

PLAN UPDATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

Room 104, Shelton City Hall

Shelton, CT

Monday, August 22, 2005

I. Call to Order

Chairman Frank Osak called the meeting to order at approximately 4:10 P.M.

Members Present:

Frank Osak, Chairman	Peter DiCarlo, Co-Chairman
Tom Harbinson	Fred Musante
Jim Tate	Anthony Pogoda

Also in attendance:

Eric Barz, Planimetrics

Mike Wilson, Barkan & Mess

Marianne Chaya, Clerk

II. Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance pledged allegiance to the flag.

III. Minutes for Approval

Tom Harbinson MOVED to approve the minutes from the August 15, 2005 meeting. SECONDED by Peter DiCarlo. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

IV. Discussion on Transportation – Barkan & Mess

Mike Wilson noted that this draft was written to fit into the overall structure of Planimetrics' report. Some items are repeated in the report. This is an update to the previous master plan. This report shows that we took a more strategic look at things. We looked at current statistics regarding traffic accidents and a number of other things. We agree with Planimetrics philosophy and acknowledge that the transportation study is meant to support the development goals. To summarize, the first section is a general overview. The first item is talking about transportation planning. The next section deals with various related facilities and an overview of the roadway system. There was an effort made in the previous report regarding developing a functional classification system for the City, which we still have and have reviewed to determine if it is still appropriate due to the development and how traffic has changed since then. Mr. Wilson pointed out the map, which is detailed by road classification – freeway, principal arterial, minor arterial, collector and proposed roads.

Traffic volumes are detailed on page 4. They also looked at how the traffic has grown over recent years. Eric Barz asked why Bridgeport Ave. is shown as a minor arterial road. Mike Wilson said that was sort of a judgment call and open to upgrade it. The reason it was given the classification as a minor arterial is that much of the traffic is local.

Page 5 details the journey to work patterns derived from the 2000 census. The question arose regarding the breakdown of the other locations that Shelton residents go to for work and where the people who work in Shelton come from. Eric noted that a more detail breakdown is located on page 14 of the Conditions & Trends (book #4). The traffic accident information was a result of two sources of information; one was from ConnDOT for the state routes and the Shelton Police Dept. The high accident locations were included.

The buildout development is mentioned and noted how many additional trips per day it would generate once the buildout is realized.

The next section is the review of products where it was noted that previously recommended road projects are in the process of implementation. They discussed the federal aid funding per year. Mike Wilson discussed how the Valley Council of Governments (VCOG) played a part in the recommended projects. They noted that all the projects listed for Shelton are in different funding categories that total almost \$45M.

Construction of Constitution Blvd was discussed. Some of the projects previously recommended in the White Hills area have been reconsidered. The members pointed out that the recommended roads where they want to complete the gaps should not be an issue now, such as the extension of Aspetuck Trail, Lane Street and Oak Valley Rd.

Public transportation was talked about briefly. The section regarding the bicycle facilities and trails lists the areas ConnDOT has designated the roads as on road bicycle routes. The committee members said that some roads designated should not be as they are very narrow, such as several sections on Route 108 and some of the area on Mohegan Rd. The map provided of the trails was discussed and it was expressed that some of the trails shown are not trails as of yet, but proposed. It was suggested that wherever there is elderly housing sidewalks should be considered. The report also lists recommendations for improving bicycle facilities for both on-road and off-road facilities.

Access Management is the next section and it was noted that Planimetrics has addressed it as well. This deals with getting the most out of your capacity to minimize conflicts and to make things generally work better. This is one aspect of the transportation system that the City does have a lot of control over in how it looks at development and how it improves development. This section is a summary of the basic principals and ideas. Barkan & Mess has done work for developers on Bridgeport Ave. and is familiar with how the state exercises that process on the State highway. The City may benefit from a systematic look to see whether access management approaches can be strengthened through the development process. The key principals of access management are listed. They also make access management recommendations.

The Route 8 corridor that this section of the report refers to includes the section of Route 8 from interchange 13 south to interchange 11 at the Trumbull line, and the 4-mile section of Bridgeport Ave. parallel to Route 8 over this length. The first section gives a corridor description, traffic volumes and traffic accidents. There is a descriptive comment in the Programmed Improvements section regarding Commerce Drive and Split Rock Corner. Five future improvement projects were summarized providing an update of previous requirements in light of current circumstances. Some projects have changed in scope or emphasis. The responsibility for these projects is distributed and shared among the federal, state and city governments, as well as private developers in some cases. Discussion of incident management of Bridgeport Ave. when there are traffic problems on Route 8 and whether Shelton is a part of it or not and if they should be.

A chart on page 7 shows the traffic growth on Bridgeport Ave. (1993-2004) and on the Route 8 ramps 11, 12 & 13(1995-2000). The next page is a table showing the high accident locations along the Route 8 corridor – ramps 11, 12 & 13. Route 8 – interchange 14 is a section of this report on its own. It is something that clearly needs improvement. We have discussed the consequences of not doing something to it as well. Studies in the past had listed three different potential ways of improvement and there was a consensus at that time, about 15 years ago. It needs to be looked at again. This would be a high cost project. There are recommendations given that could help in moving the priority of the project up. The traffic volumes and high accident locations are detailed on a table on page 3 of this section. The committee discussed how to fit this into the plan for recommendation.

Constitution Blvd. serves as an arterial that provides access to key areas of the city. It also offers the potential for much of the city's future development. The possible extension has long been considered desirable and necessary for development of large parcels of land in the corridor. The two possible extensions were detailed for the committee. Eric suggested the City could look into tax income financing (TIF) to pay for this project, or at least bond for it. You would designate that corridor as a Tax Income Financing district, and any new tax revenue collected in there is earmarked for paying down the debt on the improvements. They discussed the probabilities and problems with using a developer to build the extension of the road.

Huntington Village traffic situation was discussed and the traffic volumes and accidents were noted. The traffic operations are a concern and congestion sometimes occurs. There is a problem with the turning movements in and out of commercial drives. There appears to be little room for additional turning lanes or widening. A recommendation was discussed regarding closing Church Street extension and make the loop bigger. The advantages and disadvantages were listed. Frank Osak said that this was considered back in 1973. Mike Wilson said it might be a good idea to consider it again. He also suggested looking at cutting down the church driveways. The question came up that if Constitution Blvd was completed and operational from Route 8 to Route 110, would the traffic in Huntington Center be relieved by a substantial amount, a minimal amount, or un-

noticeable? Mike Wilson felt that it would probably not be substantial. It would have to be studied to determine the percentage of decrease.

The last section of the report focuses on downtown. The City has adopted a “downtown Shelton revitalization plan” to accomplish redevelopment objectives. This section of the report focuses on transportation infrastructure to facilitate those goals. The traffic volumes, traffic accidents and traffic circulation are summarized. The downtown revitalization plan’s phase one covers the area south of Cornell St. and is largely complete. This phase has included widening of Canal St. as far as the Farmer’s Market and completion of the River Walk to the Veterans’ Memorial. Phase Two includes further environmental cleanup, extension of the widening of Canal St. as far as Wooster St. North, and extension of the River Walk to the canal and beyond. Parking was discussed in length in regards to potential improvement.

As a final comment we do agree with Planimetrics regarding the downtown street furniture and main street ambiance. We see it as desirable as an amenity rather than a strictly transportation thing.

Members of the committee expressed the need to review the parking standards noted in the report especially in regards to elderly parking areas.

V. Payment of bill

Peter DiCarlo MOVED to pay Barkan & Mess 60% of the contract price. SECONDED by Tom Harbinson. All were in favor, MOTION PASSED.

VI. Discussion on Booklet #8 - Planimetrics

Booklet #8 is titled Addressing Community Needs

Eric Barz began with the overview of this booklet with the statement: Provide adequate, efficient, and reliable community facilities, transportation systems, public utilities, and housing opportunities to meet community needs, maintain a healthy community, and enhance quality of life.

The four main action themes and a section devoted to each is as follows:

- Adequately maintain and enhance community facilities and services
- Maintain a safe and efficient transportation system (see Barkan & Mess report)
- Ensure adequate public utilities
- Ensure housing opportunities for aging and moderate-income residents

The first section: Maintain and Enhance Community Facilities & Services. The first part is addressing city hall needs, with a description of it and some recommendations based on input received.

A map is provided with the community facilities noted.

Address Education Facility Needs is on page 5 with the historic and projected total school enrollment plus a graph showing school enrollment by grade configuration. Eric mentioned all the various options for the schools. There also

raises questions about some of the uses that are currently being used at the old intermediate school and some of the possible uses for a communications and training center. If this school were going to be utilized then there would be the need to find other places for those needs. Now that Ripton School has been closed it becomes another issue. In the long-term needs Planimetrics took a look at enrollment ratios historically as a proportion to the population and gave an explanation of the cyclical nature of the 30-35 year cycle that schools go through. Based on the number of public school children per household, the economic buildout analysis independently projects a student enrollment of approximately 6600 students at buildout, supporting the accuracy of the higher end of the projected range. There is further explanation of the enrollment projections in this section.

Address Emergency Services Needs is the next section detailing projected needs of the police department, fire department, emergency medical services and emergency communications. Extensive discussion of the fire department needs ensued.

Address Public Works Needs emphasized the current status of the Highways and Bridges Department and recommendations based on the input Planimetrics received.

Address Parks and Recreation Needs describe the current facilities and new facilities to be considered during the next ten years. The Parks & Recreation Commission for future needs or wants identified key open space parcels.

Address other Community Facility Needs details the Plumb Library, Huntington Library, the animal shelter, the Senior Center and the Old Intermediate School. Each has recommendations listed.

Address Community wide Facility and Service Issues touches on deferred maintenance and staffing and a detailed report of the capital improvement program and recommendations. The committee had several comments regarding the recommendations and strategies.

The next major section is titled Ensure Adequate Public utilities detailing the public water service, public sewer service, and natural gas service. There are maps detailing the water service areas and the sewer service areas. Eric mentioned some of the things currently going on to improve service.

Ensure Adequacy of Other Utility Services covers electrical service, wired communications and wireless communications and future strategies.

Ensure Continued Housing Opportunities states the needs of ensuring continued elderly housing options and continuing to provide income diverse housing and the strategies listed for each. Eric and the committee members had a lengthy discussion regarding affordable housing.

VII. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 27, 2005 at 4:30 P.M.

VIII. Adjournment

Tom Harbinson MOVED to adjourn. SECONDED by Tony Pogoda. All were in favor, MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Chaya
Clerk, Plan Update Advisory Committee
2 tapes are on file in the City/Town Clerk's office