

**Minutes
Cheney Planning Commission
Regular Meeting**

April 8, 2019

Commissioners Attending: Vara Lyn Conrath, Dan Turbeville, Brian Mangis, Daniel Hillman, David Early and Jake Vibbert.

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Attending: Brett Lucas, Todd Ableman, Mark Schuller and Susan Beeman.

Councilmembers Attending: None.

Call to Order: Vice-Chairman Conrath called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and welcomed new Commission members David Early and Jake Vibbert.

Minutes: Minutes of the March 11, 2019 regular meeting were approved as distributed.

Citizen Participation: None.

Public Hearing: #2019-01

Potential Rates for Traffic Impact Fees, Draft Ordinance on Traffic Impact Fees, and Police & Fire Level of Service (LOS) Thresholds

Chairman Conrath opened the public hearing at 6:04 p.m.

Mr. Ableman gave an overview of the schedule for considering the Levels of Service, LOS deficiencies, and traffic/mitigation /road improvement projects for the area located south of the railroad tracks. He explained that we would be discussing two distinct topics tonight. The first is the Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) issue, and discussion on whether this is the best recourse for addressing traffic impacts. The second will be a discussion of police and fire services provided in the areas south of the railroad tracks. He added that Bill White of Morrison Maierle is present to answer questions about the TIF rate analysis.

Mr. Lucas reviewed draft ordinance X-60, which would create a new chapter of the municipal code to establish traffic impact fees and lay out how these fees are assessed, how they are used, and under what conditions they might be refunded. He noted that page 5 of the draft ordinance refers to a transportation fee rate study, and the date of the final draft will be inserted when it is known.

Section 6 of the ordinance provides for a developer to complete a fee calculation by an independent traffic engineer, and Section 9 creates an opportunity for a developer to appeal the impact fee that has been assessed.

Section 14 authorizes creation of a board to review proposed changes to the impact fee schedules. Mr. Ableman said that it is important to remember that we are required to update our Capital Facilities Plan every 2 years.

Mr. Lucas explained that the impact fees would be limited to a geographic area located south of the railroad tracks; it will not be a city-wide assessment.

Mr. Ableman explained that at last month's meeting, we looked at three distinct tiers of transportation system improvements. Tonight we have pared that down to specific phases for the improvements:

1. Cheney-Plaza Road/1st Street Intersection: installation of a signal and northbound right-turn lane to increase intersection capacity. Improvements to pedestrian crossing.
2. Cheney-Spangle Road/1st Street Intersection: reduction of on-street parking along 1st Street and Cheney-Spangle Road to provide vehicle queue areas via striping of a northbound right turn lane and second eastbound lane prior to BNSF railroad tracks.
3. Alki Street Improvements: A complete and widened/extended street, with sidewalks and bike lanes, between Cheney-Plaza Road and Cheney-Spangle Road.
4. Cheney-Plaza Road Widening: Construct a widened roadway between 1st ST (SR-904) and Alki Street, increasing the roadway to four lanes, extension of sidewalk, installation of pedestrian crossing gates, and realignment of gate crossings and power poles.

Mr. Ableman said that construction costs for all four options are estimated to be approximately \$4,236,000. The proposed impact fees are based on a 60/40% split between the City and the developer. Mr. Ableman showed maps depicting the proposed changes, and noted that the 'big ticket' item is the widening of Cheney-Plaza Road to four lanes, with improved pedestrian crossings.

Discussion followed. Commissioner Vibbert asked if the Cheney-Spangle crossing improvement is limited because of the available real estate. Mr. Ableman agreed that this is the case; there is not as much room to expand transportation routes because of existing buildings in the downtown core.

Commissioner Mangis asked for clarification that 60% of the cost would be paid by the City through grant funds, and 40% would be paid by the developer, through assessment of impact fees. Mr. Ableman confirmed that is the case. He added that if traffic impact fees are approved, then these road improvements would be added to the Capital Facilities Plan, and he can begin looking for grant funding sources for the City share of the improvements.

Commissioner Early asked how this would be impacted by a multi-year, phased development. Mr. Lucas explained that the fees would be assessed at the time of building

permit issuance. By the time the project is completely built out, the funding would be available for the improvements needed to serve the full number of additional residents.

Mr. White added that it is a good idea to revisit the fees every 2-3 years to account for inflation. Under the RCW that authorizes traffic impact fees, you have 10 years to use the fees collected, and if you over-spend the account, you can pay it back with future TIFs collected.

Mr. Schuller added that he does not want to establish a set cost-of-living adjustment for the next 10 years because those costs can change so much.

Commissioner Mangis asked if additional development south of Alki is already platted. Mr. Ableman explained that there is no plat, but the proposed multi-family development would be allowed under the current zoning.

Commissioner Vibbert asked if any fees would be assessed for anything currently existing south of the tracks. Mr. Ableman said that we cannot assess fees for existing uses, only on new development.

Mr. Lucas explained that staff is looking for an indication from the Planning Commission as to whether we are on the right track in recommending adoption of traffic impact fees to City Council as a way to address the need for transportation system improvements.

Commissioner Mangis asked about the highlighted section regarding the TIF advisory board. Mr. Ableman said that if this moves forward to City Council, that is one of the areas they would be considering. He expects there to be questions from Council on this section. Mr. Lucas added that the highlight is to call attention to the section for City Council and the City Attorney, since implementation of this section is really a policy decision.

Commissioner Vibbert asked if the infrastructure improvements on the roads would be completed before additional residential units are put in. Mr. Ableman said access would be required to the new development, but that the payment of mitigation fees would get us started with the improvements that have been identified. Completion of the street improvements would come at some point after the construction of the new units.

Commissioner Early asked if the 10-year period is standard in other cities. Mr. White explained that the WAC controls the timeframe in which the collected impact fees must be used. For many years, the 6 year timeframe was standard, but that was recently changed to 10 years.

Discussion continued. Commissioner Turbeville made a motion to recommend approval of Ordinance X-60 to City Council. Seconded by Commissioner Mangis, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lucas explained that at last month's meeting, we looked at how much police & fire resources are being consumed north of the railroad tracks, and how much are being consumed south of the tracks based on call data from 2013-2017. Mr. Lucas summarized the demand for fire services south of the tracks, and explained that the trend we are seeing is that demand is increasing each year. He displayed graphs and maps illustrating fire response time versus distance from the fire station.

Mr. Lucas explained that our Comprehensive Plan currently calls for fire response within 3-4 minutes, 90% of the time. According to the data presented, we are having some trouble meeting that Level of Service.

Mr. Lucas reviewed the definitions of police call priority ratings, and displayed graphs and maps illustrating locations and response times for various call priorities from 2013-2017. He then reviewed the LOS standards for law enforcement identified in the Comprehensive plan, and discussed our actual average responses for both fire and police calls. He suggested that we might need to look at adjusting our LOS standards, but we might also look at using the SEPA process, as development comes in, to begin addressing land and facility needs for expansion of emergency facilities.

Commissioner Vibbert asked if we have information on calls per capita for south of the tracks, versus the rest of the city. Mr. Lucas said that he does not have that information right now, but will look into it and report back.

Mr. Schuller added that call volumes are continuing to grow, and he believes we are going to have to find some creative solutions to address the call volumes and response times across the tracks. He suggested that perhaps a collaborative effort with some of our regional partners, such as Fire District #3, would allow a higher LOS.

Commissioner Vibbert asked if the cost for a tunnel or overpass was just astronomical. Mr. Ableman explained that we have looked at the amount of clearance that would be needed, and at the type of soils and rock that we have, and at this time, the costs are prohibitive for that type of crossing solution. The development would have to be large enough to absorb that type of multi-million dollar mitigation costs.

Mr. Lucas commented that while public safety impact fees could provide substation facilities for fire and police south of the tracks, we do not currently have a mechanism to fund the staffing of those facilities.

Mr. Ableman added that we will be discussing these numbers with the fire and police chiefs in the next few weeks, and hope to bring back some recommendations to the Planning Commission at next month's meeting.

Chairman Conrath called for public comment and, hearing none, closed the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Commissioner Reports:

None.

Staff Reports:

Mr. Lucas announced that the Cheney Clean Sweep community cleanup day is scheduled for Saturday, April 27. Mr. Ableman noted that new services available this year include electronics recycling and a prescription drug take-back event.

Mr. Ableman reported that subscribers to the ‘clean green’ yard waste pickup service have been growing to the point that we are changing the pickup routes, and clean green carts will be picked up throughout the town based on the customers’ regular garbage pickup day. Residential ‘clean green’ service will begin the first week of April. The yard waste bins at the Recycling Center are now open, as well.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved By:

Susan Beeman, Secretary

Richard Mount, Chairman