

**BAXTER CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**Work Session**  
**August 4, 2015**

Mayor Darrel Olson called the Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Darrel Olson and Council Members Quinn Nystrom, Steve Barrows, and Todd Holman

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Council Member Mark Cross

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Director Josh Doty, Assistant City Administrator Kelly Steele, Finance Director Jeremy Vacinek, and Public Works Director/City Engineer Trevor Walter

**Independence Road, Inglewood Drive, Novotny Road, and Dellwood Drive Improvement Project**

Aric Welch, WSN, explained he is still waiting for approval from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE”) regarding the Wetland Fill Permit. Prior to issuing the permit, the USACE has requested a determination from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (“USFWS”) regarding the long eared bat issue. Mr. Welch has been in contact with the local USACE permitting staff on a weekly basis and has been informed the letter requesting a determination has been issued to the USFWS. When the determination from the USFWS will be issued is unknown at this time. Mr. Welch explained the Council either could continue to wait for the permit and hope it arrives timely or can delay the project until next year.

Mr. Welch has begun advertisement of the plans and has set a tentative bid opening date of August 13, 2015. To complete the project this year, it will be necessary to award the project prior to the end of the assessment appeal period. The only way to complete the project in 2015 is to forego the normal process and award the project as soon as possible following bid opening. Even this will leave a short window for construction this year, which may drive up prices, and possibility push construction into 2016 if weather delays are encountered. If the USFWS determines there are impacts, construction could not begin until October. The downside of awarding the project prior to the end of the assessment appeal period is the City will not be aware of any possible appeals prior to start of construction. This will leave the City open to possible loss of assessment revenues and other expenditures related to the appeal process.

The consensus of the council was to continue moving forward with the project.

## **Excelsior Road Area Traffic Study**

Chuck Rickart, WSB, explained several development proposals are being considered or discussed with the City adjacent to Excelsior Road and west of TH 371. Previous transportation studies have been completed in the Excelsior Road area and have identified transportation needs including future roadway connections between Fairview Road and Excelsior Road to accommodate existing and future traffic conditions in the area.

The purpose of the study is to determine the potential transportation impacts and needs of the anticipated future development will have on the area traffic operations, lane geometry/traffic control, access locations, right of way needs, future roadway connections, and pedestrian/bicycle accommodations.

The existing land use in the study area consists primarily of commercial uses adjacent to TH 371, single family residential and multi-family residential along Excelsior Road, and a mix of residential and commercial along Fairview Road adjacent to TH 210.

A.M. and P.M. peak hour turning movement and daily counts were conducted and used as the existing baseline conditions for the area. Typically, traffic studies review three-year crash data. After reviewing the crash data, it was found to be reasonable, except at TH 371 and Excelsior where it is considered high with 31 crashes.

Signalized and add the south (northbound) approach creating a full movement intersection at TH 210 and Inglewood Drive was assumed with all analyzed build alternatives. The signalized intersection on TH 210 at Knollwood Drive and south approach connection across the railroad tracks will be removed with the installation of the new signal at Inglewood Drive. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2019.

Three alternative alignments were included with the analysis for this connection. The intersection control required at the major intersections will be determined at a later date with an Intersection Control Evaluation (“ICE”). For the analysis, signalized intersections were assumed.

The analysis resulted in three alternatives. Alternative 1 is Fairview Road connection to Excelsior Road without realignment of the existing Edgewood Drive. This would create two “T” intersections. The location of the new intersection would be located as far west as feasible to improve the spacing between the two roadways.

Alternative 2 is Fairview Road connection to Excelsior Road with the realignment of the existing Edgewood Drive. The intersection would be located west of the existing Edgewood Drive intersection. This would provide improved intersection spacing between Edgewood Drive and TH 371. The existing Edgewood Drive intersection would be removed.

Alternative 3 is Fairview Road connection to Excelsior Road at existing Edgewood Drive. Although this alternative would create one intersection, the spacing between Edgewood Drive and TH 371 limit the length of the left turn lanes.

Mr. Rickart recommends Alternative 2.

Existing and forecast traffic operations were evaluated for the intersections and access in the Excelsior Road study area. A capacity and level of service analysis was completed for the study area intersections for 2017, which is the year after the proposed initial development would be completed, and for the 2035 conditions, which represents the 20-year design timeframe assumed full development of the area.

Under Alternative 2, Edgewood Drive southbound and northbound approaching Excelsior Road would require a minimum of 500 feet to the first driveway access to accommodate turning traffic into the developments. A three-lane section with a center left turn lane is recommended both north and south of Excelsior Road on Edgewood Drive and Fairview Road. Alternative 2 provides the safest and most efficient vehicle operation now and in the future. Alternative 1 and 3 both have significant operations and vehicle queuing issues that will result in safety concerns in the future.

The spacing of intersections and driveways should be controlled as defined by roadway functional class, traffic operations and traffic volumes. The level of control is determined by the type of access being considered and the functional classification of the roadway itself.

The options to accommodate pedestrians and bike lanes on Excelsior Road are to either provide an off-road pedestrian trail adjacent to the roadway or, provide on-road accommodations. An off-road pedestrian path could be provided on the south side of Excelsior Road from Inglewood Drive to TH 371. This would require acquisition of approximately 7 to 14 feet of right-of-way for the length of the corridor. Bike lanes could be accommodated on Excelsior Road west of Edgewood Drive by designating the existing shoulders as dedicated bike lanes. This would require no parking on the south side similar to the north side. From Edgewood Drive through the intersection with TH 371, on-road bike lanes would require restriping and widening the roadway 3 to 5 feet.

The next step in the process is completing the Intersection Control Evaluation report. This report would need to be reviewed and approved by MNDOT. A feasibility study will be completed to outline the details of the improvement as well as discuss cost and funding. Next, a detail design will be completed to include preparation of the final design plans and specifications for public bidding. Finally, construction of the improvement will be completed.

Mayor Olson asked the Council and then the public for comments.

Joe Brenny, 7348 Excelsior Road. Mr. Brenny explained the new Edgewood Drive would run next to where bodies enter the funeral home. Mr. Brenny also explained area storm water is not draining to the Mississippi River; it is draining towards his garage door. Mr. Rickart explained the City can consider screening or buffering and the drainage issue would be resolved with the project.

Cindy Grotzke, First Baptist Church. Ms. Grotzke explained there is a lot of traffic cutting through the church property. The proposal would eliminate the church's concerns.

Mr. Brenny asked what is proposed for the new commercial development. Community Development Director Doty explained the city has not received a formal application and would like the traffic study completed before this is submitted.

Nate Grotzke, 12543 Woodmark Lane, Brainerd. Mr. Grotzke stated a through street has been discussed for many years. Mr. Grotzke inquired if the Council would support Alternative 1 if Alternative 2 were not possible. Mr. Rickart explained in 2017 the offset intersections work, but as time passes there becomes an issue. Mr. Grotzke explained he requires access to Excelsior Road in order to complete the project.

Mayor Olson explained during the regular council meeting, the council would consider accepting the traffic study.

Municipal water, sewer, and lightening would be included with this improvement project. It is anticipated to take six weeks to two months to get approval from MNDOT and then the feasibility study is estimated to take two to three months to complete.

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION** by Council Member Barrows, seconded by Council Member Holman to adjourn at 6:56 p.m. Motion carries unanimously.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted,

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Darrel Olson  
Mayor

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Kelly Steele  
Assistant City Administrator/Clerk