

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMES AREA  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE**

**AMES, IOWA**

**SEPTEMBER 08, 2020**

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

**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 6:29 p.m. on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2020. Other voting members brought into the meeting were: 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. Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Council Member; Jacob Schrader, Transit Board; and Jon Popp, Mayor of Gilbert, were absent.

**REVIEW OF SCORED PROJECT RANKING AND FUNDING SUMMARY FOR THE 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN:** Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer gave a quick overview of what will be presented. He explained that tonight's meeting is one of the final steps in the Plan development before they present the Draft Plan to the Policy Committee. The scoring and fiscal constraints will be shown.

Brian Ray with HDR recalled that a presentation of the draft alternatives was given a couple months ago; they have made some changes based on the feedback received. He will be going over the analysis, the draft constrained plan, and what the next steps will be.

As discussed at the last meeting, Long-Range Transportation Plans are required by the federal government based on the Ames area being a metropolitan planning organization. As part of the regulations a Performance-Based Planning Approach must be done. Mr. Ray mentioned that they had worked with the public in order to identify the goals and objectives for the Ames area along with using some of the federal requirements. With that information, they were able to develop performance measures. Those performance measures help the analysis of potential projects to be included in the Long-Range Transportation Plan. Performance measures are also used to help set up System Performance Goals, which the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) is required to submit on an annual basis. Different performance measures were used to analyze the different alternatives. Some of the performance measures were used for roadway alternatives and some were for bicycle and pedestrian alternatives. He noted that some of the performance measures were qualitative and some were quantitative, but those two analyses are combined to develop a project score to determine which projects score high, medium, or low priorities.

Mr. Ray displayed the Roadway Project scoring results, which were put into three tiers: high, medium, and low. He emphasized that just because a project scores high doesn't mean the project met all the objectives; there could be projects that scored as medium that are still valuable projects,

but may not check every box. They used the tiers in order to identify projects that would be included in the Constrained Plan. There were 54 different roadway projects that were scored. The same process was used for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Scoring Results. Mr. Ray explained that on the scoring results, the CR refers to crossing projects, OFF means off-street projects, and ON means on-street projects. He noted that some of the OFF and ON may be one or the other or both.

Mr. Ray stated that the next step was to develop the anticipated funding levels. A requirement for an AAMPO is to develop what the anticipating funding will be over the next 25 years. They looked at federal, state, and local funding sources. They developed the following time periods: Current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that is from 2021-2024, Short-term is 2025-2029, Mid-Term is 2030-2037, and the Long-Term is 2038-2045. As the levels are developed, they have to look at how the funds are being spent; this was done by looking back on historical funding, how much goes into system preservation, and system improvement projects. Mr. Ray pointed out that under the Roadway projections, the time periods have three areas of funding. There is formula-based funds, discretionary funds, and local funds. A breakdown was done for the bicycle and pedestrian projects as well. In order to develop the Constrained Plan, multiple criteria were used to identify which project should be in the Plan. HDR applied project scoring, current issues/future issues, anticipated growth in the near future, project timing coordination, and project costs. An Illustrative Plan will be included (this is not considered part of the MPO Plan), to show projects beyond the fiscally constrained plan, but are still a priority to the community. A table was shown for the Draft Roadway Plan showing the short-term, mid-term, and long-term plans along with the costs. Mr. Ray pointed out that the potential funding is an estimation and would be changed based on available funding. He then showed the Draft Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan for short-term, mid-term, and long-term. The MPO staff had worked a lot with the Ames Bicycle Coalition to find the biggest needs in the City of Ames. Mr. Ray presented a draft Transit Plan for the short; mid; and long-term. He noted that all the projects are rolling stock and facilities/stations improvements.

The next steps will be to collect any comments on the Draft Constrained Plan and then develop the Draft Plan to be presented on September 22, 2020, to the Policy Committee. It will also go out for public review. HDR will collect comments from the public and the Policy Committee and then finalize the Draft Plan, which will be presented to the Policy Committee on October 27, 2020, for final approval.

Mayor Haila questioned why, on the Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvement Funding Summary, the local funds amount showed \$0. He thought that the Council spent about \$1 to \$3 million per year on bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Mr. Pregitzer explained that the funding for the rest of the term goes back to more averages. The first line is what gets programmed into the MPO's TIP, which means only the local dollars will be matched with federal aid. He mentioned that \$96,000 doesn't go very far so what they do with MPO funds to make it more efficient is to pool the funds. The current TIP has the funding pooled to do one of the bike projects as a federal project.

Mayor Haila noted that on the Draft Roadway map, on Dayton Road, there is a blue line that goes from S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street to Lincoln Way, but there is no project number assigned to that line. Mr. Ray

explained that is project 40, which is 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Grand Avenue, and Dayton Avenue Traffic Signals.

The Mayor mentioned there is a lot of congestion along GW Carver going north. The Cameron School Road and the GW Carver intersection had previously been discussed and the Ames 2040 Plan shows some potential growth in the area. He was surprised to see that nothing is scheduled to be worked on in that area. Mr. Ray explained that on the project scoring it was rated a medium tier, and further discussion was had, and it was determined that the area would be more of a developer-driven project. Mr. Pregitzer stated that projects No. 3 and No. 43 would be developer-driven and another north intersection project No. 2 rated really high and is included in the plan. They may need to closely monitor project No. 1, and if the City grows as anticipated, a traffic impact study would be done, which could trigger a project. Project No. 1 is not shown because of what the Plan's growth shows, but that doesn't mean that a development, large annexation, or something else that could come in may change that. Story County Supervisor Lauris Olson explained that her problem with that explanation is that they are talking about the area being developer-driven. Project No. 3 along Cameron School Road is already developed and the only development available would be on the southeast side. She is concerned that in not putting this area in the Plan, the area could be missed. Ms. Olson stated that as far as the County is concerned, they appreciate the area being looked into, but what is shown is not realistic. Mr. Ray stated when HDR did its analysis, the needs far exceeded the funding available for the Long-Range Transportation Plan. It is a balance and there are a lot of intersections that have scored high, and have a lot of congestion and expected to get worse. It was explained that is why they are presenting the information tonight to see if some projects need to be added to the Constrained Plan. Mayor Haila asked for help understanding the criteria that make it more objective than subjective to arrive at a prioritization. Mr. Ray explained that when they did the analysis, they looked at all the different scoring criteria. On the qualitative side, they look at areas that currently have congestion, and from their analysis, that area did not show any current congestion. The areas that were showing current congestion received higher scoring because that congestion could be addressed. Other areas that received higher scoring were projects that were on the National Highway System. The National Highway System is of high importance to the IA DOT. Mayor Haila inquired if traffic counts were done and asked how they analyzed the volume of traffic. Mr. Ray stated that the IA DOT has an extensive traffic count program that they utilized, and they also have a travel demand model that was used to project the year 2045 traffic volumes.

Ms. Olson wanted to know about the financial numbers. She wanted to know if the total amounts were just what the City of Ames is anticipated to receive from the various sources, or if it includes money that Story County may have to actually contribute to some of the projects. Mr. Ray commented that it includes a combination, but the majority of it would be from the City of Ames. Ms. Olson mentioned that they need to look at a couple areas and see if there is anything this Plan could do to address their concern.

The Mayor asked what the next steps would be and what they are looking for from the Committee. Mr. Pregitzer stated they are requesting feedback from the Committee. As a Technical Committee, they have already made comments and given them to HDR. He wanted to know if the Policy Committee was comfortable with the overall grouping of projects that were shown. It was pointed

out that when talking about roadway projects or bike projects, the plans tend to emphasize the investment on the core of metropolitan areas, where there is the accumulation of traffic and congestion. If there is anything in the Plan as far as the projects that are going to be funded that the Policy Committee has a strong opinion on, they would like to know about it now. Changing or moving the fiscal constraint of the Plan is very complicated to do and get approved by the DOT and the Federal Highway. Mr. Pregitzer commented that they worked closely with Planning staff and the Ames Plan 2040 Commission. He is hoping that the timing of the projects shown will match up with how they are anticipating the fringes of the region will grow. When the Draft Plan is presented, it will include all the details about the public involvement and the process of development. Public Works Director John Joiner pointed out that it is easy to confuse MPO projects with a longer-term CIP process. It is a planning tool to look at where the federal dollars should be spent.

Mayor Haila mentioned that the Council hasn't had a conversation yet about the road diet, and Project No. 19 shows a road diet from four lanes to three lanes. He noted that the project could be a conversation within itself. He wanted to know if the project on 13<sup>th</sup> and Grand Avenue scored higher because it was a state project. Mr. Ray commented that the 13<sup>th</sup> and Grand Avenue project scored high due to being a state roadway, congestion, and the amount of it being a safety issue. Mayor Haila stated that the area will have a lot of public input and inquired if some properties were going to be removed to widen the road. Mr. Pregitzer stated that there have been issues in the past, but by taking a more complete streets approach, a more content sensitive approach for design would be beneficial. He noted that Project Nos. 16 and 13 would have to go through an extensive planning phase and design phase before any construction would be done. Mayor Haila wanted to know if Project No. 16 wasn't able to move forward would the money be lost or would it be available for a different project. Mr. Pregitzer stated that the funds would never leave the account and would go to another project

Ms. Olson stated she had a question about Project No. 22, which lists that Story County may be a potential sponsor. She wanted to know why as that area is all City property. Mr. Pregitzer stated it was a typo and they will get it fixed.

Boone County Supervisor Bill Zinnel asked how the scoring was done. Traffic Engineer Pregitzer stated that the consultant took the scoring criteria that is a combination of the national performance measures and feedback from the public input process. The raw scoring was done by the consultant and its team, and then the Technical Committee reviewed the projects to make sure it met the needs of the City.

Council Member Gartin questioned why the recommendation for a road diet on Lincoln Way from four lanes to three lanes would be beneficial when they are trying to increase economic activity on those roads. He felt it would be counterintuitive to go from four to three lanes when there is potential growth to that area. Mr. Pregitzer explained that the road diet is from Gilchrist Street to Duff Avenue, and the thought process was that if the area did become a heavy commercial area that a four-lane undivided road with a bunch of turning traffic has a lot of safety issues and effectively operates no differently than a three-lane road. He noted that another thing that could become a

benefit would be to reconstruct the street to have three lanes of traffic and have additional space in the right-of-way to provide street or pedestrian scaping. Mayor Haila stated that the area is also Highway 69 and asked if the IA DOT would approve a road diet. Mr. Pregitzer stated that would have to be part of the design and justification process.

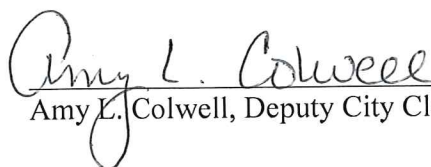
Council Member Gartin stated he appreciated the fact that they received input and guidance from the Ames Bicycle Coalition, but it seemed as if there could be a couple of different fundamental ways to prioritize the way in which they work on the bike trail system. He spends a lot of time on the trails and there are some unconnected parts. Mr. Gartin mentioned that one approach could be they want to connect the recreational areas, could prioritize the trail system for commuting, or look at how to get students to Iowa State University. He wanted to know how to take the three different types of approaches and build them into a strategy. Mr. Pregitzer pointed out that on the bicycle and pedestrian scoring map, the red lines show a lot of the recreational connections and potentially the Iowa trail system. Part of the reason that those were not part of the Plan was due to his comment made earlier about not federalizing all projects. Traffic Engineer Pregitzer stated that they could still make the park connections, but would likely do those trails with local money. They want to be able to accommodate all users.

Council Member Betcher mentioned that she had a question regarding the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. She stated that on Project No. 30, which is the Avenue bike boulevard that connects the stub that is currently there to Lincoln Way, it is listed as a mid-term project. Ms. Betcher mentioned that the City has had that stub of the bike boulevard on Ash Avenue for several years; was done as a trial project. She wanted to know if the City has accessed the trail and if it is something that bikers appreciate and use. Some of the residents in the Ash area have been concerned about the vehicle speed in the area. Mr. Pregitzer stated that bike boulevard was done in response to the athletic fields that were done as part of ISU, and as far as he has heard, it has been a positive route if you are on the route. The difficulty is getting in and out of that section, and there are accessibility enhancement funds in the CIP to build a better connection on the south end by Mortensen Parkway. It would have to build a crossing on the north end. Mr. Pregitzer mentioned that speed etc., will need to be something else that they will have to study before they finalize any designs.

Mr. Pregitzer said to email him with any other concerns or questions.

**POLICY COMMITTEE COMMENTS:** Ms. Olson thanked Brian Ray and Damion Pregitzer for their hard work.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Gartin, to adjourn the AAMPO Transportation Policy Committee meeting at 7:35 p.m.

  
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Amy L. Colwell, Deputy City Clerk

  
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John A. Haila, Mayor

*Diane R. Voss*

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk