



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0610, **Version:** 1

Resolution Regarding Community Engagement and Approval Processes for City Related Improvement Projects

Whereas, Public engagement and citizen participation are core values of Ann Arbor government, and pedestrian safety (particularly near schools), reduced vehicle speeds in neighborhoods, and smooth traffic flow/limited congestion on major corridors are all quality of life considerations important to Ann Arbor residents/neighborhoods;

Whereas, In the Spring of 2018, there were three city street-related projects/initiatives (Maple Road lane reduction, bumpouts on Prairie, Bluett Traffic Calming) where community engagement/communication was inadequate or non-existent;

Whereas, In an effort to improve community engagement and citizen participation in city street-related projects impacting neighborhoods, City Council approved resolution R-18-275 *Resolution Regarding Citizen Input and Process for City Street-Related Improvement Projects* on July 2, 2018 which directed the City Administrator to “develop and implement a process for street improvement actions (excluding routine street repair, maintenance, re-surfacing) that ensures up-front neighborhood input is obtained and notification is provided prior to implementation of any permanent street improvement”;

Whereas, The City staff response to resolution R-18-75 (Communication Item AC-2 for October 1, 2018 Council meeting) outlined the community engagement process for the several types of street improvements that was largely based on the City’s Community Engagement Toolkit which provides general guidance and wide latitude to city staff with regard to the nature, breadth, and timing of citizen engagement;

Whereas, Prior to approval of resolution R-18-275 on July 2, 2018, Council amended the initial resolution on a split vote to eliminate the 3rd resolved clause which stated, “City Council directs the City Administrator to seek Council approval prior to implementing any lane reduction actions on major streets/corridors” and to eliminate a related whereas clause stating that actions such as lane reductions that can impact traffic flow and congestion are quality-of-life policy questions that should be decided by City Council;

Whereas, City staff’s proposed revisions to the City’s Traffic Calming program presented to Council in October 2018 would have removed City Council from the approval process, but Council did not approve that proposal and the updated Traffic Calming process that Council ultimately adopted retained Council approval as a requirement;

Whereas, Lane reductions/”road diets” are a street treatment that can improve safety, but can also adversely impact traffic flow and congestion and because of the inherent tradeoff, several “road diets” implemented, proposed, or suggested have been met with significant community pushback/opposition including:

- Mixed reviews on the recently implemented “road diet” on Maple Road
- MDOT’s rejection of the proposal to permit on-street parking on Huron Street (effectively a “road diet”) during certain hours of the day
- Strong opposition to the “road diets” on Washtenaw Avenue that were included as part of the *Re-Imagine Washtenaw* Plan and on Huron Parkway (between Geddes/Fuller and Plymouth) that was suggested by council members

Whereas, The City has completed a review of potential locations for additional “road diets” and its February 15th recommendation presented to the City’s Transportation Commission on February 20th recommended “road diets” to accommodate bicycle lanes at the following locations:

- Earhart Road (4 to 2 vehicle lanes from US#23 to S. Waldenwood Dr. including installation of roundabouts at the Earhart/Glazier intersection and the Earhart/Waldenwood intersection)
- Green Road (4 to 2 vehicle lanes north of Commonwealth to US-23 and narrowing the 4 vehicle lanes south of Commonwealth to Plymouth)
- Liberty Street (narrowing the 4 vehicle lanes from Maple Rd to Stadium Blvd)
- Oakbrook Drive (elimination of the center left-turn vehicle lane from AA-Saline Rd to Main St)
- South Industrial (narrowing vehicle lanes from Stadium to Stimson and 4 to 3 vehicle lanes south of Stimson)
- Traverwood Drive (elimination of the center turn lane from Huron Pkwy to Plymouth Rd); and

Whereas, Several neighbors have expressed strong reservations/concerns regarding the impact the Earhart Rd “road diet” may have on the already problematic Glazier Way approach at the intersection of Glazier/Earhart (currently rated a “D” level of service during peak hour) and the February 15th staff report indicated that “The Glazier Way approach at the intersection of Glazier Way and Earhart Road has a level of service of E/F during the peak 15 minutes of the day and a level of service of D for the remainder of the peak hour);

RESOLVED, That City Council believe lane reductions/”road diets” are quality-of-life policy decisions requiring tradeoffs that should be decided by the elected officials (not city staff) and City Council directs the City Administrator to seek Council approval prior to implementing any lane reduction actions on major streets/corridors;

RESOLVED, That while City Council recognize that not all street improvements are equal and warrant the same level of community engagement, it is City Council’s expectation that city staff will follow-through on the verbal commitments made last July and in the formal response to resolution R-18-275 to improve citizen participation, and going forward, will demonstrate a tendency towards broader, more up-front participation in its determination of the appropriate level of neighborhood participation and application of the Community Engagement Toolkit; and

RESOLVED, That for the Earhart Road Safety Improvements Meeting April 11th, and for all future public meetings regarding lane reductions/”road diets”, city staff will provide the public all available data regarding anticipated safety/crash improvements and traffic flow/level of service impacts, and city staff will utilize the public meetings to obtain resident input to inform any specific road diet recommendation.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Lumm, Eaton, and Griswold