

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

AMES, IOWA

JULY 18, 2023

The Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) Transportation Policy Committee meeting was called to order by Ames Mayor Pro Tem and voting member Gloria Betcher at 6:00 p.m. on the 18th day of July, 2023. Other voting members present were: Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, City of Ames; Amber Corrieri, City of Ames; Rachel Junck, City of Ames; Anita Rollins, City of Ames; and Linda Murken, Story County Board of Supervisors. Ames Transit Agency Representative Jian Janes was brought in telephonically. Ames Mayor and voting member John Haila was absent. Voting member Tim Gartin, City of Ames; entered the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF 190TH STREET CORRIDOR STUDY: Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer discussed the background of the study and shared that the focus was on solving capacity issues with anticipated growth based on the “Forward 2045” plan. He also reminded the Committee that this was a potential conceptual project to be utilized for long range planning. Consultant Senior Traffic Engineer Jennifer McCoy, of Bolton & Menk, presented the findings and technical analysis. The study covered the 190th Street Corridor from George Washington Carver Avenue to US 69/Grand Avenue while focusing on the three main intersections’ existing and forecasted traffic operations.

Ms. McCoy detailed the stakeholder outreach completed by Bolton & Menk. The main themes from respondents were needs for more lighting, more bike/pedestrian infrastructure, speeding, roundabouts, and school-related traffic concerns. For each intersection signal and roundabout alternative studies were completed, then scored based on criteria developed by the consulting firm. Cost, efficiency, safety, pedestrian crossing, peak vehicle delays and queues, and emission impacts were all considered. Ms. McCoy shared the projected timelines these improvements would be needed, noting that future Capital Improvements Plans (CIP) would need to accommodate for these projects in the coming years, as improvements were needed as soon as 2030 at all three intersections.

Another aspect noted in the presentation was the jurisdiction of each intersection. Engineer Pregitzer noted these projected jurisdiction shares were based on existing cost-share agreements, but noted that could change based on actual construction, costs, and where the design would require expansion. Ms. McCoy clarified for Council Member Junck that the projected construction costs did include rough estimates for land purchase, but that would be subject to change as construction plans were made more specific. Council Member Gartin asked how projected traffic was generated, as there was a lot of weight on the Committee to “get these plans right.” Ms. McCoy shared it was based on the Forward 2045 plan provided by Traffic Engineer Kyle Thompson.

Engineer Pregitzer answered a question from Mayor Pro Tem Betcher on impacts of projected declining private vehicle ownership, explaining that the long-range planning numbers are based on Department of Transportation (DOT) recommendations, and the DOT has not yet given the recommendation to plan on less private vehicle ownership. He then clarified that the DOT does take into consideration the age of existing vehicles and trends in electric vehicles when developing their emission method models. Committee Member Murken inquired about potential safety concerns if both roundabouts and signals were used in the same corridor. Ms. McCoy stated that there was enough distance between the intersections that no complications of that nature were predicted. Engineer Pregitzer noted there had been no complaints in the Iowa State University (ISU) Research Park area where roundabouts were used in answer to Committee Member Janes question of safety with constant student turnover in the area.

Ms. McCoy shared the Committee has an opportunity to define access management in the area for future development in the area. Engineer Pregitzer noted that these models assumed urbanization would be happening in these areas, but there was no engineering done on that aspect. These studies were to be used to set an expectation as development occurs. Ms. McCoy presented a potential implementation plan to help guide future planning, sharing that these were only recommendations on how projects could be added into the long-range plan based on the predicted timeframes the project would be needed. Engineer Pregitzer stated that this table assumed no constraints on time or funding and thus would need to be adjusted.

Mayor Pro Tem Betcher presented questions and concerns on behalf of Mayor Jon Popp of Gilbert, who was not able to attend. Engineer Pregitzer and Ms. McCoy spoke to those concerns and provided further background information to the rest of the Committee. It was shared that the Climate Action Plan accepted by the City of Ames was not an MPO document, and thus was not factored into this study. The involvement of the DOT was highlighted as a valued partnership that was intertwined extensively but was not mentioned in detail in the report as it was an assumption of the study.

Mayor Pro Tem Betcher also noted that accepting the plan did not commit the Committee to carrying it out in the way the report suggested. Engineer Pregitzer noted that there was no timeframe restraint on accepting the report, but that the basis for not accepting reports was usually that there was a technical error. The Committee debated the merit of accepting the report or tabling the vote until the next meeting.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Corrieri, to accept the report.

Vote on Motion: 2-6. Voting Aye: Corrieri, Gartin. Voting Nay: Betcher, Beatty-Hansen, Janes, Junck, Murken, and Rollins. Motion failed.

Moved by Junck, seconded by Murken, to table the vote to August 8, 2023.

Vote on Motion: 6-2. Voting Aye: Betcher, Beatty-Hansen, Janes, Junck, Murken, and Rollins. Voting Nay: Corrieri, Gartin. Motion passed.

Moved by Murken, seconded by Janes, to review MPO documents that constitute the organization.

Motion withdrawn.

Committee Member Corrieri noted that the bylaws for the organization were available on the City of Ames website for review.

Traffic Engineer Thompson confirmed that the next AAMPO meeting would be held August 8, 2023, due to a DOT request for a TIP amendment.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF S. DUFF AVENUE INTERCHANGE AND CORRIDOR STUDY: Consultant Mike Forsburg of HDR presented the background and findings of the study. He highlighted that S. Duff and Airport Road, including the US 30 interchange, was the most heavily traveled service interchange in Ames, and that there were currently inefficient operations due to the configurations of the interchange. This area was also noted as being an area where significant growth was expected to necessitate updates in the next 20-25 years. Mr. Forsburg shared the goals of the study were to reduce delays and queuing, improve safety, prepare for future growth, improve multi-modal facilities, and better accommodate event traffic. He highlighted current planned improvements in the area that the study took into consideration when preparing the report.

Mr. Forsburg presented the factors that were evaluated in the corridor assessment: traffic forecasts, operations, safety, and multimodal interactions, highlighting how the project goals were used to evaluate any future changes. The two alternatives identified as being the most viable were a single point interchange and a diverging diamond point interchange. He highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each option, as well as the cost and additional work needed for each option. Mr. Forsburg explained diverging diamond point interchanges were becoming more popular in peer communities and were expected to become more widespread throughout the United States in the coming years. It also had the advantage of being less expensive, though it would add another traffic signal.

The study also identified build alternatives already in the CIP for the City of Ames at Airport Road that would tie into easing traffic stressors in the corridor. Additional build alternatives that could be included in conjunction with the planned CIP were also identified. Civil Engineer Mark Gansen shared that a Request for Proposals (RFP) would be issued for the design work for these projects, at which point the City would reach out to stakeholders. Build alternatives for S 16th Street were evaluated and presented as well. Mr. Forsburg presented the final evaluation that used the project goals as well as fuel efficiency/emissions, public acceptance, and planning level costs to rank each option. The results were compared to a no-build scenario where nothing new was implemented, with the diverging diamond interchange being the best overall option.

Mr. Forsburg stated that through stress tests, HDR was able to determine that either option would handle more than a 20% increase in what was observed during peak afternoon traffic averages. He shared this increases the resilience of the system with the adaptive signal technology and additional capacity. Engineer Pregitzer noted that other projects were being planned around Iowa State

University and the addition of lanes on S. Duff would lessen the pinch point for event traffic by allowing all available tools to be leveraged.

Mayor Pro Tem Betcher inquired what extent the added DOT costs for the single point intersection mean for the ability of the MPO to select an option, versus having one selected by default based on cost. Engineer Pregitzer stated that the State of Iowa has its own DOT priorities, so the more the MPO is able to collaborate with the wishes of the DOT and the growth needs of the MPO, the more likely the area is to see their projects being programmed. Mr. Forsburg expressed his belief that selecting the more expensive option may result in a larger cost share for the City or delayed programming. He also shared that the fuel efficiencies for both interchange options were very close. For cost estimates, Mr. Forsburg stated the potential cost share responsibility for the City was 50% but may change depending on Federal and State grants. He furthered that the MPO's was competing at a local level for funding, with statewide competition for DOT funds, and national competition for any discretionary funding.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Rollins, to accept the report.
Vote on Motion: 8-0. Motion declared passed unanimously.

POLICY COMMITTEE COMMENTS: Council Member Gartin shared a reminder that the long-range growth plan is to add 15,000 people to the community, which requires balance between housing availability and transportation to support climate change goals.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Murken, seconded by Junck, to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m.
Vote on Motion: 8-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.



Grace Bandstra, Deputy City Clerk



John A. Haila, Mayor



Renee Hall, City Clerk