



Memo

To: City Council
CC.: Mayor Harold Perrin, Gary Harpole, Donna Jackson
From: Otis T. Spriggs, AICP- Planning Director/ Craig Light, P.E., City Engineer
Date: December 8, 2009
Re.: **Record of Proceedings- Recommendation for Approval- Master Street Plan.**

Dear Aldermen:

Below is the MAPC record of proceedings for the public hearing held on Monday, December 8, 2009 at 5:30 PM, recommending approval of the Master Street Plan.

PRESENTATION:

Mr. Spriggs introduced the Master Street Plan/Study, which was contracted out to Associated Engineering and has been completed. The MAPC is asked to review the plan for adoption to City Council. Engineering and Planning Staff are asking for your recommendation to forward to Council; Council will make the final approval. All of the documents are in Legistar along with typical right of way section details along with function classification. Your comments will be forwarded to City Council. Other attachments included those changes that need to be updated to the City Code. Those were redlined by staff. Public input is welcomed.

A brief summary of the various major arterials and southern, eastern and northern bypass were described as well as major and minor arterials to handle some of the traffic issues surrounding the area between Stadium, Johnson, Commerce, and I-63.

Mr. Tomlinson asked about the 4 ft. buffer strip between the sidewalk and the curb. He had heard that it should be a minimum of 6 ft. This was shown on the local street sections types.

Mr. Spriggs stated that the 4 ft. would compromise the safety zone and it could be modified.

Craig Light stated that the dimensions were offered by the M.P.O. office as acceptable design criteria. Currently the City has no requirements for sidewalks to be constructed; therefore it is an arbitrary

dimension at this time. The only streets that a developer would be concerned with are the local streets, they are not building the collector or principal streets.

Mr. Light stated that the primary purpose of the Master Street Plan is to determine what right-of-ways need to be protected so that we can construct these roads in the future. That's the reason we have cross sections on the arterials and the collector streets so that we can look at them as minimum dimensions but they may be larger based on the terrain; for the cut/fill slopes- The developers will be building those, so if you want to change that dimension, we can make that change immediately.

Mr. Kelton asked about the amendments to the ordinances, Section 113-84 (variances, second sentence) which does not seem to make sense. **Mr. Spriggs** stated that these regulations are from the existing ordinances and changes are being recommended for amendment. Engineering and Planning are looking at the composition of the Street Committee (appointed by City Council).

The change was noted that "a member of the City Council" will be modified. **Mr. Halsey** asked if there is any way that the Plan could go to the Public Works Committee and then back to MAPC. **Mr. Spriggs** noted that the Plan has been advertised already for the Council. The recommended changes can be made instantly.

Public Input:

Mr. Bill Hall wanted to echo the 4 ft. minimum on the cross section; the 6 ft. minimum would be a better option. The other thing to consider is the idea that on the typical sections to include additional information. We have missing, some recommendations or schematic information with the option to plant street trees. When you plant them and where they should go in relationship to utilities without interfering with traffic. It will be ideal that the typical section allows for that to show as an option.

Mr. Spriggs stated that can be accommodated. Typical cross sections do sometimes show street plants in medians. Much of this greater detail will be made in the Comprehensive Plan process. There are so many regulations that need to be looked at such as transportation, subdivision design standards, landscape code. The master street plan is a general plan in which the purpose is to preserve right of ways. There are so many codes that conflict with this that need to be addressed such as right of way obstructions and regulations restricting certain plantings within the right of way.

Mr. Bill Hall, as working as a design consultant- anytime you can provide more information it is better. If you pull out the information from other places and do not include it, there is potential to miss some coordination. I hope that in the future as we grow and continue to attract more businesses and industries, we will add street trees.

Mr. Spriggs suggested that Mr. Hall meet with the Planning and Engineering Departments to work out some of those details.

Pam Alexander, stated that she would echo everything Bill said. Bill is a wonderful resource as the only certified landscape architect in our part of the state. He is the head of the state association. He is a great mind to pick on things such as this. We need to take advantage of his knowledge and expertise.

Ms. Alexander added that her concern is that in trying to educate myself on walkability and urban forestry, I have looked at a lot of good plans out there available for viewing. I am concerned about ours. This is the only plan that doesn't have a narrative (to my knowledge). I am concerned that we are not defining things: i.e. what is a buffer. There was one drawing with an 8ft. buffer; my question is- Will it protect the pedestrian from vehicular traffic, or is that an as we grow we will have extra land available. It doesn't include drawings for slip lanes- lanes for turning to the right or cross traffic; intersection of the different modes of transport like bicycles. We need to have a clear understanding of how those modes will cross paths with one another; curb extensions, we don't have them- they are the best practice. We need to make more use of those in our town. This is the same for medians, which leads to a concern about acceptable versus preferable. If we adopted the two standards all we will get is what we will put up with. We need to set a standard and to make the acceptations to the rule be something that people have to really justify. It has to be really explained.

This week was the first time I've seen these cross section drawings. There are a lot of people out there that haven't seen these. In the land use plan these were not part of our dialogue. I hate to be critical; I hope we could have more opportunity to discuss these on down the road. Having talked to the bicycle advocates today, they were not aware of this. Their representative could not be here. They do have some concerns. What decision we make here we will have to live with for a while.

Mr. Halsey asked if there will be a public hearing on this. **Mr. Spriggs** explained that there will be other opportunities for public input. You are asked to make recommendation. **Mr. Halsey** stated that he feels it should go before the public before coming to MAPC.

Mr. Spriggs explained that the Master Street Plan was a part of a contract through the consultant. There were a series of public work sessions that occurred on a number of occasions that allowed for public participation. The plan was completed and forwarded to the City in the form of the map, cross sections and narrative. As part of the public hearing process, this allows another window of public input. It will most likely go through three readings at Council.

Mr. Kelton asked who is responsible for making the changes to the Ordinance. **Mr. Spriggs** stated that they have been made by Staff and placed in the form of an Ordinance and they have to be adopted by Council.

Mr. Halsey stressed his concerns of what the MAPC is being asked to do, the process and whether the MAPC findings will actually be presented before Council.

Mr. Spriggs asserted that all MAPC record of proceedings are forwarded to Council for any recommendations, giving the details of the meetings including public comments, special conditions, and all conclusions and votes of the MAPC.

Mr. Roberts stated that just as Otis Spriggs has said this is a living and changing document that will be added to as the City does progress and we see the reality of the sidewalks and the need for street trees.

Ms. Norma McElroy, 1005 Commerce Dr.: She wanted to make sure the people here realize that there are homes on Commerce Dr.; if this road goes there it will wipe us out. We have been there 10 years and our neighbors the Grimes have been there 40 years. We had planned on living in our home the rest of our lives. It will take the porches off some of those houses. My concern is my home. We will lose our home.

Craig Light: Clarified again that this is a right of way preservation plan. As developers come in and make requests to develop a large acre tract, this plan will be used to preserve right of way for future roads (not that they have to build it). On commerce, we see that being a major arterial; will it go through her front yard, or will it go to the east or west of her house? We do not know. This is not a design document; the details are used to determine what right of way is needed. He gave a scenario using the minimum of 120 ft. for major arterials, where actually 160 ft. minimum may be needed because of the terrain. This is not our standard of preserving the right of way. These are not our standards for putting in trees. We are going to classify all of our streets as Expressways, Major Principal or Minor Arterials, Collector Roads, Local Roads, etc.

Mr. Light urged the MAPC that they were reading too much into this. He added that he would love to see plans to have streetscaping, but this is not the proper phase of this document or process for it.

Mr. Kelton asked Mr. Light was he responsible for putting the text changes to the ordinance together, and are they his recommendations? **Mr. Light** stated that he sat down with Otis Spriggs and looked at the existing ordinance and got rid of those things that conflict with what we have now. There were two sections that had the functional classifications listed but were in conflict with one another. Staff decided to remove them for clarity and have them as part of the Map and section details.

MAPC ACTION:

The **Commission** concurred that now that it is clarified, everything is fine. **Mr. Roberts** stated that with that explanation he **moves to approve and recommend to Council, 2nd by Mr. Kelton.**

Roll Call: Mr. Collins- Aye, Mr. Tomlinson- Aye, Mr. Dover- Aye, Ms. Norris- Aye, Mr. Kelton- Aye, and Mr. Roberts- Aye. **The Master Street Plan was recommended approved with a 6 to 0 vote, unanimously.**