

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of March 3, 2009

SUBJECT: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby adopts the City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update as an element of the City of Ann Arbor's Master Plan.

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby recommends that City Council adopt the City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update as an element of the City of Ann Arbor's Master Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update be **adopted** as an element of the City of Ann Arbor's Master Plan.

HISTORY

The existing City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update was adopted in November 1990. The 1990 Plan, to be updated as a result of this planning process, was a coordinated effort of the City, Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, and the University of Michigan. Since 1990, the existing plan has provided a vision for a sustained, focused and incremental effort to maintain mobility without compromising the City's character. Over the nearly two decades since the adoption of the 1990 Plan, the City and other transportation entities have already implemented significant elements of it.

PLANNING PROCESS

City Council approved a contract with Parsons Brinckerhoff, Michigan, Inc. in August 2006 to develop a revised City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update. Work began on creating the draft Plan in early 2007. The University of Michigan partnered with the City in funding this planning effort. The University contributed \$20,000 toward the development of data and preparation of the draft Plan.

The draft Plan's development began in April 2007 and continued through 2008. The process was lead by a consultant team working with City staff and a project Steering Committee. Public involvement (see Appendix E in the draft Plan) in support of the planning process was obtained using a variety of mechanisms. The project team hosted two public workshops. A project website (www.A2TransportationPlan.com) was maintained during the draft Plan's preparation.

A series of project newsletters were published and circulated. The public participation processes, including the workshops, created an opportunity to present information to and receive input from the public about issues affecting transportation throughout the City.

An Advisory Committee of 45 stakeholders was formed to advise the Steering Committee and consultant team. The Advisory Committee provided input on the goals and objectives as well as technical aspects of the draft Plan. The Advisory Committee membership was broad and inclusive. Its members and summaries of its work are listed in Appendix E of the draft Plan. The draft Plan was presented to the Planning Commission in a working session on September 9, 2008. The draft Plan was forwarded to the county for formal review following the City Council action on October 20, 2008.

After nearly two years of analysis and public involvement, the consultant provided staff with a final draft of the document. The draft Plan was forwarded to Washtenaw County to meet state "notice to plan" requirements. Review by Washtenaw County and surrounding jurisdictions was designed to meet statutory requirements and ensure inter-jurisdictional consistency regarding transportation issues. No opposition was expressed by any adjoining jurisdiction. The draft Plan was delivered to Planning Commission the week of February 23, 2009.

THE PLAN

This Transportation Plan Update will assist the City as it continues to maintain a long-term view of transportation systems and use that information to develop short, mid and long-term capital improvements and transportation policies and programs. This planning effort is oriented to assuring the highest quality of life consistent with the Guiding Principles and Goals of the City. To assure comprehensiveness, this draft Plan was guided by a steering committee of technical professionals, an advisory committee of community stakeholders and included substantial public involvement.

Transportation data is a critical element of this planning process. Information and data gleaned from existing studies and reports, as well as original data collected by the project team was used to form this draft Plan. Data have allowed for informed decision making by the project team. Coordination with recently completed and ongoing studies such as the Ann Arbor Discovering Downtown program were a fundamental part of the project.

Existing transportation systems and system utilization were analyzed. The Washtenaw Area Transportation Study Travel Demand model was relied upon to forecast future demands on a variety of important system elements. Several future scenarios were developed and evaluated. The draft Plan recommends improvements, including demand management strategies responsive to current and future needs.

This draft Plan incorporates the recent efforts of the Northeast Area Transportation Plan, the City of Ann Arbor Non-motorized Plan, and Ann Arbor Discovering Downtown Strategies. It reflects the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority's recently completed system planning efforts completed under this contract. Additionally, the project explored the relevance of and built upon the City's policies regarding transportation system management, intelligent transportation systems, and transportation demand management.

The City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update identifies specific recommendations to improve transportation policies and facilities throughout Ann Arbor for the next two decades. It also includes a vision statement as well as a series of goals and objectives, proposed policies and programs, and an implementation strategy that can help guide decision-making and investments regarding transportation in our community for years to come.

The Plan consists of six chapters:

1. Executive Summary
2. Vision, Goals and Strategies
3. Action Plan Recommendations
4. Basis for the Plan
5. Future Conditions
6. Future Alternatives

The draft Plan includes a goal to “Promote a transportation system supportive of and integrated with land use decisions.” This goal serves to recognize the linkage between land use and transportation systems as a fundamental basis for preparing the draft Plan. Incorporating this thinking represents an evolution from earlier planning. The 1990 Plan focused solely on transportation solutions. This draft Plan recognizes and addresses the interplay and linkage between land use and transportation. The draft Plan acknowledges the City is experiencing employment growth and that travel patterns of Ann Arbor residents differ than commuters who travel into the City each day. The draft Plan seeks to enable positive sustainable land use supported by appropriately scaled and located transportation systems. These integrated land use and transportation concepts, including access management and Transit Oriented Development, are introduced in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3, Action Plan Recommendations, contains a series of recommendations grouped into three timeframes: Short, Mid and Long-Term. Each timeframe contains Improvements grouped into the following categories: Roadway Improvements, Intersection Improvements and Policies, Traveler Choices, Access Management, Transit, Park and Ride, Non-motorized, and Land Use Policy. Each recommendation lists the name of the improvement, its location, a cost estimate and a lead agency. The recommendations provide a set of strategies aimed at addressing the needs of the City’s transportation system over the planning period.

A variety of funding sources will help implement many of the proposed projects, studies and programs identified in the draft Plan. The funding sources are identified in Chapter 3 and detailed in Appendix D. They include: a) Local Funding, b) State of Michigan Funding, c) Federal Transportation Funding and d) Cost Reduction and Financing. These funding sources will ensure that the Transportation Plan Update provides guidance and flexibility as the City regularly improves its transportation programs and facilities.

The draft Plan is available at www.A2TransportationPlan.com. After the draft Plan is adopted, disk copies will be available at the Planning and Development Services front counter for a small fee to cover costs.

STAFF COMMENTS

Planning and Development Services – Staff recommends the adoption of the draft Plan because it supports a comprehensive consideration of all modes of travel and encourages appropriate investment complemented with sustainable land use practices. The draft Plan was developed with extensive public involvement and has met State of Michigan distribution requirements. Ann Arbor continues to lead transportation planning and policy development in the State of Michigan and to invest in maintaining the unique qualities and high quality of life in our City. The City of Ann Arbor Transportation Plan Update will serve as a blueprint to achieve that result.

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