

**BLOOMINGTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION
AGENDA**

September 27, 2023

**4:30 P.M. –In-person and Virtual Hybrid meeting
City Hall, Council Chambers**

Online link: <https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/6359441221>

Meeting ID: 635 944 1221

Passcode: COBPT

Dial in: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Minutes**
 - A. June 28, 2023
 - B. August 23, 2023
- III. Communications from Commission**
- IV. Public Comment***
- V. Reports from Staff**
 - A. Feedback Requested from Boards and Commissions - Traffic Commission
- VI. Old Business***
- VII. New Business***
- VIII. Traffic Inquiries:**
 - A. Alley Traffic Usage Request to Make Portion of Alley Pedestrian Only – *Ryan Robling, Planning Services Manager*
- IX. Adjournment:**

Next meeting – October 22, 2023 – City Council Chambers

**Action Requested/Public comment prior to any vote (limited to five minutes per speaker)*

Auxiliary aids for people with disabilities are available upon request with adequate notice. Please call (812) 349-3429 or e-mail human.rights@bloomington.in.gov.

**BLOOMINGTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION
MINUTES**

June 28, 2023

**4:30 P.M. –In-person and Virtual Hybrid meeting
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I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

A. March 26, 2023

III. Communications from Commission

Alexander: Old 37 and N. Walnut has a pedestrian signal which is not operating at proper capacity.

Shadday: Discussed the roadways identified as “poor” and “very poor” and asked that the City respond to these issues. Also, as

IV. Public Comment*

V. Reports from Staff

- A. College and Walnut Corridor Study
- i. Steering Committee membership
 - 1. Shadday volunteered

VI. Old Business*

VII. New Business*

VIII. Traffic Inquiries:

- A. Alley Traffic Direction Request to Make Alley One-way South – *Ryan Robling, Planning Services Manager*
- i. Staff opened discussion with a brief background.
 - ii. Jeff Mease gave additional background.
 - iii. Shadday asked: about conflict an adjacent alley.
 - iv. Ryterband asked: trucks parking in alleyways with
 - v. Burns: Would like to have a more wait and see approach.
 - vi. Cibor: What would enforcement look like? How successful are other one-way alleys. Where will one-way signs be located?
 - vii. Mease: Expressed that he does not believe that there is urgency to this proposal. Asked a question about potentially using alternative signage.

IX. Adjournment: 5:04 PM

**BLOOMINGTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION
MINUTES**

August 23, 2023

**4:30 P.M. –In-person and Virtual Hybrid meeting
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I. Call to Order

In-person: Ryterband, Alexander, Shadday, Love, Cibor, Field
Virtual: Moore

II. Approval of Minutes

III. Communications from Commission

Alexander gave a report on sidewalk related uReports.

IV. Public Comment*

V. Reports from Staff

Gave brief update of SS4A process, and asked members to join.
Alexander and Ryterband agreed to serve.

VI. Old Business*

VII. New Business*

A. TC-23-06: Alley Stop Sign Installation on Alleys Along Driscoll Street –
Ryan Robling, Planning Services Manger

- i. Robling presented
- ii. Shadday does not see speed as an issue on the alleyway. Walks, drive, and works near alley frequently
- iii. Field asked about other alleys with stop signs
- iv. Ryterband asked if current traffic calming has been effective
 1. Cibor explained the purpose of stop signs and traffic calming
- v. Shadday explained how the current traffic calming effects the area
- vi. Love hopes to have the traffic calming become permanent
- vii. Ryterband motioned to forwarded TC-23-06 with a positive recommendation. Love seconded. Passed 6-0-1 (Field abstained)

B. TC-23-07: Stop Control at 11th/Fountain and Crescent/Fountain Intersections – *Neil Kopper, PE, Senior Project Engineer*

- i. Kopper presented
- ii. Ryterband asked about flagging new stops.
 1. Kopper explained that temporary flags will be installed. Kopper also explained that new realignment of the intersections will happen and that he is hopeful that will assist people in realizing the stop

- iii. Alexander asked about project timeline.
 - 1. Kopper – construction expected next year
- iv. Cibor updated on public information campaign
- v. Moore surprised that there has not been more crashes at the intersections. Is in favor of the change
- vi. Ryterband motioned to forward TC-23-07 with a positive recommendation. Alexander seconded. Passed 7-0
- C. TC-23-08: No Parking Signs on the South Side of the 300 Block of E. Southern Drive – *Kyle Baugh, Engineering Technician*
 - i. Baugh presented
 - ii. Ryterband asked about a similar request in the past
 - iii. Alexander asked if there was public comment on the proposal
 - iv. Field asked if adjacent properties were contacted
 - 1. Cibor gave explanation that in this project adjacent properties were not contacted due to the regulation about 12' ROW
 - v. Shadday expressed concern about liability
 - vi. Field asked if it would be possible to include public outreach as part of the approval
 - vii. Ryterband asked about contacting residents about sanitation/other City officials coming into narrow streets
 - 1. Cibor and Love responded. Discussion ensued.
 - viii. Cole has enforcement done anything about enforcement, or have they measured
 - 1. Baugh answered that Engineering has measured, and that enforcement is self-regulatory
 - ix. Ryterband made a motion to forward TC-23-08 with a condition that proper notice to adjacent residents and property owners is completed prior to Council hearing the petition. Field seconded. Passed 7-0

VIII. Traffic Inquiries: None

IX. Adjournment: 5:15 pm

Dear Traffic Commission,
(Please forward to the chair/all members as appropriate.)

The Common Council's Special Committee on Council Processes has been reviewing an [Organizational Assessment](#) of Boards and Commissions prepared by the Novak Consulting Group from January 2022.

The Novak report mentions that the City should regularly review the scopes of individual boards and commissions. The report suggests identifying areas of overlap and addressing those areas by merging similar entities or by further differentiating their scopes. The report specifically recommends merging the Traffic Commission, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission, and the Parking Commission. At some point, the Committee would like to host a meeting with staff liaisons and members of these commissions to discuss this recommendation. An invitation to do so will be shared in the future.

The Committee has not endorsed any recommendation from the Novak report to merge any commissions, but it is interested in hearing from boards and commissions as part of reviewing the report.

At this time, the Committee is interested in feedback from the Traffic Commission on its purpose, duties, goals, etc. currently spelled out in local code as follows:

BMC 2.12.070(1)

Purpose—Duties. It shall be the duty of the commission, and to this end it shall have the authority within the limits of the funds at its disposal, to coordinate traffic activities, to carry on educational activities in traffic matters, to supervise the preparation and publication of traffic reports, to receive complaints having to do with traffic matters, and to recommend to the common council and to appropriate city officials ways and means for improving traffic conditions and the administration and enforcement of traffic regulations.

Does this accurately reflect and capture the activities of the Commission? Would the Commission suggest any revisions to this language and, if so, what are those revisions?

This same request for feedback is being sent to other boards and commissions with purposes/duties set forth in local code.

The Committee would appreciate it if a response could be provided by November 20, 2023. Alternatively, please let us know if additional time is needed.

Respectfully,
Stephen Lucas

Recommendation 2: Merge the Parking Commission, Traffic Commission, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission.

The purpose of the Parking Commission, per City Code, is to “make recommendations on parking policy” and “To coordinate parking activities, to carry on educational activities in parking matters, to supervise the preparation and publication of parking reports, to receive comments and concerns having to do with parking matters, and to recommend to the common council and to appropriate city officials ways and means for achieving the city's comprehensive plan objectives through the administration of parking policies and the enforcement of parking regulations.”⁷

The purpose of the Traffic Commission, per City Code, is to “coordinate traffic activities, to carry on educational activities in traffic matters, to supervise the preparation and publication of traffic reports, to receive complaints having to do with traffic matters, and to recommend to the common council and to appropriate city officials ways and means for improving traffic conditions and the administration and enforcement of traffic regulations.”⁸

Finally, the purpose of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission, per City Code, is to “promote and encourage bicycling, walking and running in a safe and efficient manner in the City of Bloomington for the purpose of health, recreation and transportation.”⁹

While these scopes do not overlap as significantly as the Environmental and Sustainability Commissions do, each of these areas have the potential to impact the other. There is limited land and transportation infrastructure available in Bloomington, and it is up to the City to decide how to use it most effectively; more lanes in a road to reduce traffic, for example, may eliminate parking spaces, or narrow the sidewalks and reduce walkability. For this reason, proposals for changes to infrastructure or transportation policy must often be presented to multiple bodies for review and recommendation. For example, as of March 2021, the City Council is considering a proposed ordinance that would increase the number of intersections in the City where right turns at red lights are restricted.¹⁰ The question of whether or not to allow turns at red lights impacts both traffic and pedestrian safety, and so in January 2021 the same proposed ordinance was reviewed by the Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission on January 11¹¹ and then by the Traffic Commission two weeks later.¹² In both cases, staff were required to prepare memos and presentations to the Commissions and to attend the Commissions to answer questions. Re-submitting the same proposal to multiple groups increases approval time and reduces staff capacity for other work.

Having three Commissions with narrow scopes also limits their ability to consider issues comprehensively. The City wants to reduce traffic, ensure adequate parking, and promote walking and biking, but these goals must be balanced against each other to identify the optimal transportation structure for the City. The Traffic, Parking, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commissions each focus on a single area and thus do not have the capacity to consider this balance.

There also may not be enough City residents with both the time to attend Commission meetings and an interest in transportation issues to populate all three Commissions effectively. As of March 2021, three of the nine Parking Commission seats are vacant, three of the nine Traffic Commission seats are vacant, and two of the nine Bicycle and

⁷ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.110

⁸ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.070

⁹ City of Bloomington Municipal Code § 2.12.080

¹⁰ City of Bloomington. “Common Council Legislative Packet.” March 17, 2021. p. 235.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/meetingFiles/download?meetingFile_id=8547

¹¹ City of Bloomington. “Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Commission Agenda.” January 11, 2021.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/meetingFiles/download?meetingFile_id=8113

¹² City of Bloomington. “Traffic Commission Agenda.” January 27, 2021.

https://bloomington.in.gov/onboard/meetingFiles/download?meetingFile_id=8200

Pedestrian Safety Commission seats are vacant. This level of vacancy is a concern because it limits the capacity of the commissions for research and deliberation as well as limits the range of ideas and backgrounds among members. It also creates the risk of being unable to reach quorum at meetings. In both the Parking and Traffic Commissions, a quorum is not met if just two of the current members do not attend.

These vacancies may not be directly caused by the existence of the three commissions, but the issue could be mitigated by merging the three commissions into a single Transportation Commission addressing traffic, parking, and bicycle and pedestrian safety. Instead of filling seats on three commissions, the City would only have to fill seats on one, creating less risk of vacancies. Again, the City could begin with combining membership of all three commissions to form a single larger commission and move to a smaller size through attrition over time.

A Transportation Commission could address issues comprehensively, increasing the value of its recommendations and making it easier for the public to attend one meeting to address all aspects of transportation-related agenda items. A single commission would also reduce staff time spent supporting the current commissions and preparing presentations for multiple commissions on the same issue.

Recommendation 3: Consolidate park, recreation and urban forestry related commissions under the Board of Park Commissioners.

The City of Bloomington, like all cities in Indiana, is required to operate a Board of Park Commissioners consisting of four board members appointed by the Mayor. According to State statute, the Board of Park Commissioners approves budget revenues and expenditures, passes bond issues, acquires and improves property, adopts new programs, establishes management policy and regulations, and provides a public venue for community debate and input regarding park and recreation resources in the community. This commission has authority within that context. However, the City has also established a number of additional related boards that fall under the general rubric of parks and natural spaces.

The Environmental Resources Advisory Council advises the Board of Park Commissioners on the environmental impact of park operations within the City's natural areas. The Tree Commission advises the City Landscaper and Board of Parks Commissioners on urban forestry and develops recommended forestry policies. The Cascades Golf Course Advisory Council provides community feedback regarding the management of the Cascades golf course. The Banneker Advisory Council provides feedback regarding management of the Banneker Community Center.

Each of these advisory councils provides feedback regarding a specialized subset of general park, recreation, and natural resource management. In highly specialized focus areas such as urban forestry and sensitive environmental areas management, policy and operations are primarily driven by subject matter experts among City staff. As such, the role and responsibilities of Tree Commission and Environmental Resources Advisory Council can be effectively subsumed with the Board of Park Commissioners while still ensuring that adequate attention is paid to these important areas.

The Banneker Advisory Council and Cascades Golf Course Advisory Council are primarily special interest citizen advocacy groups. These advocacy groups can continue; however, they should be eliminated as City supported commissions and management/advocacy of these groups taken over as grass roots advocacy organizations. Oversight and management of these areas will continue under the purview of City staff and the Board of Park Commissioners.



TRAFFIC COMMISSION
Traffic Inquiry

Case #: TC-23-09
Date: September 27, 2023

FROM: Ryan Robling, Planning Services Manager, Planning and Transportation Department

REGARDING: Alley Traffic Usage Request to Make Portion of Alley Pedestrian

Location: Alley-Between: E. Kirkwood Ave. and E. 4th St. from S. Walnut St. to 100' east of S. Walnut St.

Background: The Engineering and Planning & Transportation Departments received a traffic inquiry from the Uptown Cafe, a local business located along E. Kirkwood Ave. The inquiry addressed concerns regarding public safety and property damage along a portion of the alley. The inquiry aims to explore the possibility of closing a section of the alley to vehicular traffic, specifically from S. Walnut St to a point 100 feet east of S. Walnut St.

The business proactively reached out to neighboring property owners and businesses, including the Trojan Horse. Before finalizing a formal resolution, further input will be sought from the adjacent properties.

The inquirer has included some observations and analysis, summarized below. Additionally, the inquirer has included some pictures to help illustrate the concerns.

- **Safety Concerns:** The inquirer deemed the alley hazardous due to the excessive speeds of cars along the alley. Additionally, the inquirer identified the presence of business backdoors opening directly onto the alley as a safety risk.
- **Inadequate Width:** The inquirer has concerns about the narrow width of the alley, which is especially unsuitable for larger vehicles, such as trucks. These larger vehicles frequently cause damage to adjacent structures, including buildings, exhaust fans, AC units, and lighting fixtures.
 - **Additional Hazards:** The installation of gas meters and high-power boxes further compounds the potential dangers associated with this alley.

Staff Response: The Engineering and Planning & Transportation Departments have begun reviewing the request and have a number of potential questions/concerns:

- Which measures are suitable for preventing vehicular traffic?
 - Staff has concerns about potential methods to prevent vehicular traffic from using that portion of the alley.

Staff has expressed concerns about the proposal to restrict vehicular traffic on a section of the alley, taking into account the benefits that alleys offer in terms of enabling business deliveries. If a portion of the alley were to be closed to vehicular traffic, delivery vehicles for several businesses on both Walnut and Kirkwood may opt to use S. Walnut St., potentially obstructing parking spaces or traffic lanes along that corridor. Alleys play a vital role in supporting connectivity within downtown areas, facilitating efficient transportation for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Notably, this particular alley serves as an entrance to the Fourth and Washington



Surface Parking Lot. Closing this entrance on S. Walnut St. may limit the ease and safety of northbound traffic accessing the parking area

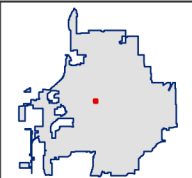
Recommendation:

Staff requests that the Traffic Commission identify if this traffic inquiry needs further analysis before a future case can be heard. The specific types of data and information that the Traffic Commission would like to review, as well as any possible solutions to considered, are also requested by staff.



Map Legend

 Proposed Pedestrian Only Portion





Alley looking west toward S. Walnut St. delivery vehicle parking in the alleyway.



Alley looking west toward S. Walnut St. delivery vehicle parking in the alleyway. (1/2)



Alley looking east toward S. Washington St. delivery vehicle parking in the alleyway. (2/2)



Alley looking west toward S. Walnut St. delivery vehicle parking in the alleyway.



Newly installed Duke power lines from 8/31/23



Newly installed Duke power box from 8/31/23