively schedule with both internal and external agencies and residents.

Mr. Breitweiser suggest that the recommendation include a suggested timeline for revisiting the 5-year plan. Ms. Bradley mentioned that the new VA Clinic is a good example of something that could drive a change. It wasn't foreseen several years ago. We need to get started and see how it goes.

B. Information: October 2019 Citizen Comments/Complaints Summary

Ms. Bradley hoped that some of the items were being reviewed at the correct time, such as looking into the alley parking during football season rather than waiting until January.

Ms. Bradley asked about changing Allin and Oakland to an all-way stop (item 85) considering the recent bicycle crash at that intersection and how Oakland and MacArthur have been faster streets in residential areas. Mr. Allyn indicated that staff would be going through the process at this intersection and reviewing the all-way stop control warrants. These warrants are based on traffic volumes and crash history data. If they aren't met, staff would review if there are any other mitigating factors such as sight distances and parking by the intersection that could be addressed.

Ms. Bradley asked who determines parking on the State routes such as Main Street. Mr. Allyn indicated the City has some input, but it is ultimately the State's decision. Smaller changes like removing a parking space at an intersection for sight distance purposes, they will generally agree to our request. Larger changes like dropping an entire driving lane to add parking would be harder to get approved.

Ms. Bradley asked about the horse and buggy request (item 88). Is there a policy on dealing with horse and buggies? Mr. Allyn indicated that he was not aware of a specific policy other than when horses are in parades, the organizers are required to clean up anything that may be left on the street. Ms. Bradley asked if they are allowed on Emmerson or if they are limited to Sunset. Mr. Allyn indicated that he was not aware of a set policy and has not yet investigated the specifics of this request.

Mr. Breitweiser asked about pedestrian warnings on Route 51 (item 4) and the comment about waiting on consideration from IDOT before adjusting crosswalks and updating ADA ramps. Are these ramps dependent on IDOT funding or does it come from the City? Mr. Allyn indicated that in this case, the ramps were already being done on Front Street and we would be look at whether it made sense to modifying the cross walks based on the new ramps. It was not a request to update the ramps.

Generally, if there is a ramp on a State route, crossing the State route, it is the State's responsibility. If the crossing is across a City street, the City is responsible for the ramps. The City can request that IDOT update one of their ramps if it's needed. If they don't agree to do it right away (they typically do the ramps as part of a resurfacing project rather than a single ramp in an isolated location) the City can get

permission to replace it ourselves. Current PROWAG guidelines require that when a street is resurfaced, any non-compliant ramps must be updated. PROWAG is the federal government applying the ADA requirements for buildings and private sights and applying them to public Right-of-Way areas with some minor changes based on features of public Right-of-Way. This is another benefit of having a 5-year street resurfacing plan. Sidewalk ramp work will be able to be completed the year prior to the resurfacing by a more cost-effective sidewalk contractor rather than the asphalt paving contractor.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Bradley asked about the status of the Downtown parking and stakeholder involvement. Mr. Allyn indicated that staff has met with the Deputy City Manager and compiled everything that has been done to date, such as the Downtown Master Plan and the Downtown Task Force report and how they all fit together. Staff is looking at the larger picture for all of Downtown rather than just Main Street. The next step would be to start getting all the parties actively involved. Ms. Bradley asked if the Downtown Task Force was still active. Mr. Allyn indicated that they submitted their final report about 1.5 years ago and disbanded. The report was never adopted by Council. There are several other groups that are still active. We don't know at this point when and how all these parties will be involved. Ms. Bradley asked that the Commission be kept informed of these efforts as they occur.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Bradley asked about the status of the GE and Keaton project. Mr. Allyn indicated that traffic signals will be constructed at this intersection. The project has been let for bid and the contract awarded. There may be some minor work down this fall, but most of the work will be when the weather allows in the spring. Ms. Bradley expressed some concern for the safety of employees of the adjacent businesses that park along Keaton or on the old GE property and walk south. There is no sidewalk on the east side and they often walk in the street. Mr. Allyn indicated that the project is limited to the intersection and would not be extending all the way south. There is currently no room for sidewalk on the east side of Keaton. Ms. Bradley suggested it would be a good time to look at this.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

No comments.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Heenan made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Corey seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:31 pm.

Respectfully,

Philip Allyn
City Traffic Engineer