



City of Denton
MINUTES
TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
www.cityofdenton.com

Monday, January 7, 2019

5:30 p.m.

City Council Work Session Room

After determining that a quorum of the Traffic Safety Commission of the City of Denton, Texas is present, the Chair of the Traffic Safety Commission will thereafter convene into an open meeting on Monday, January 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Work Session Room at City Hall, 215 E. McKinney Street, Denton, Texas

Commissioners: Chair Patrice Lyke, Jim Owen, Daniel Krutka, Clay Thurmond, and Melissa Carr

Staff Members: Pritam Deshmukh, City Traffic Engineer; Tracy Beck, Engineer; Engineer; Becky Owens, Review Technician; Trey Lansford, Deputy City Attorney; Marc Oliphant, Bike & Pedestrian Coordinator;

REGULAR MEETING

- A. TSC19-001 Consider the approval of the Traffic Safety Commission meeting minutes of December 13, 2018.**

Clay Thurman made a motion. Jim Owens seconded the motion.

The Traffic Safety Commission Recommends approval of the minutes (5-0).

- B. TSC19-002 Receive a report, hold a discussion and make a recommendation to City Council to establish a speed limit along the newly constructed section of FM 2499 from IH-35 southbound frontage road to FM 2181.**

Pritam presented a map reference noting the previously named State School Road segment of FM 2499 south of I-35 E was recently widened and a new connection made south to FM 2181 from Denton to the city limit of Corinth. Once a TxDOT segment is widened, TxDOT conducts a speed study. A survey was conducted along this segment and the initial staff review report recommended anything south of Robinson be posted at 50 MPH. In our review several intersections had sight distance concerns. The turns and horizontal and vertical curves are so that vehicles cannot be seen waiting at the intersection to get out onto the main lanes. Currently one lane in the south bound direction has been shut down by TxDOT because anyone coming out cannot see oncoming traffic coming southbound and there have been a few accidents. The lane has been temporarily shut down until we widen Hickory Creek and install a signal. The plan is currently in design. Based on the accident statistics and area observations we advised TxDOT the 50 MPH was not going to work and we wanted it reduced to 45 MPH. The north and south segments were already at 45 MPH. TxDOT is now recommending 45 MPH for the entire segment from I-35 to FM 2181. We are currently working on widening Hickory Creek and installing the signal. Once we get a recommendation to move forward it will be presented to council. When an ordinance is passed we can post the speed limit and enforce it. There is no currently policy to support any enforcement of the reduced speed on the new roadway.

It was further noted that in a conversation with Officer Briggs of the Police Department that if a roadway does not have a speed limit posted, it is assumed to be a 30 MPH limit and they can ticket.

Clay Thurman asked if perhaps reducing it further to 40 might help to reduce the number of accidents. Pritam responded that it becomes more of a practical enforcement issue when 85% of people are doing 45 MPH, how do you bring that number of people down to 40 MPH as opposed to being somewhere in the middle when 45 MPH has been determined to be a comfortable limit, allowing street access in a safe manor. It becomes an enforcement burden on PD.

Clay Thurman made a motion to recommend to City Council. Jim Owen seconded the motion.

The Traffic Safety Commission Recommends (5-0).

C. TSC19-003 Receive a report and hold a discussion and make a recommendation to City Council regarding the proposed ordinance prohibiting electric scooters on City rights-of-way (ID19-035).

Mark Oliphant gave an overview of the recent interest in electric scooters. There are both scooter services and be bought individually. They typically operate at about 15 miles per hour, are designed for adult operation and cost about \$400 to \$500. Scooter Share is like bike share. They are provided by private companies and operate as a pay as you go phone app rental. There are arguments both for and against and the numbers would indicate they are more popular and often more than bike share but there are a lot of concerns about safety.

Recent publications highlight specific injury data point spikes from scooter injuries. There have been enough concerns nationwide that the CDC is working with the City of Austin to specifically review this. The Denton Police department has expressed concerns about mixing young college students, alcohol scooters and really see the potential for disaster. The physical differences between a bike share and scooter share were reviewed. A different demographic group of people use them versus those who might already know how to use a bicycle.

The regulatory landscape under the state code municipalities have the option to prohibit these. Other cities have allowed them but are dealing with the fallout out of the injuries. Fort Worth is the prominent nearby city that has banned them by ordinance. For clarification there is currently a restriction in the Denton downtown area only for bicycles and toy devices not being used on sidewalks but otherwise there is no prohibition policy in the city. The policy options allow for prohibition, limitation options or no restrictions. Because as a college town with lots of students, it is important that the city be in harmony with the universities and work together. In talking with them, neither university at this time is prepared to deal with the scooters and do not want them. UNT currently prohibits any motorized vehicles inside campus other than mobility devices and those for ADA. It would be very difficult to regulate them if allowed in the city but not within the universities.

The Traffic Engineering perspective is that Denton is not ready to accommodate electric scooters. We would like to more research and safety information when the CDC completes their study and report. Perhaps in the future but at this time it is our recommendation to prohibit them. Perhaps in the future they could be accommodated.

Clay Thurman asked if we are being pre-emptively putting an ordinance in place to prevent companies from coming in. Marc Oliphant responded it is close but there have been more than two inquiries from scooter share providers. This is running in parallel to real world actions. In many cities they will just show up overnight. If you don't have something in place you may not have a mechanism to regulate it.

Melissa Carr asked about lighting requirements on the scooters. Marc Oliphant commented hopefully the shared ones would be equipped with lights but he was unsure of the options on personal purchase

scooters. Federal law does require reflectors for bicycles but this is new and he was unaware of the requirements for scooters. Melissa further questioned whether Denton allows for the scooters on the roadway or would they be limited to sidewalks. Marc Oliphant redirected the question to Trey Lansford.

Trey Lansford noted in his understanding they would be considered a motor vehicle because it is not self-propelled and does have a motor. However, because it travels 15 mph or less, it could fall under the toy device prohibition we currently have that only covers the downtown area. They could however be questioned about the operation on a street if they were impeding traffic or something of that nature but at this time he was unaware of a strict prohibition that would stop them from operating on a street directly. Council has looked at it and would like to go with the universities decisions for now. The prohibition being proposed is not against the companies or business but against the action of the scooters themselves.

Daniel Krutka presented an opposing view. He personally rides scooters in many cities when available in his personal travel and finds them to be a great mode of transportation. In his opinion he does not find them to be particularly dangerous and finds most of the cases to be blown out of proportion because they are new and related to associated elements like cars and street and sidewalk elements. He is interested in the CDC reports. He is of the opinion that scooters are perfect for Denton to fill the gaps in core between the universities and the down town square and DCTA station. He feels that the streets are problem and they are too dangerous. The scooters operate very much like bikes and as more people start using them it will force us to start making safe spaces for both bikes, scooters and alternative forms of transportation. Most people avoid the rough pavement or dangerous streets instead in violation and take the sidewalks. He is against banning them and would like to see more conversations about them. He has used them on several college campus and believes them to be a great way to get around and take traffic off of the road.

Jim Owen supported the staff recommendation and noted it was being presented to Council soon and an ordinance is expected to be forth coming.

Pritam Deshmukh noted the City is not ready to address the legal liability and issues that are concerning. We are not prepared if a company were to show up tomorrow. This is why we are taking this pre-emptive approach to get this in place. We will continue the discussion to develop a pilot program for the platform, areas for use and limitations. We are not saying the city will not look at them but the city needs to be prepared legally and with our infrastructure.

Daniel Krutka asked what type of further information would need that has already been tested out in the hundreds of cities they have already been dropped off in already. Pritam Deshmukh responded most of the cities are still struggling with the allowance on sidewalks. Engineering does not support the use on the sidewalks with pedestrians and the size and conditions of the sidewalks and we do not have the street infrastructure to accommodate them. We need some additional time in our long term plans of the street segments and determine our mobility goals and then incorporate them. It is not something we want to allow an outside entity to force on the city. The universities are big partners and we will work with them as they get ready.

Marc Oliphant further noted the city is currently in the test phase for the bike share program. The current provider permitted in the city also has scooter program and are interested in educating the city and universities about it. As an advocate for non-automobile modes of transportation, it does pain him a little bit to say no at this time but sees logical arguments by the city and is optimistic that there is a way in can be incorporated into the city.

Patrice Lyke asked if there could moratorium as a softer landing versus banning and asked for clarification of the difference between the two terminologies. Pritam Deshmukh restated that we are

not banning the companies from coming in but banning the use of the scooters as an action and we are open to further discussions with any company about future service options and making sure we are working with the universities. Trey Lansford added it is more in the way that this is set up as a proposed ordinance prohibiting the riding of the scooters on the sidewalks or public right of way. It is something you can receive a ticket or fine for. Once the plan is in developed and put into place the ordinance would be changed and it is not lifting a ban. Daniel Krutka further noted his understanding the companies can also restrict or red zone where they can be operated which might allow students to ride them to the up to the campus and drop them at the edge of campus. He has seen that it is chaos whenever they are just dropped off but they seem to settle in either being accepted or banned. In his experience of riding them it has made a lot of places more accessible and they are always banned from sidewalks. He was unclear on how much more research is needed to allow them. They are available on the streets and should be available in the core. Pritam Deshmukh responded that we need to work with UNT and TWU as the main users. The City as such only has one or two locations they would work in. Since the universities are not on board yet, we will wait and work through them for a pilot program similar to the bike share program. Once that happens we will bring another ordinance in agreement with the universities to council. Christopher Phelps at TWU and Doctor Clark at UNT were identified as the contacts to pilot this program.

Melissa Carr furthered the conversation as an option for high school students. Marc Oliphant commented for liability issues most company shares typically limited to users ages 18 and over. Individual purchase usage would be at a parent's discretion or decision but still banned from the public rights of way under the proposed ordinance at this time.

Jim Owens commented that we have already seen the bike dump and this is council's opportunity to try and get ahead of the scooter dump. Pritam Deshmukh stated that we have been receiving inquiries from companies about Denton's policies and how they can operate here. In the last council work session it was clearly stated they do not want to follow previous bike share events and it is their desire to be pre-emptive and have a plan in place and move slowly before they arrive.

Daniel Krutka referenced in Stillwater at Oklahoma State University had a ban but later opened then on campus with a specific provider. There are a lot of precedence for cities to work through it and come up with solutions. Marc Oliphant remarked he had heard it was a selling point for some universities to be able to announce they have the program on campus. Daniel Krutka also argued it will be an economic boom to get people traveling locally versus getting in the car and traveling elsewhere.

Jim Owen made a motion to accept the staff recommendation to ban the scooters to allow council to look at the program further. Clay Thurman seconded the motion.

The Traffic Safety Commission Recommends by vote (4-1).

D. TSC19-004 Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding the US 380 street lighting feasibility and photometric study.

Pritam Deshmukh This item was previously presented to council. He further noted 380 was widened west of I-35 all the way through town to Locust and Elm to be a 6 lane facility. TxDOT does not focus on street lighting. They do not design or pay for street lighting and it becomes the cities responsibility to fund, design and install. Many of the recent projects have this same situation or need. Going forward this may change and we may see changes from TxDOT. Once this roadway was opened up, a number of citizen concerns were received about how dark it is considering the visibility with the large number of driveways between intersections. Council asked staff to look at this 5.4 mile segment from I-35 to Mayhill Rd. A consultant was hired to look at the current lighting, requirements and the cost estimate

for improvements. We focused on two smaller segments with different characteristics. These were a commercial area between Bonnie Brae and I-35 and the residential segment between Carroll and Bell. Existing conditions were studied and reported. The report was compared to the TxDOT standards and it was clear that there are significant deficiencies with continuous light. Design recommendations were reviewed with a visual presentation with cost and schedule. Council has directed us to move forward with design and funding for construction. Design options will be completed and presented for Council to select which options to proceed with for phased construction based on funding. Current city project will include street lights. Other TxDOT project will need to be funded separately. A little bit of lighting add a great deal of safety. Our goal going forward is to incorporate lighting as part of all city projects. We have also identified intersections that need to be upgraded.

Jim Owen asked for pedestrian accident information. Pritam Deshmukh commented that the evening accidents are not as high in the night time in comparison to the number of collision data. Lighting makes for better intersections and the prospective for people is it is safer. We are no longer a small community but a growing urban environment. The major highways, arterials and collectors need to be looked at in a different perspective and be lighted. Melissa Carr agreed and gave reference to an incident at McKinney and Loop 288 to reduced visibility with pedestrian crossing. Pritam Deshmukh noted the McKinney project currently in design will include widening and lighting to the east all the way to Grissom Rd. Daniel Krutka asked for clarification of the area included in Phase 2 being along Hickory and Bell. Pritam Deshmukh restated it is along US 380 where all of the intersections will be upgraded. Clay Thurmond further noted the area along 380 between TWU toward Carroll as being pretty dark with a lot of student traffic. Pritam Deshmukh noted we are working with TWU on their master plan and particularly the parking area between Ruddell to Bell including the sidewalk on the south side of US 380 and the lighting at the Bell intersection. Patrice Lyke asked for additional comments on the height of the existing light standards at this intersection in comparison with the presentation numbers. Hooded lights are planned to direct the light away from residential spaces. DME is also soliciting feedback on what type or color lights are preferred. Patrice Lyke share Austin as a dark sky example and her preference for this goal to be applied in Denton.

This item is for discussion only, no vote is needed.

E. TSC19-005 Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding Texas Department of Transportation On-System projects in the Denton area to include the 35Express Project.

Tracy Beck spoke about the I-35E project at Brinker and Mayhill and the traffic switch schedule plans. This has been delayed but the targeted completion date is now July 2019 but due to weather conditions will probably extended into late fall.

Pritam Deshmukh added there were three interchanges to be reviewed. The Texas U-turn under the bridge at Mayhill is complete. The Brinker interchange for Buc-see's and the Loop 288 updating the entire interchange. The lane shifts are going into place in February and should provide some much needed congestion relief. Once these are complete the 35 expansion would be complete. The City does have plans in follow up particularly at the Mayhill intersection.

Jim Owens asked about the travel to Buc-see's. Pritam Deshmukh noted this will be the next project. A bridge is planned to go over the DCTA track and then connect more directly to the 35 intersection. TxDOT will be upgrading the Mayhill intersection to connect with the city's projects. Buc-see's will be signalized when the crossover is complete.

This item is for discussion only, no vote is needed.

F. TSC19-0005 Staff Reports

The Street Construction Report was explained by Pritam Deshmukh. This is a weekly report that is published weekly and attached to the council packets each Friday. This is intended to be a quick reference for the TSC Commissioners to be aware of current and upcoming projects in the city to be used as a communication tool.

Patrice Lyke asked for clarification on how to interpret the report. Pritam Deshmukh explained two different elements. When a street is looked at for reconstruction or rehab it is a maintenance activity and is only for work in the actual street curb to curb. Sidewalks are typically capital projects and not included in the street reconstruction.

Matrix Review:

#1 – This will follow the Oak Gateway parking. Planning will be updating the downtown comprehensive plan. There are alternative solutions brought up by the Oak Gateway plan.

#2 – We are working with TWU and they are willing to support us help us with right of way or non-cash funds and with the traffic study. We can bring this back as necessary.

#3 – Since we are working with the small area plan, when UNT decides to close down area streets when can revisit this.

#4 – Looking at the feasibility of putting in ramps and funds are available. There are compliance issues to be revisited before construction changes can be planned.

#5 – We are working to establish ROW markings and working with enforcement.

#6 – The temporary tabs have been installed. This was originally a maintenance curb to curb repair project. It has since been changed to include signage, lighting paving and drainage and is currently in design.

#7 – Two intersections have been identified to have signage installation scheduled.

#8 - Plan is to bring the report information to the April meeting.

#9 - Paint has been put in.

#10 – The project manager will be bringing an update next month.

#11 – Will be part of the PD report.

#12 – This is a difficult one due to visibility limitations. Jim Owen clarified that he was only asking for the one lane to have the recessed stop bar. Pritam Deshmukh confirmed that this option is viable and Welch is scheduled to go on the road diet in the near future.

#13 – We are looking at protected bike lanes. Part of the Windsor project will have protected bike lanes and also working with UNT to add a two way protected bike lane on Highland between Avenue C all the way to Welch. Should be scheduled in the next couple of months.

#14 – The I-35 Project update was presented.

#15 – Ongoing pending design and funding.

#16 – We have met with Val and Council Member Armintor. We have plans to adjust timing in the next month.

Daniel Krutka asked a question, as discussed with Council Member Hudspeth, the bike share with Via Ride contracted with the City it was understood they would have bikes available in the area of DCTA. Marc Oliphant stated there is not a contract between Veoride and the city but there is a permit. There is a contract between Veoride and DCTA and there is a request for bikes to be available at the station in town. They are talking with DCTA and the Legal Department has been involved and have some questions. An area has been identified an area on the edge of the DCTA where the city owns the property and we have reached out to Veoride to ask them to put the bikes there. It is not right by the train but is in close proximity.

Clay Thurman asked for clarification of the bike lane section plans for Windsor. Pritam Deshmukh identified the area between Locust and Stewart as the area we are looking at. We don't have the plans yet but will share as they become available.

Daniel Krutka spoke about the areas along Carroll near Hickory in both directions from Oak to Mulberry and similarly on Bell from Mulberry to McKinney. He has met with Council Member Briggs after the pedestrian accident on Carroll. The ideas that were presented to Council were not found to be acceptable. His major concern was the speeds at which people travel in these areas and was interested in slowing down the traffic. This is where his group and council had opposing views. He would like to entertain additional discussion or perhaps a focus group to explore the options for urban design ideas for these areas to slow traffic in these areas. Pritam Deshmukh responded if the focus of the concern is for the pedestrian crossings at Carroll and Bell, we have signals with pedestrian phase and lighting is missing. From a protected pedestrian crossing view point there is not much more that we can do. If you are talking about mid-block crossings and slowing vehicles that is a different story and perhaps you are mixing two different elements. Urban planning and the urban core is slightly different than the intersections and pedestrian crossings. Engineers are looking at it from different principals and that's where it is getting lost in translation. For the big urban planning picture, we get into planning and the uses are designed that way we get the streets to flow that way but it is a combined effort on how we plan the core. He agreed that if we plan it better for the entry into the core and the planned land uses in the area for a complete review of the elements is done. One is a long term plan and the other is the more immediate concerns for the existing.

Daniel Krutka restated his goal for being on this committee is for the urban part of Denton to have urban principals. This is the one area that we should not have to prioritize cars but prioritize pedestrians and bikes. On this project his short term goal is there anything we could look at for traffic calming measures to work here. Pritam Deshmukh responded there are several signals lined up on Carroll and its primary goal is to carry traffic. The goal defined in the mobility plan defines Carroll as an arterial. Now you are contradicting your plans. If we are defining the urban core we need to work on the land use component and how our transportation systems tie in. If you change that, then you do not require the access and the freeways or arterials going into the areas you don't want. The best way to handle it is to look at the uses, what kind of growth is anticipated and how does our transportation fit into that. Currently that is how these two areas are designed to carry people. If we were to go in and just narrow this down and tell people to slow down, we will create serious congestion in the peak periods and there would be a lot more outcry as opposed to a small group. Before we can do that we need to come up with a plan or alternate as part of the mobility plan update. We are embarking on updating that soon. These are all good comments and we can have for consideration in that planning. Daniel Krutka understood the problem is that his desire to not move vehicles on this block section of Carroll conflicts

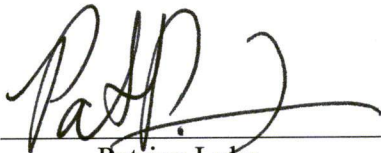
with the primary design function is to move vehicles at a fast speed as well as in our mobility plan. Trey Lansford ended the discussion as this topic was not a posted scheduled agenda item for discussion.

Adjournment: 7:28 p.m.

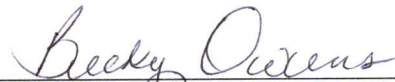
CONCLUDING ITEMS

Under Section 551.042 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, respond to inquiries from the Public Utilities Board or the public with specific factual information or recitation of policy, or accept a proposal to place the matter on the agenda for an upcoming meeting AND Under Section 551.0415 of the Texas Open Meetings Act, provide reports about items of community interest regarding which no action will be taken, to include: expressions of thanks, congratulations, or condolence; information regarding holiday schedules; an honorary or salutary recognition of a public official, public employee, or other citizen; a reminder about an upcoming event organized or sponsored by the governing body; information regarding a social, ceremonial, or community event organized or sponsored by an entity other than the governing body that was attended or is scheduled to be attended by a member of the governing body or an official or employee of the municipality; or an announcement involving an imminent threat to the public health and safety of people in the municipality that has arisen after the posting of the agenda

APPROVED



Patrice Lyke
Chair



Becky Owens
Administrative Assistant