

TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD MINUTES
May 24, 2017

APPROVED AS AMENDED

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jerry Dunning, Pierre Jomini (Call in), Todd Cormier, Ron Alles

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gene Wade, Sondra Baker, Capt. Harper

STAFF SUPPORT: Erin Claunch, Aaron Lebsack, Dakota Martonen

GUESTS: None

BUSINESS MEETING:

Call to order: Todd Cormier called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

Minutes: Motion by Jerry Dunning for approval of the March 2017 minutes as amended. Seconded by Pierre Jomini. Motion by Pierre Jomini for approval of the April 2017 minutes. Seconded by Ron Alles. Motion carried on a voice vote.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD: Concerning speed limits, Pierre inquired about the City's experience with speed survey results and was advised that the 85 percentile speed and the upper limit of the pace were above the posted speed limits. Pierre indicated for the record that he would have recommended 35 mph posted speed limits on Grand Avenue, west of Zimmerman, as was posted prior to the reconstruction.

STAFF REPORTS:

Flashing Yellow / Lead-lag Operations: Erin explained to the Board how signal coordination is used throughout the City. Signal coordination is used from one intersection to the next in order to improve traffic flow and reduce travel times, stops and delay. Every signal needs to be on the same cycle length that repeats itself so the signals can be in tune with each other. The Cycle length must be split up to determine how much time is going to the north/south streets and how much is going to the east/west streets. A coupling index is used in order to determine whether coordination is needed within a corridor. The coupling index, I , is the total hourly volume divided by the signal spacing ($I = V/L$). Length is measured in feet. Coordination is recommended when $I > 0.3$. When rearranged to $V = I * L$, you can then determine how much hourly volume is needed for coordination. Once the required traffic volumes have dropped, coordination should be discontinued as well. Coordination is also subject to volume's on side streets. Lead-Lead and Lead-Lag signal phasing's are generally used at intersections. In the older signal heads, Lead-Lead will allow opposing traffic to have protected left turns followed by a permitted phase. Lead-Lag is used to allow one direction a protected left turn as well as through movement, followed by opposing through movement. Lead-Lag can cause what is called a "yellow-trap" where after the first through movement is finished with green time, a yellow ball will appear making drivers think that they have to make a left turn, often turning into opposing through movement. Flashing Yellow Arrow signal heads make Lead-Lag phasing much safer by displaying a flashing yellow arrow which alerts drivers that they can still turn left using caution.

Pierre expressed concern that drivers will pay more attention to the through movement yellow ball and not the left turn flashing yellow arrow, creating confusion on the yellow ball. The National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), report 493, conducted a study for the best way of elimination the yellow-trap and recommendations for Lead-Lag signal timing. This study recommended flashing yellow arrows over all other signal displays.

BOARD REPORTS: There were no reports from other City Boards.

BOARD MEMBER INQUIRIES:

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Five non-signalized intersections with most injury/fatal accidents for 2014-2016:** *Nothing to report at this time.*
- **Local Option Gas Tax:** House bill 0473 was signed taking the gas tax from 27 cents/gallon to 31.5 for 2018 and 2019. 32 cents/gallon for 2020 and 2021. 32.5 cents/gallon for 2022 and 33 cents/gallon for 2023 and thereafter.
- **Impacts of MDT funding cuts on Billings projects:** All projects slated for 2017 are still on course for completion, some with 2-3 week delay. Any funding issues associated with State dollars to match federal dollars appear to be satisfied.

ITEMS FOR STAFF TO CHECK ON

- ❖ **10th Avenue North & North 19th Street corner parking:** Ron inquired if yellow curb could be installed at the corner of 10th Ave N & N 19th St to prevent vehicles from parking in the radius.
- ❖ **Main Street transition signing to 6th Ave N:** Jerry expressed concern of the lane assignment signing on Main Street transitioning to 6th Avenue North. He asked if the City could forward on to the State about the possibility of adding “downtown” signs along with the right only signs.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.