



City of Ann Arbor
Formal Minutes - Final
City Planning Commission

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
<http://a2gov.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

7:00 PM

City Hall, 301 E. Huron Street, 2nd Flr.

10-a 13-1072

Master Plan Amendment: 2013 Update to the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan - The City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on an amendment to the 2007 Non-motorized Transportation Plan. This amendment includes a section on best practices pertaining to planning and policy which includes issues such as updated design guidelines, signage, bicycle parking, and funding. The amendment also includes near-term and long-term non-motorized recommendations for major transportation facilities in Ann Arbor. Copies of the draft plan can be reviewed at: www.a2gov.org/NTPUpdate <<http://www.a2gov.org/NTPUpdate>>. Staff Recommendation: Approval
Eli Cooper, City Transportation Systems Manager, presented the 2013 Update to the Non-motorized Transportation Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Noting no speakers, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

Moved by Clein, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby adopts the 2013 Update to the Non-motorized Transportation Plan as an amendment to the City Master Plan, and

Moved by Clein, seconded by Bona, that the Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that the City Council adopt the 2013 Update to the Non-motorized Transportation Plan as an amendment to the City Master Plan.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION:

Bona asked how many individuals might have participated in this planning process.

Cooper responded that there were several hundred that participated in the public workshops and approximately 90 individuals who were involved in the focus groups, adding that they interacted with hundreds of people at various table events over the two-year period that they worked on this plan.

Bona asked Cooper how that compared with the 2007 planning process

in regards to public participation.

Cooper deferred to Rampson on the 2003-2005 period, noting that when he started with the City in mid-2005 the public participation process had already reached 85% completion.

Rampson stated that this community has really valued non-motorized transportation for a long time, so even before the 2007 Plan was adopted there was the Northeast Area Transportation Plan, where the on-lane bike lanes were vetted with lively debate whether bikes even belonged on the streets. She said she believed the volume of participants have been the same during previous public participations as during this current process, with the participants being different ones. She noted that they have seen an increase in pedestrian advocacy during this planning process versus what there experienced 5-6 years ago.

Bona asked why the City had a Non-motorized Transportation Plan and not just a transportation plan integrated together, that would include the Complete Streets policy.

Cooper explained that the City adopted the first comprehensive transportation update in 2009, which was the first since the 1990's. He said that in that plan, they incorporated the entire Non-motorized Plan. He said that he feels the need to keep the two plans separate since the City has an Alternative Transportation Committee that looks at means of transportation that do not include the motor vehicle. This separate and discrete plan allows the City to celebrate their efforts of non-motorized forms of transportation throughout the City.

Briere said that she had met with a former Commissioner who asked how sufficient funding could be ensured for sidewalks. She said that City Council had allocated \$75,000 towards planning efforts of sidewalks, but she was unaware of any funds allocated towards implementation. She asked how the implementation would happen.

Cooper said that the Plan sets in place philosophical goals and acts as a template, noting ways in which these goals can be implemented. He said the actual funding comes through the Annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which is reviewed and discussed by the Planning Commission and then moves forward to the Council. He further explained that the City's Project Management staff and the road resurfacing program use the plan to its fullest to bring about the goals outlined in the plan whenever they are working on streets or infrastructure projects throughout the City. He pointed to Stadium Boulevard and how they were able to get added bike lanes when they

re-did the water main project and resurfacing of the road. He said it comes down to everyone in the City working together to bring about the goals when the opportunity arises, using all available funding as approved by Council.

Clein thanked Cooper for the report and all the hard work in putting the plan together and for having it in one place on the City's website. He said he feels that there has been an increase in non-motorized activities in the last 5 years in the City, and encouraged people to continue moving in that direction.

Peters thanked Cooper and staff for their efforts on the plan and asked what opportunities were available for amendments to the plan, should such arise.

Cooper responded that the plan remains open for amendments and that the City has added several regional stakeholders, with the topic remaining as an on-going conversation and on-going process.

Peters said that a member of the public, whom had previously brought her concerns before the Commission, had reiterated her concerns with the need to have safe routes to schools, and he wondered if there was a City wide review done of the schools and if there was any collaboration with the schools on this matter.

Cooper explained the different elements; 'Safe Routes to School', being a Federal transportation program that has come through the Michigan Department of Transportation [MDOT] with a distinct definition. He said that there was an important acknowledgement of consideration very early on with the Non-Motorized Plan to recognize pedestrian and bicycle access to all of the schools. He explained that the Michigan program has received high praise in that it requires grassroots involvement, and applications have to be submitted and supported by the school and the parents of the children interested in requested improvements. He further explained that the City may provide support for such improvements but they are not permitted to initiate them and go out and do the work; however, he stressed that the City is always ready to work with their partners, citizens and parents on specific school access issues.

Rampson asked if the plan included a specific reference to the access to schools.

Cooper responded that the 2007 Non-Motorized Plan does.

Rampson asked Peters if he would like to see more in reference to the

school access issue than what is noted in the plan.

Peters said he didn't know if the matter required further action in regards to the plan; however he had been made aware of the grassroots interest on this topic in Ann Arbor.

Briere stated that it would be helpful if the Alternative Transportation Committee meetings were listed on the City's website.

Cooper said he would get with the Communications Department to make sure they get added, pointing out that the [ALT] meetings typically meet the second Thursday of the month at 2:30 p.m. in the DDA offices. He said the meetings are open to the public and they often have specific groups who come to make presentation on various topics of interest.

Briere said that she is aware that City staff, Council members and the City Administrator and others have been meeting for the past 18 months to discuss access issues, and that the sidewalk gap completion program came out of those meetings. She said that homeowners, parents and schools need to be the ones to work with the City to request certain sidewalk gaps to be filled and that the program prevents the City to operate in a pro-active way on collaborating with the schools, and worked supportively on filling the needs. She said the news needs to get out that there is a program available and that there is a concerned, organized group who cares about the issue.

Parekh thanked Cooper for putting together the plan with recommendations and ideas, adding that it is enlightening to see where Ann Arbor is in comparison to other cities. He asked if the latest comments had been included in the version provided to the Commission.

Cooper said, yes, that the September 10th version did include their comments.

Rampson pointed the Commission's attention to the memo included with their plan. She also read an email, received late in the day from Evan Pratt, that included some comments on recommendations to the plan that also included the CIP [Capital Improvement Plan]. She asked Briere if she had met with Pratt to discuss his suggestions.

Briere said yes, and that the document made reference to the City Council budget and timeline for the matter.

Rampson asked if she felt the issue had been addressed through the document.

Briere said that it only addressed the planning but not the implementation and Pratt's suggestion was that it be added to the CIP and thereby the implementation would be taken care of.

Rampson explained that once something is added to the Master Plan it can then be incorporated into the CIP, and becomes part of the City's process.

Westphal asked if the implementation would then fall into the CIP prioritization system as to what gets funded. He asked about the suggestion of separate funding for the sidewalks.

Rampson responded that that is part of an on-going study being conducted by the City's Systems Planning Department.

Cooper explained that they had framed the possibility of separate sidewalk funding two years ago when they began the process, and they are now taking a closer look at the overall need, implementation and funding.

Westphal gave staff accolades for putting the plan together and including the public process document as well. He said the charts on page 7 were truly helpful. He said when the facilities of added bike lanes are added, the comfort levels have gone way up and the increased usage verifies that. He said it would be helpful if conversion data and road diets could be included, if available.

Cooper explained that the City's Complete Streets program with bike lanes and pedestrian crossings with road diets [i.e., waiting space in between lanes] is so much more effective when looking at crash reduction data. He said he would provide the requested data to the Commission.

Westphal said it was incredible to see how well the road -share was working in Ann Arbor. He noted the general desire for people to expect responsible behavior on the part on non-motorized users and that going hand-in-hand with responsible motorists.

Cooper commented that the intent of enforcement is not to write tickets, rather to bring attention to the fact that there are rules that we, as a local government, are enforcing those rules. He said he felt comfortable that in a few years into the future, they will look back and be happy that they took steps to up the program.

Giannola asked Cooper to explain the plan's amendment.

Cooper replied that the amendments to the plan will be incorporated once they are adopted, and each word in the report will carry the same policy weight as the others in the document. He said that it was deemed that 60-70% of the 2007 plan remains valid and in effect and the amendments is intended to freshen up the plan and incorporate some new policy issues and outline more thoughtful recommendations for geographic locations.

Bona commented that the CIP prioritization process is very sophisticated and asked if the proposed planning study would be approved by Council, if it would include a prioritization of the 80 gaps, adding that it would be interesting to see if our CIP prioritizes them in the same way. She referenced Evan Pratt's concerns and said that in looking at the CIP one would expect these items to be prioritized higher.

Cooper said that his sense was that often when items are prioritized they get lumped into their broader group and sidewalks probably are viewed as more of a local improvement element without a dedicated funding source, and at the end of the day, they remain a priority but on an unfunded list.

Briere pointed out CIP funding criteria for prioritization of City and community improvements.

Rampson noted that CIP funding criteria have been established by staff in the past and blessed by the previous City Planning Commissions, adding that the Commission, as the reviewing body, has the ability to suggest that different criteria be used or added. She noted that this is an 'off' year for the CIP, but that it is a timely discussion given that Deb Gosselin begins putting the CIP together in October. Rampson offered to convene a meeting for the CIP committee.

Westphal asked for an update on proposed bicycle parking.

Cooper said he hasn't heard of parking being an issue. He said that private developments are working with Planning staff on retro-fitting their sites to manage the needs of bicycle parking.

On a roll call, the vote was as follows with the Chair declaring the motions carried.

Yeas: 8 - Bonnie Bona, Wendy Woods, Kirk Westphal, Diane Giannola, Kenneth Clein, Sabra Briere, Paras Parekh, and Jeremy Peters

Nays: 0

Absent: 1 - Eleanore Adenekan