



**Prosperity & Livability Committee**  
***Members: Ewing, Hill, Wagner and Williams***  
***Chaired by Council Member Ewing***  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Lobby Conference Room**  
**June 7, 2017 – 9:00 A.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:**

Committee Chair Jason Ewing, and Committee Members Alyce Hill, Jay Wagner and Chris Williams

**Also Present:**

Council Member Cynthia Davis

**Staff Present:**

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation; Heidi Galanti, Planning and Development; Matt Carpenter, Traffic Operations Engineer; Terry Houk, Director of Public Services; Robby Stone, Assistant Public Services Director; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development and Housing; Andy Piper, Senior Planner; Maria Smith, Deputy City Clerk, and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

**Others Present:**

Judy Stalder, TREBIC

**News Media:**

None Present

**1. Discussion- Bike Paths on Green Drive**

Matt Carpenter, Traffic Operations Engineer, provided an update on this NCDOT project. The proposal is to take Green Drive from two lanes in each direction (four lanes total), down to one lane each direction with a two-way left turn lane and bike lanes on each side, as well as install crosswalks, loading zones, signal upgrades, striping, etc.... The project will start at Brentwood on the east and will go to Main Street on the west. The big change will be at University, where there is currently a thru-left lane and a thru-right in each direction and it is proposed to take that down to a thru-right and a left turn only in each direction. Staff will change the phasing of that intersection to address most of this, but anticipates some additional delay for vehicles passing

through that intersection. Although it is anticipated that the queues will increase, staff will be able to process the traffic in the same amount of time. Back-ups are anticipated in this area due to only one lane going through and some traffic keeping straight, while others are trying to make a right turn. Those making the right turn must wait in the queue for the opportunity to take the right.

As part of the growing pains, Chairman Ewing asked if staff foresees over anxious motorists trying to move into the bike lane and turn right. Mr. Carpenter did not think so due to the narrowness of the lane, but acknowledged that someone might try it.

Mr. Carpenter advised that the traffic island on Green Drive at Park Street has been removed by Public Services as a means to make the three-lane cross section work at this intersection. The area on the left-hand side will be striped with three lanes of traffic and a bike lane on the right. Crossing over to Centennial, that will continue and will eventually wind up with some really wide lanes or the possibility of adding some loading zones. Mr. Carpenter pointed out a loading zone is being proposed near the IHFC parking lot to the west, as well as a loading zone as you come up to Hamilton because during the Furniture Market trucks already take advantage of those areas to load/unload.

Chairman Ewing asked what is on this stretch that would encourage people to get their bikes out and ride the one-half, three-quarter mile stretch on Brentwood. Mr. Carpenter replied that while he was out doing research and collecting data on that stretch of Green Drive, he did observe plenty of bikes on Green Drive, so at least it would give those bikers somewhere to be rather than in the street.

Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation shared that the channelization down to one lane will temper speed and providing the center left turn lane would make a dedicated place for people to make left turns into driveways, etc.... He stated he was not aware of any issues involving rear-end collisions of any particular location out there, but providing the turn lane would definitely further the use.

Committee Member Williams agreed that the most complaints would more than likely come from the intersection at University/Green. Committee Member Wagner felt a little congestion would slow traffic down, as well as make it safer for people to walk in the area. Chairman Ewing asked if the church on the corner was still active and Committee Member Williams replied the owner has rented it out to various ministers from time to time.

Mr. McCaslin noted staff just wanted to make the Committee aware that NCDOT is heading in this direction with this project, but if there was total opposition to it, there might be enough time to go back to NCDOT. At this time, Council Member C. Davis asked staff if the other Council members would get to see the plan or if staff plans to just push it through without members of Council having a say on whether or not they agree. Mr. McCaslin reiterated this is a NCDOT project and it could possibly be changed, but staff wanted to just make sure that the Committee was aware that it was forthcoming.

Chairman Ewing asked staff to explain why only two crosswalks were proposed across four lanes of traffic. Mr. Carpenter explained that the predominant pedestrian movements are on the north

side and that's why the crosswalk is located there. Mr. McDonald suggested it might be possible to add crosswalks on the other two legs since signal upgrades would be done.

Committee Member Williams mentioned speeding issues that Oakgrove Church has been experiencing due to the hill when people try to exit out of the church parking lot and noted that he did ask the city manager at one time if it might be possible to install some caution lights there. Mr. McDonald felt the channelization and the thru-traffic into one lane would also help slow it down.

Mr. McCaslin asked if there were any additional questions. There being none, he asked Mr. Carpenter to forward the presentation to him so he could get it to the rest of Council.

## **2. Sidewalks and Trees**

Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin prefaced discussion on this matter with a reminder that the Committee had requested that staff look into the sidewalk replacement and tree issue.

Robby Stone, Assistant Director of Public Services, presented some examples/illustrations of damaged sidewalks involving trees/plantings, etc.... that were not specific as to location, but could be found anywhere. He noted that the 1990 ADA defines a trip hazard as "any vertical change over one-quarter of an inch," which equates to a minimum height separation.

Mr. Stone noted the 3-foot minimum is now the standard that the Engineering Department is holding for new development, but in the case of older development, there may be many areas that may be less. He noted the discussion and focus today was regarding the trees/plantings near sidewalks and the issues that could arise when something is planted in the 3-foot minimum strip or issues that may arise when something is planted on the private property side beyond and adjacent to the sidewalk.

The Committee then discussed various issues surrounding sidewalks in general and the damage that can be caused by plantings/trees.

Staff suggested these could be addressed by:

1. Removing the tree, grind the stump and replace the sidewalk section, or
2. Grinding any trip hazards; or
3. Doing a combination of these things.

Mr. Stone mentioned several different construction methods that staff has done in the past to repair sidewalks and broke it down into six areas:

Area 1: Root bearing matting that deters roots from growing upward.

Area 2: Took #4 rebars (one-half inch diameter rebar) and tied the sidewalks sections together.

Area 3: Used double fiber concrete to strengthen the concrete.

Area 4: Used standard concrete.

Area 5: Used wire reinforcement with 4-inch grids (chipping wire) to tie sidewalks together.

Area 6: Used wire reinforcement along with a double fiber concrete.

Staff found none of these to be the true answer in resolving all the sidewalk issues.

Mr. McCaslin asked staff to expound on the trees that are on the approved list for planting near streets. Andy Piper, Senior Planner, advised they have a recommended list, but it is not all inclusive. They have an index to identify types of trees and which ones are better near sidewalks, overhead lines, etc.... and staff is looking at updating some of that information.

Staff suggested to continue addressing sidewalk repairs on a case-by-case basis. Mr. McCaslin offered assurances that staff would address the worst of the worst situations.

Chairman Ewing advised he was okay with staff continuing to address these on a case-by-case basis and researching what other options might be out there that are more financially prudent than just replacing sections of sidewalk every so many years.

### **3. Discussion- Community Gardens**

There was no one present from the Community Garden Group (Urban AG, Food Alliance, Hayden-Harman Foundation, etc...). Mr. McCaslin noted that he did not believe this was an official request, but the group had sent an email to the city manager asking for the following:

- ✓ Soil
- ✓ Additional lots
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Taps
- ✓ Cost of the meter

Staff advised that currently the Hayden Harman Foundation has paid for taps at most of the current locations and they have picked up the monthly cost as well, but they are wanting some different considerations possibly for the city to comp and cover these costs. Mr. McCaslin strongly suggested if Council desires to go this route, that a grant program be set up similar to the community grants with a specific number of dollars in the budget with certain criteria being developed to distribute the funds.

Committee Member Williams asked if staff has any information as far as how much vegetables, produce, etc.... has been produced. Mr. McCaslin replied that he was not sure, but believed this information may be in the email that was sent out.

Chairman Ewing suggested that staff contact the Community Garden Group and ask them to have representatives come to the August Prosperity & Livability Committee Meeting and in the meantime, he asked the Committee members to be thinking about some options.

**Motion was made and carried unanimously by the Committee to place this matter on the August 2, 2017 Prosperity & Livability Committee meeting agenda and directed staff to compile data of what the city currently does give from a tonnage standpoint as far as soil, as well as other in-kind services, and come up with recommendations for discussion from a policy level. [4-0 vote]**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Lisa B. Vierling, MMC  
City Clerk

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Jason P. Ewing, Chairman

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