

**MINUTES
BLOOMINGTON TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 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, Mr. John Corey, Mr. Adam Heenan

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. George Boyle, City Attorney; Mr. Kevin Kothe, City Engineer; Mr. Philip Allyn, City Traffic Engineer; and members of the public.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Bradley called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

4. MINUTES: Reviewed and approved the minutes of the October 15, 2019 regular meeting of the Bloomington Transportation Commission. Mr. Heenan motioned to approve the minutes with the correction to the status of the individual mentioned under Item B during the discussion of the Allin and Oakland intersection and the correction of the spelling of Mr. Breitweiser's name in Section 5. Mr. Corey seconded the motion. The Transportation Commission unanimously approved the motion via voice vote.

5. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Mr. Allyn indicated that the previous Chairman election was for an interim of 2 months, which has expired. Mr. Heenan nominated Ms. Bradley for Chairwoman, seconded Ms. Benecke, Ms. Bradley accepted and was elected unanimously.

Ms. Bradley nominated Mr. Heenan for Vice-Chairman, seconded Mr. Breitweiser, Mr. Heenan accepted and was elected unanimously.

B. Information: IDOT Multi-year Plan: FY 2020-2025 (Review and Discussion)

Mr. Allyn reviewed the information from the packet regarding the work that IDOT has programmed for the upcoming 6 years. There is a significant amount of work, both construction and design, that is planned for the Bloomington-Normal area in general and the City in particular. Most of the State roads in the worst condition in the City are scheduled for improvement. The major projects include:

1. Construction funding for the Route 9 improvements through the City including the re-routing of the Route designation from Empire and Lee streets to Center and Locust, which are already state routes. This will remove the State highway from the residential area around Bent Elementary. Also included is the addition of 8-foot wide sidewalk along the north side of Market Street from Towanda to the airport.
2. Phase 1 preliminary design study for the Business Route 51 (Main and Center (East and Madison through downtown) from Olive through the ISU campus in Normal. This should be a significant maintenance effort similar to the Route 9 project. It's unknown the exact scope at this time.

3. Construction resurfacing on Veterans Parkway at Morris, from Commerce through Washington, and in Normal, which will complete the remaining gaps in the resurfacing that has been completed the last several years.
4. Phase 1 preliminary design study for US Route 150 along Hanna and Morrissey.
5. Construction resurfacing along US Route 150 (Clinton Street).

Mr. Heenan asked if any of the projects are new construction as an expansion of the existing street network. Mr. Allyn indicated that everything being done in our area is maintaining the current infrastructure.

Ms. Bradley asked about the timing of the projects. Mr. Allyn indicated that the years provided are the State's fiscal years, which run from July to June. The projects planned for the current year (July 2019 through June 2020) are noted as such. We don't yet know the timing for the other projects scheduled for the remaining years. It's reasonable to assume that the projects that have both design and construction planned, the design work will likely be in the first year or two, with the construction anticipated for the last several years. The construction will likely be spread out among the years. Construction of the section of Veteran's from Commerce to north of Washington will likely be soon since the State has had design plans completed for a couple years already. It's still unknown the specifics on the phasing for the larger projects such as the Route 9 corridor. Since none of the design work has been completed for the Route 9 construction documents, it can be assumed that this construction will be at least a year away.

Mr. Breitweiser asked if there were any projects that the City would have liked to have been included that were not. Mr. Allyn indicated that there wasn't anything significant. The City's biggest priority has been the re-routing of Route 9 from Lee to Center, followed by repairing the worst stretches of State roads, and these have both been included. The Route 51 corridor could also be a significant improvement. We are very excited about the amount of work planned for our City and this will be great for our residents.

Ms. Bradley asked for clarification of some comments she recently heard about the quality of the pavement on Center Street. Mr. Allyn stated that Center street used to be a local City street prior to the implementation of the one-way couple on Center and Main. This means that pavement designed for low volume local traffic was converted to a high-volume, high truck street and the base isn't as good as it would typically be, resulting in the surface not lasting as long as it should. One of the projects that was specifically broken out for reconstruction is a section of the Center Street. Since a "reconstruction project" typically involves rebuilding the pavement all the way down to the base, this deficiency should be addressed. We'll have to wait and see the final project though to know for sure.

Mr. Heenan asked about any overlap between the City and State on these projects. What does the City need to do? Mr. Allyn indicated that one of the most important things is communicating with residents that these projects are coming in the near future. A significant amount of the State routes through town are in poor condition and this work should dramatically improve them. In a more tangible sense, while the State is funding the vast majority of this work, there will be portions of some of the projects that will require City involvement. For example, the cost of new sidewalk construction proposed along the north side of Empire with the Route 9 project will be split 80% State and 20% City. We do not know the amounts at this point.

Mr. Breitweiser asked about how the State is addressing pedestrian or bicycle accommodations on each of the major projects such as Veterans and Route 51. Mr. Allyn indicated that if we would like new sidewalk to be included in one of the projects, the City would make the request and IDOT would include if possible. This is what happened with the new sidewalk along Empire. Most of the Route 51 length already has sidewalk. Maintenance of this sidewalk is the City's responsibility. The IDOT project would probably only include upgrading curb ramps to current standards. The Veterans project is just a

resurfacing, so it will include curb ramp upgrades, but very little other work outside the milling and overlay. With the resurfacing there will be new pavement markings at all the crosswalks. These streets are the State's jurisdiction, so it is the final decision on what is included. We can make requests to incorporate elements of our various master plans. They usually will include items such as new sidewalk when it makes sense and fits the scope of the project. The Route 9 project has a larger scope that focuses on the entire Right of Way and this includes a significant amount of curb and gutter replacement, intersection upgrades, and the new sidewalks. The Veterans projects have smaller scopes that are focused primarily on maintaining the pavement. Mr. Breitweiser mentioned that the Town of Normal is kicking off the public portion of the renewal of their Pedestrian Master Plan. Some of the comments received were about pedestrian access on north-south routes, especially along Veterans Parkway. There is a hope that this provides the opportunity to work with the State on this.

Ms. Bradley mentioned that we have recently lost two young people to pedestrian crashes on Veterans Parkway. We need to take time to look at how this loss for the community impacts residents and ask that the State consider this as they plan and complete these projects.

C. Information: November 2019 Citizen Comments/Complaints Summary

Ms. Bradley asked about item number 88 (request for traffic signals at Airport Road and Carlene/Cornelius). Should the traffic signal have been installed with this project? Mr. Allyn indicated that the intersection was built with the High School and the signal wasn't warranted at that time. With the recent construction of the eye center and the ongoing new restaurant development, staff is monitoring this intersection and will be reviewing traffic signal warrants once the restaurant work is completed.

Ms. Bradley noted the number of requests for traffic calming and asked about the effectiveness of the speed humps that is our current practice. Mr. Allyn indicated that in general, he does believe that it is effective. The speed humps require drivers to slow down. Mr. Kothe responded that data was gathered during the period 10-20 years ago when most of the traffic calming was installed. It showed that when the humps were placed at the proper spacing and not too far apart, it was effective. The City has found that the speed humps provide the best balance between speed control and ease of maintenance.

Mr. Heenan asked whether on-street parking has a positive traffic calming effect and if the addition of on-street parking would be a good alternative to speed humps. Mr. Kothe indicated that on-street parking does help to calm traffic due to the reduced width. However, most areas where the traffic calming is installed already allows on-street parking. One downside of this approach is that in most of the newer parts of town, homes have two or three car garages and there tends to be fewer on-street parkers. Mr. Breitweiser mentioned a similar affect when the number of lanes is reduced with a road diet.

Ms. Bradley asked about the jurisdiction of Fort Jesse between Veterans and Airport. Mr. Allyn indicated that portions are the Towns and portions are the City's. Ms. Bradley asked about how the Town and City would come to an agreement on what the speed limit should be. Mr. Allyn indicated that each agency would be responsible to set the speed for their segments. Ms. Bradley mentioned that with the number of driveways and reduced visibility, the speed limit may need to be reduced below 45 mph.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Breitweiser inquired about the status of the Main Street parking and the anticipated end date. Mr. Allyn indicated that the end date won't be until late-spring at the earliest since the marking work can't be done until the weather warms. Ms. Bradley indicated that its important to get this right since it will be in place for a number of years.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Breitweiser asked that in light of the recent pedestrian fatalities on Veterans Parkway, what discussion has happened at the government level and what is the role of a commission such as this in addressing any safety concerns that have been brought forward. What actions have been taken and what improvements can be made? Mr. Allyn indicated that he isn't aware of anything specific in response to the fatalities. A side path along Veteran's is included in the Bicycle Master Plan to be constructed when possible. This should help with pedestrian and cyclist safety by providing them a space to travel separate from the vehicles as well as allowing easier access to the marked crossings. He can't speak to the recent fatality in Normal without knowing any of the details. Regarding the earlier fatality, not all the details are known other than that it involved a pedestrian crossing Veterans between intersections. While not trying to assign any blame, in general, it's important, especially on higher-speed and higher-volume roads, that everyone uses the spaces that are allotted to them for the safety of all. In the same way that vehicles should not travel the wrong way down a street, pedestrians should be using crosswalks and crossing at locations where drivers expect them to cross. Facilities are designed to mitigate potentially dangerous conflicts and all users are responsible to use those facilities properly. Drivers are responsible to obey traffic laws including speed limits, right-of-way, and not driving distracted. Bicyclists are responsible to obey the traffic laws and traffic control devices pertinent to the facility they are using. Pedestrians are responsible to cross at the locations that are designated as the safest crossing locations with equipment, signage or markings to assist them.

Ms. Bradley agreed that pedestrians have a certain responsibility to use the facilities and devices that are there to serve them. We should also be encouraging the State to give the City the best that they have knowing that the community needs it. With the changes on Veterans coming, we have an opportunity to improve.

Mr. Allyn mentioned that there are three components to safety we call the three E's: Engineering, which is designing properly, Enforcement, which is making sure things are used properly, and Education, which is making sure people know what they should be doing so that they can make wise decisions. While one or two often get focused on, all three components are critical.

Mr. Breitweiser expected that the IDOT work would only provide the engineering aspect and wondered if that would be adequate.

Mr. Corey asked if there has ever been consideration of a pedestrian overpass across Veterans. Mr. Kothe mentioned that one of the challenges with pedestrian crossings is that pedestrians will typically only use an accommodation if it is convenient. If it requires significant extra travel, they will take the risky crossing instead. There are locations where pedestrian crossings are provided with traffic signals, but often people will still cross between them rather than walking down to the nearest intersection. This would be the same with a pedestrian overpass. If enough people use them, then they are worth the large cost. However, it won't save any lives if people take risky behavior and cross mid-block. There was some consideration with the State when Veterans was widened from 4 lanes to 6, but it hasn't been brought up recently. The underpass for the trail works well but it's located right at the trail and is primarily used by the trail users. Mr. Corey indicated that one of the heaviest pedestrian crossing locations is between Cloverton and Buckeye.

Mr. Breitweiser asked if any studies or data gathering has been completed on the whether the number or severity of pedestrian crashes has increased? The currently feeling is that they have, but maybe that's not actually the case. It would be good to know.

8. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Corey made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Heenan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully,

Philip Allyn
City Traffic Engineer