

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMES AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE AND
REGULAR MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL**

AMES, IOWA

JULY 14, 2020

**AMES AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (AAMPO)
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Mayor Haila announced that it is impractical to hold an in-person Council meeting due to the Governor of Iowa declaring a public health emergency because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, limits have been placed on public gatherings, and this meeting is being held as an electronic meeting as allowed by Section 21.8 of the *Iowa Code*. The Mayor then provided how the public could participate in the meeting via internet or by phone.

CALL TO ORDER: The Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) Transportation Policy Committee meeting, which was being held electronically, was called to order by Ames Mayor and voting member John Haila at 6:01 p.m. on the 14th day of July, 2020. Other voting members brought into the meeting were: Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, City of Ames; Gloria Betcher, City of Ames; Amber Corrieri, City of Ames; Tim Gartin, City of Ames; Rachel Junck, City of Ames; David Martin, City of Ames; Lauris Olson, Story County Supervisor; Bill Zinnel, Boone County Supervisor. Jacob Schrader, Transit Board, and Jon Popp, Mayor of Gilbert were absent.

HEARING ON FINAL FFY 2021-2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP): Public Works Director John Joiner stated that the draft Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was presented to the Policy Committee in May 2020 and was unanimously approved. During the public comment period, the document and project maps were available online and at a public input session held virtually. No comments were received from the public. Staff received and addressed minor comments from the Iowa Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and Federal Transit Administration.

Lauris Olson, Story County Supervisor, noted that the TIP is due to the Iowa Department of Transportation tomorrow, and even though the draft was approved in May, things have changed for the County. The County would be interested in advocating to look at roundabouts that are needed in the north and northwest part of the community. Ms. Olson wanted to verify that she would not be able to add the roundabouts to the TIP. Director Joiner confirmed that any changes would not be able to be submitted. Mr. Joiner stated a new application would have to be submitted, and any new applications were due in the winter of 2019. Any new projects would need to be brought up in the winter of 2020. The process is similar to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as it allocates funds for the first year and the next three years are more of a planning document. If the County would like to raise projects for consideration, that can be done in the next fiscal year application period. Ms. Olson mentioned that the County would want to submit something. She noted that the County has become increasingly convinced that the discussions between funders and decision-makers need to start occurring when it comes to roundabouts for a couple of intersections in the north and northwest part of the community. She noted that one of the roundabouts could be a joint project between the City and the County located at George Washington Carver and Cameron School Road. Ms. Olson

mentioned that another area would be within the City of Ames purview and explained that the County discovered this when the City of Ames annexed an area up to 190th Street around Hyde Avenue, and both sides of the street were annexed. The third area would be within the AAMPO boundaries and that is George Washington Carver and 190th Street. Ms. Olson noted tonight is her formal request to start discussions and to have staff work on putting the roundabouts into the Transportation Plan that will be put before the AAMPO in Fiscal Year 2022.

Council Member Betcher inquired if the Commission was to entertain the changes recommended by the County for the next fiscal year if the Council would have to ask the Traffic Engineer to do traffic studies. Director Joiner noted that in order for a project to be funded, it has to be noted in the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Any project that has funding requested has to be shown in the Plan and then has to follow the application process. The application period is open during the winter and each project would have to have a sponsor. The formal application would have to be submitted to the AAMPO by the Technical Committee, which is then brought to the Policy Committee.

Mayor Haila questioned how it was determined if a roundabout is appropriate or if other traffic control methods were warranted or needed in different locations. The request from Supervisor Olson was to put three roundabouts into the Plan. He inquired as to what is recommended in terms of doing an assessment/analysis or if the request was appropriate. Director Joiner noted that was a question more for the next item on the Agenda. He explained that discussions have already occurred between City staff, County staff, and the developer on George Washington Carver Road and Cameron School Road. Mayor Haila asked if the discussions had been about roundabouts or a different type of system. Director Joiner noted the discussion was about intersection improvements, and the engineering staff will decide which treatment is best; whether, it would be roundabouts, turn lanes, or signalization. Mayor Haila asked what kind of direction would be needed. Mr. Joiner explained that now is not the appropriate time as the projects need to appear in the Long-Range Transportation Plan first and then there would need to be internal discussions among the City, County, and developer staff on who the sponsor would be and how the cost-share might work. Once a sponsor has been defined, it would be appropriate to have an application submitted to the AAMPO to make the intersection improvements.

County Supervisor Olson asked for the definition of "sponsor," asking if it would be the County or the City. Mr. Joiner mentioned that it would be Story County, the City, or Boone County. Any entity can complete an application for an improvement within the boundaries as that project's sponsor. Ms. Olson commented that it was her understanding from County Supervisor Murken, who has taken the lead on the request for the County, that those discussions had been had and the County was unable to do anything as it was within the City; that is why she is bringing it up to the Policy Committee.

Linda Murken, Story County Supervisor, noted that she has been in discussion over the past year with both the developer and City staff, but she is not on the AAMPO, so she is unaware of the process. Ms. Murken mentioned that maybe she needs to meet with the AAMPO and have further discussions about how to proceed. County Supervisor Murken stated that a traffic study was done over a year ago that did include the three intersections that Supervisor Olson referred to earlier. The information is there, but she needs to know what the process is and discuss it with Story County to see how they can further those needs for next year. Ms. Murken stated that she did sit through a

preliminary training session with the Department of Transportation about roundabouts and was really impressed.

Mayor Haila opened the public hearing. Since no one asked to speak, he closed the public hearing.

Moved by Beatty-Hansen, seconded by Zinnel, to approve RESOLUTION NO. 20-360 approving the final FFY 2021 - 2024 Transportation Improvement Program.

Vote on Motion: 9-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

UPDATE TO 2045 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT: Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer introduced Brian Ray, Project Manager with HDR Engineering Inc., who has been hired to do the update to the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Mr. Ray noted that when moving forward with his presentation, he will be referring to the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan as the "Forward 45". He commented that today he wanted to review the vision, goals, and objectives process that was done, discuss performance measures and performance-based planning, and then discuss any potential alternatives.

Mr. Ray stated that they wanted to look at multiple sources to gain input into developing the vision, goals, and objectives for the Forward 45 Plan. Some information was gained from a regional travel survey, in-person visioning open house, on-line visioning open house, and working with the Transportation Technical Committee. The regional travel survey was done by a sub-consultant in order to gain perceptions on different transportation issues, the types of transportation methods that the City of Ames citizens use, and concerns regarding traffic safety. The survey was done by a random sample of residents through a letter format where 404 surveys were returned. A regional travel survey executive summary was shown on screen, and it was noted that overall 48% of the people in the Ames area said that the overall transportation system was good, while 35% said it was average, 10% thought it was poor, and 8% felt it was excellent. Two of the issues that came up during the survey was the flow of traffic during peak times and the ease of north/south travel in the Ames area.

An in-person visioning open house was held on November 14, 2019, at the Ames Public Library. There were approximately 40 in-person attendees. An on-line visioning open house was held from November 14 through November 27, 2019, where participants could log in on-line and go through the same exercises as they would have been able to do in-person. The on-line visioning open house had a total of 91 visitors. It was noted that during the open houses, participants could do a mapping exercise, answer questions about what they would do to improve the Ames transportation system, and prioritize the vision of transportation. Mr. Ray stated the during the visioning exercise it was noted that citizens felt that accessibility, sustainability, and safety were the top three priorities for citizens.

A vision statement was developed based on the feedback received. The Forward 45 Vision Statement is "The Ames area future transportation plan delivers, safe, efficient, and reliable solutions that are accessible to all users. The plan focuses on preserving the existing network and shaping the public

realm through placemaking, while providing long-term sustainability.” The six different goal areas that were set were: Accessible, Safe, Sustainable, Efficient and Reliable, Placemaking, and Preservation. Mr. Ray stated that there were federal requirements that each transportation organization has to follow, and they needed to incorporate the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Performance Measures. The Performance Measures that needed to be met were: Safety, Transit Asset Management, Pavement, Bridge, System Performance, Freight, and Transit Safety. Mr. Ray explained that Federal Planning Factors also must be met. The Federal Planning Factors were:

- Economic Vitality
- Safety
- Security
- Accessibility & Mobility
- Environment, Energy Conservation & Quality of Life
- Integration & Connectivity
- System Management & Operations
- Preservations
- Resiliency & Reliability
- Travel & Tourism

Once the goals were set, HDR was able to put together the objectives of each goal to meet all the requirements. As part of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a Performance-Based Planning approach needs to be utilized to develop a Transportation Plan. An example was shown as to how each goal and objective is assigned a performance measure and then scored to help identify high, medium, or low priority projects. Mr. Ray noted that the original plan was to hold an in-person meeting in order to identify what types of alternatives and strategies should be considered in order to meet the goals and objects, but due to COVID-19, the meeting was changed to online participation only. The online open house was held from March 31 through April 14, 2020, and received 443 total views with 193 responses. There were three types of mapping exercises done. The first was a roadway mapping exercise where 85 comments were received, the next was a bicycle/pedestrian mapping exercise that received 56 comments, and the last was transit mapping that received a total of 26 comments. All the information was reviewed, and a technical analysis was done by looking at traffic and safety and other areas that need improvement. HDR Engineering also worked with the Transportation Technical Committee to review other plans and studies. An example was shown of potential and committed roadway projects. He explained that committed are projects that are already set up in the Transportation Improvement Program or committed through the City of Ames Capital Improvements Program. The potential projects were projects that might be considered for the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The same type of map was shown overhead for bike and pedestrian projects and transit projects.

The next step will be to identify if there are any other potential projects or alternatives that have not been identified yet and analyzed. Mr. Ray explained they will start the analysis process soon, and if anyone thought of any other potential project; HDR would need to be notified soon in order to be included in the analysis process. HDR will analyze projects and prioritize the projects to high, medium, and low, and then will look at the financial aspects to develop a plan. Mr. Ray stated that

HDR will present the list to the Policy Committee in September 2020. Any adjustments would be made with the draft plan to be available for 30-days. The final plan will be presented to the Policy Committee in October 2020 for adoption.

Mayor Haila asked Mr. Ray to bring up the slide that showed the committed and potential projects and referenced Supervisor Olson's earlier comments about Cameron School Road and potential projects. Mayor Haila indicated that item 1, 2, 2a, and 3 on the map show the project description as being traffic signals, turn lanes, or roundabouts. Mr. Ray commented that at this point they are unsure if those projects will be roundabouts or traffic signals. Projects 1, 2, 3 are roundabouts and Projects 1a, 2a, 3a are signals, which would include turn lanes. He noted that in the potential alternatives they would be looking at it both ways. Mayor Haila inquired if part of HDR's scope of service is to develop budgets for both the options or do traffic studies need to be done. Mr. Ray explained they would not do traffic studies, but would do a high-level evaluation to come up with a recommendation. A detailed traffic study would be done later, but would have high-level budgetary numbers for each project. HDR does not go through an in-depth engineering study for each project as the Long-Range Transportation Plan is a more high-level document that identifies the projects, but prior to construction a more detailed traffic analysis would be done. Mayor Haila wanted to know how the projects would be prioritized. Mr. Ray commented that based on all the performance measures, HDR would go through and assign a score to each alternative and see where the scoring ends and try to put all the projects in categories as to what would be considered high, medium, and low-level projects. Another thing to take into consideration is timing as some of the projects are needed sooner rather than later. Mr. Ray noted that if something scores high, it doesn't mean it has to happen right away, but within the next 25 years. Mayor Haila inquired if Project 1 came up as a low priority, but the AAMPO wanted it to be a higher priority would it compromise any funding. Mr. Ray stated the MPO uses a Performance-Based Planning Process to identify which projects should move into the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan, in theory it could, but would need to document why it was put into the Transportation Improvement Plan. Traffic Engineer Pregitzer stated that if a project didn't meet the short-term, then any project that shows up in the short-term are projects that are not eligible to be accepted into the TIP. All that means is the project would not be eligible for federal funding without doing a major amendment. Mr. Pregitzer stated that it could be something to discuss in more detail later. Once the Policy Committee sees the list of projects priorities, they may move some around. It was noted that if a project didn't meet federal funding, there were other grants that could be considered.

Council Member Betcher questioned the scoring on accessibility that was shown as an example of performance measures as she noticed the mention of environmental justice areas that have been identified and wondered if that had been identified through the Census or if it was something the City identifies based on the process. Traffic Engineer Pregitzer commented that they use the Census information. Mr. Ray stated that under sustainability, there is an objective to promote financially sustainable transportation system investments, which is the cost to build something and maintain it. A lot of the time the cost comes into play when developing the constraint plan as to what can fit into the budget and what cannot.

Council Member Gartin commented that the Council works closely with the Ames Bicycle Coalition.

He wanted to know if that group had been involved in the process and whether there would be future opportunities for further input. Mr. Ray noted that some of the members from the Ames Bicycle Coalition have been involved, but maybe not the whole committee. A sub-consultant, Nelson\Nygaard, is helping on the bicycle/pedestrian portion and has been in contact with the Ames Bicycle Coalition. A few members had gone on a bike ride with Nelson\Nygaard to help get a visual assessment of the area. They will be working with the Ames Bicycle Coalition more going forward.

Supervisor Olson wanted to know when the appropriate time would be to give feedback for some of the individually listed projects that are on the potential list. Mr. Ray stated if there were projects that HDR is not showing as potential projects, they would like feedback as soon as possible through the AAMPO website, but as for any project already listed, HDR is working on the prioritization list that will be presented in September. The meeting in September would be the appropriate time for feedback. Ms. Olson stated that a project shown mentions paving out to a particular road and the County has shut down the bridge on that road. She commented that it will be very expensive to redo the bridge. Ms. Olson questioned the possibility of an overpass/underpass on 580th Street (Teller Avenue) between Lincoln Way and East 13th Street. The Union Pacific railroad has a switch station in this area and traffic use has already increased. The City recently annexed that area (East Industrial Area). Supervisor Olson commented that within the next 3-4 years, the traffic concerns for that area will be massive.


Mayor Haila temporarily suspended the meeting at 6:55 p.m., due to a tornado warning. The meeting reconvened at 7:21 p.m.

Traffic Engineer Pregitzer asked, if there is anything on the candidate lists that the Policy Committee members do not see or hear about from now until July 31, 2020; please email those to any of the City staff.

POLICY COMMITTEE COMMENTS: Supervisor Olson commented that in the Council packet she saw that staff is referring an email from HIRTA about service changes. She noted that she is Vice-Chair of the HIRTA Board and wanted to let the Committee know that the HIRTA staff will be presenting to the Board of Supervisors next Tuesday about funding and possible changes to service delivery that could impact Ames residents. She encouraged anyone who wants to hear the presentation to watch the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Gartin, seconded by Olson, to adjourn the AAMPO Transportation Policy Committee meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Vote on Motion: 9-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.



Amy L. Colwell, Deputy City Clerk



John A. Haila, Mayor