



MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 10, 2017

TO: Transportation Commission

FROM: Howard Lazarus, City Administrator

CC: Craig Hupy, Public Services Administrator
Cresson Slotten, Systems Planning Manager
Nick Hutchinson, City Engineer
Kayla Coleman, Systems Planning Analyst

RE: Transportation Commission Role in Major Street Projects

The Transportation Commission was established in November 2016 to “foster excellence in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of a sustainable and resilient multi-modal transportation network for the City of Ann Arbor.” The Commission serves as “an advisory body to City Council and the City Administrator on transportation policy with a focus on accessibility, mobility, equity, and safety for all citizens.” Consistent with that mission, Commissioners have requested that staff prepare and present a process by which the Commission can participate in the development of major street projects (i.e. arterial and collector streets). This memorandum provides the proposed structure for Commission participation.

Transportation Commission Role. Consistent with the Commission role to advise City Council and the City Administrator on streets and highways, City staff will seek input from the Transportation Commissioners on major street projects at the following key points in a project’s development:

- **Identification of Major Street Projects for Review.** Staff recommends that the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) Committee, established at the July 19, 2017 Commission meeting, serve as the working body to identify upcoming major street projects requested for Commission review. Review requests should include projects planned for the upcoming two-year span and requests should be updated by the CIP Committee annually. Major street projects selected for review should focus on arterials and collectors and projects that involve significant changes in capacity, geometry, intersection efficiencies, and non-motorized/active transportation features. Work that consists primarily of routine repairs and/or maintenance are not candidates for Commission review and need to move forward without Commission review in order to maintain efficient and effective operations.

- **Participation in Conceptual Design.** The Staff Liaison and Chair will schedule projects for Commission review taking project timelines and the Commission Work Plan into consideration. Reviews will be scheduled to allow comments during the conceptual design phase. Commission members are encouraged to raise questions, concerns and offer input to staff in response to project presentations. Staff will provide a follow-up response to Commission input, and make reasonable efforts to resolve conflicts. Taking project timelines into consideration, staff will work with the Commission to determine an appropriate deadline for feedback. Final designs will be based upon sound engineering principles that address concerns to the most technically feasible extent, as well as community values, budgetary constraints, and public engagement efforts.

After providing input, the Commission may choose to endorse a project based on the conceptual design and project details available at the time of review. Where the Commission has concerns about the project or its design, the Commission should adopt clear statements of the concerns, including the rationale and proposed alternatives.

Monthly Staff Report to the Transportation Commission. Staff will continue the current practice of preparing a monthly update on transportation related projects. The update will continue to include major street projects, including those in design and construction phases.

Capital Project Approval. For reference, the City process for capital project approval (e.g., major street projects) is outlined below:

- Capital projects are identified in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) with input from: existing Master Plans, including the City’s adopted Transportation Master Plan, and other planning documents; staff in Engineering, Systems Planning, Public Works, Finance, and Community Development Units; the University of Michigan; the general public; and, other interested parties.
 - Transportation Commission provides input toward the CIP
 - Planning Commission reviews, holds a public hearing and takes action on the CIP (i.e., final approval)
- Capital projects are identified in the City Capital Budget
 - City Council uses the CIP as a basis for Capital Budget consideration; Council takes action on the budget (i.e., final approval)
- Capital projects are designed by staff and consultants taking community input into consideration. Opportunities for Transportation Commission input at the design stage are outlined above.
- Construction contracts exceeding \$25,000 (most Major street projects) are presented to City Council for approval. Otherwise, project designs generally do not require action or approval by boards, commissions, or Council. At the point of awarding the construction contract, the design has been set and generally cannot be modified.

Note: there are some exceptions to this project approval process, such as for special assessments.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Staff Liaison, Kayla Coleman, if you have any questions or concerns.

cc: C Hupy
C Sloten
N Hutchinson
K Coleman