

Public Safety & Transportation Des Moines City Council Committee Minutes May 8, 2008

Meeting called to order: 5:32 PM on May 8, 2008 in north conference room at 21630 11th Avenue South, Des Moines, WA 98198

Purpose:

Presentation by consultants (Mirai Transportation) to provide update on Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) 2008 Update

Attendees: Dan Sherman, Mayor ProTem, Ed Pina, Councilmember, Tony Piasecki, City Manager, Grant Fredricks, PB&PW Director, Dan Brewer, Asst. Director Transportation & Engineering. Absent: Dave Kaplan, Chairman.

Guests: Katherine Casseday and Don Samdahl, Mirai Transportation Planning & Engineering

Discussion Items:

1. Upcoming Open House for CTP Update

An open house meeting for the public to learn about the CTP Update is scheduled for June 10, from 6-8PM in the Council Chambers. We have prepared an article describing the CTP Update underway for the City Currents and will advertise the open house in the Des Moines News. We plan a briefing for the full Council at the June 5th Council meeting. The open house will be an opportunity for the public to give input and comments about current conditions of the transportation network as well as provide guidance for dealing with the planned growth in Des Moines.

2. Overview of CTP Existing Conditions

Katherine provided a quick review of maps illustrating existing conditions of the transportation network, ranging from a map showing the existing sidewalks, bike lanes and existing street functional classification. Dan noted that a recently complete paving job provided a new bike lane installation with center turn lanes on S 260th Street between 16th Avenue South and Pacific Highway South. The map showing number of average accidents per year by intersection – seems to be high at some locations – and it was requested that data be sorted by year to reflect some recent project implementations that should have positive impact on safety.

- Ed and Dan would like to see a chart showing the number of accidents per year – showing changes over time.

3. Highlights of Stakeholder Interviews and Comments

Katherine handed out a summary of issues raised by stakeholders through the interviews conducted for the CTP Update. The issues were categorized into five sections:

- Streets and Intersections, Transit, Parking, Non-Motorized and Parking Issues.
- It was suggested that the summary be forwarded to Denise Lathrop as reference to her work in the City Center.

4. Review of CTP Policies: Level of Service Standard

Dan and Katherine reviewed the current operation of the signalized intersections in Des Moines – those on Pacific Highway operate at or near capacity during the evening peak hour. There are some key points of constraint in Des Moines with low level of service (operating at or near capacity) – Marine View Drive at S 216th Street/7th Avenue S, Marine View Drive at Des Moines Memorial Drive are two examples.

The City's current level of service standard is LOS D. Dan noted that a challenge with the standard, as written, is that it isn't defined well enough – is this an intersection standard? Is it for a corridor? Is it just for the PM peak hour, or any time of the day? There have been multiple interpretations of the standard – and as a result, it's difficult for City staff to enforce. For the Des Moines Creek Business Park, no mitigation was identified for the intersection of S 216th Street at Pacific Highway South because it has an exception – LOS F is allowed at S 216th and at Kent-Des Moines Road intersections with Pacific Highway. That means that there is no mitigation required for any project adding more traffic through these intersections – even though there might be some changes made to the intersection to make a difference.

Don Samdahl walked the Committee through a discussion of level of service policy and some options for the City to consider. (See attached power point handout) City staff would like to examine and move toward a more systematic approach to level of service – to more clearly define the standard to apply, to be flexible to the needs of Des Moines. It would be good to explore if a LOS standard by approach to Pacific Highway could work to help manage traffic and impacts. Even with a LOS F standard, there may be side-street approach needs that should be mitigated.

Comments made:

SR 99 is regional and we don't control the traffic on it.

Don't change the standard to make congestion worse.

LOS E is ok in the downtown area.

It's important that the neighborhood streets are protected from impacts due to diverted traffic.

Where Pacific Highway is outside of Des Moines, our standard might be more appropriately for the approach, not the whole intersection.

How can we preserve the side street access and/or ability to cross the major street?

It may be that a pedestrian bridge is needed over Pacific Highway at Kent Des Moines Road – since intersection operation must handle pedestrian crossing times, it's a challenge to make the intersection operate smoothly.

Committee Direction

The Committee provided input to Katherine, Don and Dan for the CTP Update. The following points were part of the discussion:

Keep the traffic flowing on the arterials – to keep the traffic out of the neighborhoods. The Committee generally supports a refined definition of the level of service standard.

Discussion items raised:

Des Moines and Kent need to work better together for joint transportation issues.

Need to get the SR 509 Committee active again – to address the outstanding needs without SR 509 extension to I-5.

Military Road is an under-used arterial – a smooth route for through traffic.

Dan is working closely with King County to implement Rapid Ride on SR 99/Pacific Highway South. There will be signal coordination through the corridor and coordination with Kent, Federal Way and SeaTac.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Notes submitted by Katherine Casseday