

**MINUTES OF THE
BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

January 15, 2013

Conference Room A

7:30 a.m.

Members Present: Councilor Ken Smith, Councilor Brad Lown, City Manager John P. Bohenko, Paige Roberts, Eric Gregg, Rick Chellman, Cliff Sinnott, Bill Lyons

Members Absent: Bill Lyons

City Staff Present: Rick Taintor, Adam Cannon

Chairman Smith called the meeting to order at 7:40 a.m.

As the first order of business, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes from the December 12, 2012 meeting. Mr. Chellman stated that functional classification of streets is no longer used in urban areas.

Mr. Taintor gave presentations on three topics: green streets, traffic calming, and the relationship between land use and transportation. "Green Streets" is not a commonly used term, but is analogous to Complete Streets. The term encompasses the design of streets that incorporate landscape infiltration, stormwater treatment, narrow travel lanes, increased reflectivity, and low-emission travel.

Mr. Gregg asked what the purpose is for using porous pavement. Mr. Taintor replied that it is to infiltrate stormwater so that it does not go into the storm drain system or directly into rivers and streams. Chairman Smith said that the porous pavement works great in the parking lots at the Wal-Mart and Target. Councilor Lown noted that there are some problems with porous pavement and Councilor Smith noted that it breaks up easily. City Manager Bohenko added that porous pavement can save money if it allows the City to avoid other costs of stormwater treatment to meet EPA requirements.

Chairman Smith then noted that during the final phase of Portwalk the City would have a median with planters on Market Street Extension. Mr. Taintor said that there will be trees and pavers installed under the gateway with plant medians on Green Streets where there is no parking.

Next, Mr. Taintor briefly spoke on Green Streets case studies in Portland, Seattle, Boston and Chicago. Portland promotes the use of green streets in public and private development. Seattle prioritizes open space, neighborhood streets, wider sidewalks and pedestrian travel. Chicago has a green alley program and a sustainable streetscapes initiative.

Mr. Gregg asked if plowing is possible on streets surfaced with pervious pavers. Mr. Taintor replied that you may have to raise the blade and that there would be additional issues with sanding including vacuum maintenance. City Manager Bohenko noted that it would take time and result in additional costs for implementation. The EPA has recently focused on stormwater runoff in its efforts to address water quality. This may ultimately require the establishment of municipal stormwater utilities to finance the costs of needed infrastructure.

Mr. Taintor referenced the State Street project as an example of a green street project. Mr. Gregg noted that we did bump outs and that rainwater has a lot of nitrogen in it. City Manager Bohenko explained that the State Street project included separation of sewer and stormwater, and that the project design incorporated innovative techniques to filter the stormwater before it is discharged to the river.

Mr. Taintor moved on to the topic of traffic calming. Traffic calming consists of physical measures used to reduce traffic speeds; it does not include non-physical measures or extra enforcement. There are two categories of traffic calming: volume control and speed control. Speed control can be vertical or horizontal. Volume control can include access restrictions, full and half-closures, median barriers and forced turn islands. Vertical speed control can include vertical deflection, speed humps, speed tables, raised crosswalks, speed cushions, and raised intersections. It was noted that there would be opposition to vertical speed control measures because of the difficulty of snow plowing. Mr. Gregg commented that there are studies showing that these measures are much safer for pedestrians. Other measures like textured pavement are more difficult for walkers and bikers.

Next, Mr. Taintor discussed horizontal control measures including horizontal deflection, roundabouts and neighborhood traffic circles. City Manager Bohenko stated that a roundabout was proposed once at Maplewood and Woodbury Avenues, but that half were in favor and half were against. He noted the importance of educating people about these new traffic ideas.

With respect to enforcement, Councilor Lown stated that he is concerned about all of the revenue for ticket stops going to Concord and that 5% of all stops resulted in a ticket. Chairman Smith spoke regarding the discussions occurring in the Parking, Traffic and Safety Committee meetings. Chairman Smith noted that the committee asked what rules could be enacted as Council like city citations for unsafe traffic movements. Mr. Gregg asked what was better for the long-term and noted his concern with a police state atmosphere.

Mr. Chellman stated that in England street humps are called sleeping policemen. He thinks of the situation in four different dimensions. He noted that he lives on Richards Avenue which is a two-way street with one-side for parking. Richards Avenue takes three to five thousand cars a day and is self enforced. Mr. Sinnott said it's important to consider the psychological aspect and how to make people uncomfortable with going faster than the speed desired for a particular street or neighborhood.

Chairman Smith stated that during snow removal, speed bumps get ripped out. Mr. Chellman added that horizontal shifts and rotaries work much better.

Mr. Taintor showed some slides demonstrating lateral shifts, chicanes, "s curves", curb extensions and chokers. Mr. Gregg noted that visibility at an intersection is compromised when large vehicles like SUVs are parked in the first few spots. Mr. Taintor then discussed center island narrowings and pedestrian refuges. Chairman Smith stated that Borthwick Avenue is a huge success in this regard.

Mr. Taintor then described the concept of a "road diet." He stated that you could reduce the number of lanes or convert one way roads into two-way roads. Chairman Smith then asked about physical elevation levels and how to slow traffic going down a hill. Mr. Taintor said that it may be possible to put a bump in some blocks. Mr. Gregg commented that there might be a good place to add a table there. City Manager Bohenko noted that Granite Street Minerals lawyered up because their truck movements couldn't work.

Chairman Smith then asked how to attend to the terrible intersection on Austin Street and whether there could be a smaller circle. Mr. Taintor noted that there a lot of places which could take an active role in traffic calming. Chairman Smith stated that on Elwyn Road there are a lot of sign requests and that a traffic circle might work really well.

Next, Mr. Taintor discussed land use and its interaction with transportation planning. He stated that the road network, sidewalks/pedestrian realms, bicycles and public transit are all impacted by the surrounding uses. Mr. Taintor noted that much of the City does not have the density necessary to support frequent transit, but that there could be improved bicycle infrastructure, including both on-street bike lanes and off-street cycle tracks, space where only bikes could go. Councilor Lown asked if the space is available. Mr. Chellman stated that we don't in downtown.

Councilor Lown raised the idea of "sharrows," which are pavement markings indicating that vehicles must share a lane with bicycles; and he asked if these could be implemented in the downtown area. He noted that there would be a huge education portion with bikes. City Manager Bohenko noted the many times bikers dart across intersections and from corners. Chairman Smith stressed the importance of the balance between encouraging bike use and enforcement. Mr. Taintor stated that sharrows should be placed in the middle of the travel lane so that drivers can see them and understand that bikes will be mixed with car traffic.

Chairman Smith commented that moped use is increasing in the City. Mr. Taintor replied that in Holland, the majority of people use electric-assisted bikes. Chairman Smith noted that with the price of gas fluctuating in the summer, a 50cc vehicle can use the bike lane and save on gas.

Mr. Taintor then noted that data sources are lacking for transportation. City Manager Bohenko again stressed the importance of more education when rolling out these new ideas. Chairman Smith commented that it would be dangerous to put a bike lane on Marcy Street. He also stated that the bikes should all go on State Street and that there should be a bike lane along the rail line. City Manager Bohenko reminded the committee that there is no state money

available for these projects unlike in other states. Some federal money depends on the type of project. Chairman Smith stated that in order to get projects, the City will need to put funds on the table.

Chairman Smith then discussed the next topic for the committee: specific implementation and strategies. City Manager Bohenko offered to bring back the formats from the Operational Efficiencies report and Building Use report. Chairman Smith then requested a copy of all minutes up to date for each committee member prior to the meeting.

Following this discussion, the Committee set the next meeting date for February 12, 2013 at 7:30 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam Cannon
Special Projects Manager