

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

May 14, 2019

A meeting of the Committee on Traffic and Transportation was held this date beginning at 2:31 p.m., at City Hall, 80 Broad Street, First Floor Conference Room

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

PRESENT

Councilmember Seekings, Chair; Councilmember Wagner, Councilmember Moody, Councilwoman Jackson, and Mayor Tecklenburg (arrived at 2:43 p.m.) **Also Present:** Keith Benjamin, Rick Jerue, Robbie Somerville, Mandi Herring, Michael Mathis, and Wanda Stepp, Council Secretary

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence provided by Councilmember Wagner.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On the motion of Councilmember Moody, seconded by Councilwoman Jackson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2019 meeting.

TRC Review Improvements: Transit Accommodations

Mr. Benjamin stated that this was a partnership between the Traffic and Transportation Department, The Planning Department, CARTA and BCDCOG. The Technical Review Committee (TRC) did a revamping of their manual in December 2017. In there, it had specific stipulations on development projects that automatically required traffic studies. His department had the right to stipulate additional traffic studies for other types of projects if need be, but it was already delineated what those projects were. There were two things that specifically happened in those studies. One was the type of measurements taken for the traffic, the level of service created, with or without the build, and the trip duration. Those measurements were in every study done. In that process, there were mitigations that came forward. SCDOT and the engineer might require certain things for the development project to do. Most of the mitigation pieces had to do with the public right-of-way and moving vehicle traffic, which needed to be accommodated for. With this, it would empower TRC to add transit as a piece of their tools for what mitigation should look like for projects that came forward, based off existing measurements. It wasn't the creation of a new process. It was asking how they could use the existing process to allow TRC, in their conversations with development projects, to stipulate that they had to help the City meeting goals, and one of those goals was mitigating traffic. One of the pieces that they were purposeful in, in consultation with BCDCOG was that, even though there was flexibility about what came out of the conceptual designs, they wanted to root the ordinance within the planning documents that had already been co-signed regionally. They wanted to lean into the documentation that was already passed by the entire CHATS board and was adopted within the federally stipulated long-range transportation plan, and allow it to be a baseline for where the determinations came in. They thought this was one of the tools they should be taking advantage of within the zoning code to help meet their mobility goals. Usually, this would go to the Planning Commission and then to the Committee, but they thought that, because it was so important for the conversation, that they should go to Council first, and then to Planning Commission later.

Councilmember Moody said he didn't have any problem with what they were trying to do on the properties that were proceeding through the process. His question was how far they could push that. For example, they had not made these accommodations for some sites, and wondered how aggressive they could be on having

the development do something on the other side of the street. Mr. Benjamin stated that one thing that was in there was the radius of the location. Most of the time, they wanted the transit stops to be about a quarter of a mile apart. So, they might have a development that came in, but the stop might be a couple blocks away. It was still an accommodation that could play a part in mitigating the traffic and helping with connectivity, especially if it was within the public right-of-way. Councilmember Moody said if there was not a place for mitigation right on the development's project, if there was a fee-in-lieu that could be imposed or built into the process. Mr. Benjamin said they had language in their already about how they could mitigate their transportation if it wasn't on their parcel, but within the public right-of-way and how they could go about that. In a different draft, they did have a fee-in-lieu, but after consulting with Legal and BFRC, they stepped away from that for now because they would have to have a new account, and there were a lot of questions regarding it. Along 17, with the County's project, transit accommodations was a part of that project. Those were already within the budget. Councilmember Moody said the County was doing all of that and if the City required other developments to participate, they could use that money somewhere within the City. But, if the County was going to pick it up, he wouldn't necessarily want developments to escape completely. Mr. Benjamin said it was also a case-by-case basis. There was flexibility within the ordinance to allow TRC to review and see the circumstances that were happening and what was and wasn't applicable. The idea was to empower TRC to be able to make that stipulation. Right now, there was nothing in their structure that allowed TRC to have a conversation or give a requirement to have accommodations.

Councilwoman Jackson said he appreciated Councilmember Moody's points because she wouldn't want a project that required some type of mitigation that wouldn't have to do that mitigation. She asked if there was any other way to bank it and use it in the future. Mr. Benjamin stated that they wanted to have flexibility to allow or not allow things. Councilwoman Jackson said she was in favor of the purpose behind this. She said it still tied it right back to the development site and didn't really meet Councilmember Moody's suggestion about if they could put it on another side. Mr. Benjamin said he thought that discussion could still be had within the TRC process. Councilwoman Jackson said they had the flexibility of letting it go to the Planning Commission if they were concerned it wasn't achieving all the goals it should. Mr. Benjamin said that this ordinance was separate from the sidewalk piece, but there were some tweaks that needed to happen to that. Councilmember Moody asked what department the sidewalks fell under and Mr. Benjamin said it was Public Service.

Chairman Seekings asked why they were limiting themselves geographically the way they were with the quarter of the mile. If the idea was to capture new development, they didn't know where those would be. He didn't think there should be a limitation on it. They should capture all development projects and let TRC decide what would be appropriate for the geographic location. If he were to vote for this, he would take out the geographic location and look at all projects. Mr. Benjamin said they had no problem with that. Chairman Seekings said there was no reason to not have everyone in the same boat, and require them to have some kind of site/location appropriate transit facility in the future.

Councilmember Moody said that on Savannah Highway, the automobile dealers used the center lane to unload vehicles. They sent the police out there, and he also saw trucks using the center lane for loading and unloading for restaurants. He thought there needed to be more consideration given to places where unloading and loading could happen.

On the motion of Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilmember Moody, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the TRC Review Improvements to the Transit Accommodations with the amendment to take out the geographical limitations in Sec. 54-365 A.

An ordinance to amend the Code of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, Chapter 19, Section 234 to make it unlawful to park a vehicle in a marked fire lane when signs, curb painting, pavement markings, or other approved notices or markings are installed giving notice thereof. (Submitted and approved the Public Safety Committee April 23, 2019)

Mr. Ruemelin said that some of the officers had questions as to what the ordinance said about parking in a fire lane. It was there through the fire code, which referenced the International Fire Code, which had a section on parking in a fire lane. However, it made it hard to find that site, so they thought it would be cleaner to add a new section to the City's code. Mr. Benjamin said if it wasn't in a private area, and was in public the Parking Enforcement Officer's would be writing the ticket.

On the motion of Councilmember Moody, seconded by Councilwoman Jackson, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the above ordinance.

Directors Update

Mr. Benjamin said that he didn't have any updates.

Councilmember Wagner said that about a month previous, in City Council, they were discussing the Uber situation and them having to go around the corner to pick people up. He thought he heard someone say it was an easy fix and asked if they had looked at that. Mr. Benjamin said they had started to look at that. There were a lot of limitations in the ordinance about where Uber and Lyft could and couldn't pick up. They had to get over those hurdles. They were looking at ride-share as a whole and research to see what was best to do. Councilmember Moody said there were some valet parking places and he knew some of those places shut down at a certain time. Chairman Seekings said it used to be a big problem and one stop could back up the street for a long time. Councilwoman Jackson said it may be time to have a more comprehensive understanding of King Street. It occurred to her that they may be able to close King Street to thru-traffic at a certain time of night to a certain time in the morning. Councilmember Moody said that if they closed King Street, it would force all the traffic into the residential neighborhoods. Councilmember Moody said that Councilmember Wagner's question was if anything had been done. The answer was no and they probably needed to look at it.

Having no further business, the Committee adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

Bethany Whitaker
Council Secretary