

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
PLANNING BOARD ACTION ITEMS
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Motion carried, 6-0.	11

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING BOARD
WEDNESDAY, JULY 10, 2013
City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held July 10, 2013. Vice-Chairperson Gillian Lazar convened the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Present: Vice-Chairperson Gillian Lazar; Board Members Scott Clein, Carroll DeWeese, Bert Koseck, Janelle Whipple-Boyce, Bryan Williams

Absent: Chairman Robin Boyle; Student Representative Arshon Afrakhteh

Administration: Deputy Police Chief Mark Clemence
Brendan Cousino, Asst. City Engineer
Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary
Jim Singelyn, Asst. City Planner

07-109-13

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING BOARD MEETING
HELD JUNE 12, 2013**

Motion by Mr. DeWeese

Seconded by Mr. Clein to accept the Minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting of June 12, 2013 as presented.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: DeWeese, Clein, Koseck, Lazar, Whipple-Boyce, Williams

Nays: None

Absent: Boyle

07-110-13

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS (none)

07-111-13

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (no change)

07-112-13

PUBLIC HEARING

To consider recommending adoption of the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan to the City Commission

Ms. Ecker gave a brief introduction and then turned the meeting over to Mr. Norm Cox, Consultant from Greenway Collaborative who put the plan together. The Multi-Modal Plan is a plan to make sure that all of the streets work for all users: drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users. When the project kicked off they started with a Steering Committee to oversee the process and represent the general public. The Steering Committee consists of representatives from the various boards, Police, Engineering, Planning, Staff, and individual residents.

In addition, there has been public input all along which has been woven into the Plan. The most comments they have received were concerns about the traffic signal at Lake Park and Maple Rd. and the traffic signal at Adams and Buckingham. Several options have been laid out as to which one the public would like to occur.

The Planning Board can decide tonight whether they want to take action on the Plan and send it to the City Commission.

Mr. Williams indicated his vote would be to keep the light at Lake Park and Maple Rd.

The meeting was then turned over to Mr. Norm Cox who informed everyone they have been working with Toole Design Group, the engineer on the project. He went through some of the major structural changes from the June draft of the Plan:

- Added policy and program recommendations for what the City will undertake.
- Removed section dealing with education and enforcement recommendations.
- Community partner programs that are undertaken by a non-governmental agency were moved to Appendix.
- Expanded reduction in Woodward Ave. along with how to immediately address the Oak St. improvements.
- Added language regarding Oakland Ave. and getting across Woodward Ave.
- Clarified location of crossing islands.

Mr. Cox went on to list some of the key items where multiple comments were heard from the public. He noted the Plan focuses on the safety needs of pedestrians and bicycles while continuing to serve the needs of motorized traffic. Most of the improvements are within the existing curbs of the roadway and can be moved forward quickly and economically. Mainly the Plan builds on the walkable community brand that already exists. Many of the improvements are designed to accomplish multiple goals.

The Plan sets up structure where there is good inter-departmental coordination at the very beginning of a project and then it is brought to representatives of the public for their

input before getting into the design drawings. Mr. Cox presented a PowerPoint covering the following:

- About two and one-half miles of additional sidewalks are recommended along the major roadways.
- Forty-two curb extensions which shorten the distance for pedestrians to cross are planned for road crossings.
- Nine crossing islands, three with rectangular flashing beacons, are proposed.
- Eighteen road crossings are proposed to be upgraded.
- 3.7 miles of bike lanes are planned for the primary road system.
- Four to three lane conversions (“road diets”) are being considered because they are proven to reduce crashes and their severity.
- Buffered bike lanes protect from high speed traffic.
- Shared lane markings encourage bikers to go with the flow of travel.
- Neighborhood connectors use local roadways combined with wayfinding to link up with some new and existing pathways. At a busy road, there is a crossing island or signal to cross safely.
- Bicycle parking is expanded; enclosed and secured parking is proposed within the decks.
- Transit facility enhancements coordinate pedestrian crossing improvements with bus stop locations.
- Specific intersection recommendations. A number of viable alternatives are identified for each of eight locations. Some are dependent on other roadway changes.
- Network Implementation Plan Phase 1 includes bike lanes, shared lane markings, and a lot of road crossing improvements. Working with what the City already has is a cost-effective approach. Cost is \$1.3 m.
- Phase 2 shows bike lanes, a lot of shared lane markings, neighborhood connector routes, and continuing with road crossing improvements. Cost is \$1 m.
- Phase 3 adds more bike lanes, shared lane markings, another level of neighborhood connector routes, road crossing improvements, active transportation hubs.
- Phase 4 offers limited cost effective solutions working within the existing roadway.
- Approximately fifteen miles of new facilities are proposed in all four phases.
- Specific area plans are provided for Lincoln, W. Maple Rd., Woodward Ave., and Downtown.

In response to a request from Mr. Williams, Mr. Cox explained the alternatives for the Maple Rd./Lake Park and Adams/Buckingham intersections. He noted that the cost to replace a signal is substantial, which is part of the reason for looking at whether removing a signal is a viable option. In talking to their engineer about concerns of getting out of the neighborhood with the four to three lane conversion, he said speeds will be slower and two-step left turns will be possible. Therefore it will be easier to get out of the side streets than currently with the four lanes and the signal. This can be tested before committing.

Mr. Williams asked about the proposal for the bottom of the hill at Baldwin. Mr. Cox replied the proposed solution is the three-lane configuration with flashing beacons and a crossing island in the middle.

Mr. DeWeese stated they are moving in the right direction but he doesn't think they are there yet as a master plan for the City to follow. The introduction needs to clarify the reason for the Plan. There seems to be an apparent bias toward pedestrians and bicycles. It does not come across that the process is a vision. There are some options, and the community needs to take these as guidelines and determine what is appropriate.

Mr. Koseck observed that he did not expect this level of detail as part of the master plan. Ms. Ecker said the feedback from staff indicated they need to find a way to integrate all of the perspectives. This isn't a typical master plan. It has an overall vision but it also shows technically how it can work and how it can build the system on the ground.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said that as she went through the plan she wished it could be written more like the 2016 Plan which is much less specific and gives the opportunity to adapt a plan according to the times. Mr. Cox explained that as they outlined the network of different connectivities they wanted to avoid things that can happen when only one corridor at a time is looked at.

Mr. DeWeese commented the Plan is good because it allows people to deal with specifics rather than having a grand idea which is in full disagreement with the particulars. Mr. DeWeese thought it is positive that this effort deals with planning issues in the residential neighborhoods which haven't been touched in years. It is the first comprehensive plan that has been put forth for the whole city in decades.

Vice-Chairperson Lazar observed she lives in close proximity to two cross-walks, one with an island and one without. Neither works. She doesn't think motorists understand the importance of giving way to pedestrians. Therefore, she doesn't want to see a cross-walk as an alternative to a light.

The vice-chairperson turned discussion over to the public at 8:40 p.m.

Ms. Alicia Chandler, 955 Shirley, said she is president of the Coryell Park Association and came to address concerns on behalf of the association. In talking about the plan for Maple Rd. there are five areas to look at:

- 1) The impact of traffic on Maple Rd. in the stretch.
- 2) How any proposed changes would impact the volume of traffic that diverts from Maple Rd. down to Lincoln.
- 3) The ability to turn left from their neighborhood if the light at Lake Park is removed.
- 4) Impact on the Fire Station at Chesterfield if that light is removed.

5) Impact on Shirley and Arlington of the potential for increased cut-through traffic. Also, they think it is important that the residents of any neighborhood with proposed sidewalks be given the opportunity for input on whether the sidewalks are added and how they are added.

Ms. Fran Linden, 380 Aspen, is opposed to removal of any of the traffic signals on Maple Rd., as well as the reduction from four lanes to three lanes, and bike lanes in the street. Add a policeman to stop speeders and people who run the light.

Ms. Cynthia Kelly, 1991 E. Lincoln, objected to a bike lane that will remove any on-street parking that she can have.

Mr. Pierre Boutros, 285 Hawthorne and owner of Mills Pharmacy, said narrowing to three lanes along Maple Rd. will cause traffic congestion and make it even harder than it is now to cross. More study needs to be done.

Ms. Sharon McMaster, 1592 Buckingham, thought a summary of the Plan would really help. A traffic island encourages people to take the risk of running into traffic to get to the safe zone. Removing the light at Adams is a concern. Narrowing the lanes on Adams for a bike lane will further back the traffic up.

In response to a question on regional multi-modal planning efforts, Ms. Ecker advised that Oakland County has been putting together a S. Oakland County Bike Plan that identifies the most comfortable routes for bicyclists. Also, SEMCOG is doing a non-motorized plan to try and link up all of the communities. Mr. O'Meara clarified the eight intersections identified in the Plan have all been there 50 years or more and may not be operating as when they were first implemented. The signal lights are reaching their end and it is time for re-examination.

Mr. Dan Beyer, 1380 Buckingham, echoed comments in favor of keeping the light on Maple Rd. He has not heard any evidence that the Traffic and Safety Board has weighed in on the Plan. The cost of maintaining the improvements is a concern. He questioned the demand by members of the community for improved walkways or the claim that people feel the need to bicycle to work. Concerns that are thought to be the basis for the plan may not really be there. It has been determined this is an effective pedestrian community as it is. Ms. Ecker noted that a Traffic and Safety Board member is on the Steering Committee and the Traffic and Safety Board has been involved throughout.

Mr. Larry Bertolini, 1275 Webster, commented on all the curb extensions along Eton between Maple Rd. and Lincoln. It is great to slow down traffic, but on the other hand he does not want to spend more time in traffic. He loves the idea of having a cycling network in a community. He would like to see more focus on the intersection at Maple Rd. and Eton. For pedestrians, a change in material rather than just striping might be needed. Further, the intersection at Melton and Eton is important and presently there is a long cross-walk there.

Ms. Tanya Shrem, 1111 Dorchester, said she would have no idea how to get out of her house if the light on Maple Rd. is gone.

Ms. Johanna Slanger, 1875 Winthrop, said she chairs the Steering Committee. She wanted everyone to understand that the Committee shares a lot of the concerns voiced this evening and the Plan was done with a lot of thought.

Mr. Bill Dow, 1347 Yorkshire, thought it would be irresponsible for this board to make any recommendation to the City Commission without input from the Traffic and Safety Board. He was concerned that the light at Adams and Buckingham should not be changed or moved because of the traffic back-up that has been talked about. There has to be coordination with SEMCOG and the surrounding communities to connect more bike traffic.

Mr. Mark Colton, 411 Linden, said he supports the concerns that have been raised about the stop light at Lake Park and Maple Rd. and about the "road diet." Bicyclists can always figure how to get around; they will not take Woodward Ave. or Maple Rd. and put their lives in danger.

Mr. George Manoogian, 1100 Westboro, said if the signal at Adams and Buckingham is removed or shortened they will never get out of Westboro. He agrees that a study is needed. People coming down Adams are speeding and a police officer is needed there.

Mr. Dorothy Conrad, 2252 Yorkshire, said she finds nothing in the Plan that addresses the pedestrian crossings on Maple Rd. between Eton and Adams. The crossings that exist at Eton and Maple Rd. are horrendous. She asked that Plan incorporate some pedestrian proposals for those intersections.

Mr. Greg Appel, 1610 Buckingham, president of the Birmingham Estates Homeowners Assoc., spoke against taking away the light at Adams and Buckingham. If lanes are taken away on Maple Rd. and on Adams with the concept of adding bike lanes it will cause traffic problems. He was not sure that the needs of the more rural Birmingham are being looked at like they are for the needs of the pedestrian Birmingham.

Ms. Cheryl Daskas who lives on Aspen said she is a business owner and a member of the Principal Shopping District ("PSD") Board. She doesn't want to see Maple Rd. narrowed from four to three lanes because people will go a different route and not come downtown.

Mr. Joe Pallischeck, 329 Linden, endorsed the fact that light at Maple Rd. and Lake Park should not be removed. He does not support going from four lanes to three. Consider installing a small roundabout that has traffic slowing capability. Accelerate additional studies so recommendations can be put into the capital improvement

program for the reconstruction of W. Maple Rd. Lastly, it needs to be incorporated early in the body of the document that it is a vision and further study will be necessary.

Ms. Georgia Vitica, 667 N. Eton, cautioned that if it becomes too restrictive at Adams and Buckingham all of the traffic will go down Derby and down Eton.

Mr. David Young, 1011 Clark St., asked what impact the Pierce/Lincoln bump-outs will have on some of the side streets. Mr. Cox answered they will not inhibit traffic enough to divert it into those streets. Mr. Young further questioned if that is done, whether a traffic count can be taken before and after, and what remedies there are to rectify an adverse impact. Mr. Cox replied they always encourage before and after studies. There are many different techniques to inhibit cut-through traffic on the residential streets.

Mr. John Sieg, 1285 Westboro, said he is a member of the Birmingham Estates Homeowners Assoc. He thinks there is an inherent bias in the Plan toward bikers and that should be taken out. He questioned what led to the creation of the hundreds of pages of recommendations and what is trying to be accomplished. He reinforced the point that residents of Westboro have a difficult time getting in and out and the light at Buckingham is really needed.

Ms. Courtney Colton, 411 Linden, is opposed to removing the light at Maple Rd. and Lake Park. She questioned why all of the bike paths that people will not use are needed. Many times pedestrian walkways are terrifying because motorists do not pay attention to them. The Seaholm and Derby parking lot is a complete disaster and that should be addressed.

Ms. Ecker explained the Plan came about for multiple reasons in multiple different projects. The City Commission in general has had concerns as to why there is not better integration of processes between the Engineering, Planning, and Police Depts. so that by the time a project comes to them all of the issues have been worked out. The reason for this Plan, therefore, is to improve the process. Also, State legislation includes some Complete Streets requirements and the City Commission passed a Complete Streets Resolution in 2011. It is something that the country as a whole is moving towards.

Mr. Cox thanked everyone for taking their evening to come out. He summarized the discussion. There was dialogue about how the whole Plan needs to be introduced and what it is trying to accomplish. They have heard loud and clear that all of the side streets depend on the traffic signals to get in and out and the gaps those signals make are critical. The signals offer a higher level of security versus the mid-block uncontrolled crossing.

Mr. Clein said he is a member of the Steering Committee. One of the things he thinks the Committee let slip by is there have been fifteen or twenty years of study showing that these sorts of improvements reduce the number of crashes and their severity. The Plan needs to be more forceful in its discussion of that. Also, the National Assoc. of

Realtors has released studies that show having these improvements in the community raises home values.

Mr. Williams reminded everyone that this is a planning board, not a reactionary board, so they want input from the residents.

Mr. Pierre Boutros spoke again to say if the Plan can go without changing the lights he doesn't think anybody would object.

Motion by Mr. Williams

Seconded by Mr. DeWeese that the public hearing be continued to September 11.

Motion carried, 6-0.

ROLLCALL VOTE

Yeas: Williams, DeWeese, Clein, Lazar, Whipple-Boyce, Williams

Nays: None

Absent: Boyle

The board took a short recess at 10 p.m.

07-113-13

SPECIAL LAND USE PERMIT ("SLUP")

FINAL SITE PLAN REVIEW

1803 E. Fourteen Mile Rd.

Embury United Methodist Church

Addition of ADA compliant access ramp to rear entrance

Site Plan

Mr. Singelyn explained the subject site is 51,000 sq. ft., which includes the current Embury United Methodist Church at 1803 E. Fourteen 14 Mile Rd., and IXL Daycare which is located within the church building. The southern portion of the property is zoned O-1 Office and the northern part is zoned R-2 Single-Family Residential.

The applicant is proposing to add an ADA compliant wheel chair ramp to the west and north entrances of the church. The applicant proposes to add landscaping around the proposed wheel chair ramp. The applicant also proposes to extend the existing playground on the southwest corner of the site. The existing fenced-in playground is 19 ft. by 38 ft. The applicant proposes to expand the playground length of 19 ft. an additional 14 ft. and surround the playground with a new fence.

As this is a SLUP, the Planning Board will review the plans and make a recommendation to the City Commission. The City Commission's approval of the SLUP application or amendment shall constitute approval of the site plan and design.

Design Review

The only change proposed by the applicant is the addition of a concrete retaining wall. The ADA ramp will be concrete, with black powder coated galvanized steel guard rails to match the existing church building.

Mr. DeWeese observed the ramp is going out into the parking area and so there are seven to eight parking spaces that are affected. Also he asked whether some of the parking spots at the ramp entry need to be re-designated for handicap. Ms. Ecker noted the Building Dept. is in charge of ADA compliance and the ADA spaces have to be closest to the entrance.

In response to a question from Mr. Clein, Mr. Andrew Bayer, John Sakasian Architects, said the drive is 23 ft. wide. Parking will be parallel right next to the ramp.

Discussion concluded that parkers never fill the 70 spaces in the parking lot.

Motion by Mr. DeWeese

Seconded by Mr. Clein to approve the SLUP as well as the Final Site Plan Review for 1803 E. Fourteen Mile Rd., Embury United Methodist Church, subject to any modifications to administrative approval and subject to any potential variances required. Also, that the applicant provide a detailed list of plant species and locations for administrative approval.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: DeWeese, Clein, Koseck, Lazar, Whipple-Boyce, Williams

Nays: None

Absent: Boyle

07-114-13

COMMUNITY IMPACT STUDY (“CIS”)

PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN REVIEW

400 S. Old Woodward Ave.

Green’s Art Supply

New construction of a three-story mixed-use building

CIS

Ms. Ecker advised the applicant has not submitted a complete CIS as they are waiting for several portions of the study to be completed by the consultants, including the traffic study.

Preliminary Site Plan Review

Ms. Ecker advised the applicant is proposing to demolish the existing building and surface parking lots to construct a 58,001 sq. ft. three-story, mixed-use building. The building will provide ground floor retail, second floor office space, and six residential units on the third floor. As the building is located within the Parking Assessment District, twelve parking spots for the residential units only will be provided at grade underneath the overhang of the building along the western property line. The building is located in the D-2 Zone District.

Design Review

Ms. Ecker went on to explain the proposed building may not meet all of the architectural standards set out in Article 3 of the Zoning Ordinance, as it is unclear at this time as to whether at least 90% of the exterior finish is cast stone, granite, and glass; whether the storefront windows have mullion systems with doorways and signage integrally designed; and whether all glass is lightly tinted or clear. In addition, the percentage of glazing for the north and east facades must be provided to determine if the maximum upper level 35% has been exceeded.

The top residential floor is set back and there are terraces for each of the units on that floor.

The Planning Division will reserve detailed analysis and comments regarding architectural standards and design-related issues for the Final Site Plan and Design Review.

Mr. Koseck pointed out there is a requirement that all primary entrances be accessible from the public sidewalk.

Mr. Jason Kreiger with Kreiger Klatt Architects was present with Mr. Joey Jonna, the developer; and Mr. Riley Sieman. Mr. Kreiger explained that right now the plan calls for residents to enter through the parking garage. Therefore, they will have to plan an entrance for the residents off of Daines. In response to an inquiry from Mr. Clein, Mr. Jonna said they envision the tenant space on the corner as a bank. Nothing is certain for the remaining space. Mr. Clein suggested activating the rear entrance from the parking lot.

At Mr. Koseck's request, Mr. Kreiger described that garbage will be wheeled out to the street on pick-up day. Mr. Koseck suggested that one parking spot might be given up so that the trash may be pulled into that zone and the doors to the service are underneath in the garage. He further suggested that the landscape be combined. Also, that they make sure there is only 35 percent glazing facing the street above the first floor.

Mr. Kreiger agreed that the glass calculations for the building will be provided. With regard to signage, Ms. Ecker told him it is only allowed on the first-floor sign band. Further discussion disclosed that the building will be lit at night.

Mr. DeWeese cautioned the applicants to work closely with staff and not to hold off improvements until Final Site Plan Review. Also, think about allowing extended sidewalk space along Daines.

There were no comments from the public at 10:58 p.m.

Motion by Clein

Seconded by Mr. DeWeese with respect to 400 S. Old Woodward Ave., Green's Art Supply, that the CIS will be reviewed and the Preliminary Site Plan will be studied at the July 24th Planning Board meeting.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Clein, DeWeese, Koseck, Lazar, Whipple-Boyce, Williams

Nays: None

Absent: Boyle

07-115-13

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Ms. Dorothy Conrad voiced her concern that when an existing building changes uses many times the windows get blocked, such as the Drs' Housecall building on S. Old Woodward. Ms. Ecker agreed to look into that.

07-116-13

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Communications (none)
- b. Administrative Approvals (none)
- c. Draft Agenda for the Regular Planning Board Meeting on July 24, 2013 (not discussed)
- d. Other Business (none)

07-117-13

PLANNING DIVISION ACTION ITEMS

- a. Staff report on previous requests (none)
- b. Additional items from tonight's meeting (none)

07-118-13

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, board members motioned to adjourn at 11 p.m.

Jana Ecker
Planning Director

APPROVED