

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTIES OF POTTER AND RANDALL

ON the 20th day of February, 2013, the Amarillo Traffic Commission met at 1:30 p.m. in regular session in the City Commission Chambers on the third floor of City Hall at 509 S.E. 7th Avenue.

Traffic Commissioners present were D. J. Stubben, Dean Downey, Craig Gualtiere, Mark Nair, Frank Nelson, Steve Rogers, and Walt Kelley. Commissioners absent were Charlie Graham and Tiller Watson III. Staff members present were Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer, David Szmagalski, Traffic Operations Technician, Michael Rice, Director of Public Works, Lt. Michael Miller, Amarillo Police Department, and Judy Alexander, Recording Secretary.

Commissioner Downey led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Stubben gave the invocation.

Commissioner Stubben established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The following items of business were conducted:

1. **Approval of the November 14, 2012, Minutes:**
Commissioner Gualtiere made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2012, meeting. Commissioner Nair seconded the motion, and motion carried unanimously.
2. **Consider Creating a Dedicated Northbound Left-Turn Lane on Fillmore Street at S.E. 6th Avenue in the Central Business District:**
Commissioner Stubben asked if anyone in the audience would like to come forward to speak.

William Ware, 3012 S. Ong, with Amarillo National Bank came forward and said the bank supports a dedicated left-turn lane at Fillmore St. and 6th Avenue. He said they believe the turn lane would improve traffic flow and alleviate traffic delays for employees and customers in the downtown area. David Strange, 7816 Lindsey, with the Amarillo National Bank stated he supported the dedicated left-turn lane for the following reasons:

1. The dedicated left-turn lane is endorsed by Downtown, Inc.
2. Dedicated left-turn lane would provide consistency on Fillmore St. with 8th Avenue and 10th Avenue.
3. 25% of northbound traffic on Fillmore turns left on 6th Avenue, which is ten times more than right turns.
4. 8th Avenue has a dedicated left turn although 12% are turning left, which is half the rate of 6th Avenue.
5. Left lane at Fillmore and 6th Avenue does not clear in a green signal cycle.

The following Amarillo National Bank employees collectively expressed their support for the dedicated turn lane:

Corey Krusa, 7613 New England
Tayn Williams, 3612 Tripp
Pat Ware, 2609 S. Lipscomb
Karen Isern, 1600 S. Bowie
Richard Ware, 3012 S. Hughes

They stated the traffic is heavy because of numerous large businesses and their customers in the downtown area, as well as traffic generated by the Potter County Courthouse and the Federal Court. They stated that both the Amarillo National Bank parking garage and the Chase Tower Parking garage are located on 6th Avenue, and 6th is the only route available for northbound traffic on Fillmore to the parking garages. They stated the dedicated turn lane has received the support of Center City. Pat Ware stated that they had also letters of support from other large downtown businesses: Xcel Energy, Happy State Bank, Maxor, Boyce Insurance, and Chase Tower Properties. Richard Ware said they had petitioned the city for the dedicated left turn lanes on 8th and 10th Avenue in the late 1970's at the time their drive-up facility was built. He noted that the turn lanes on 8th and 10th have worked well, and he requested Commissioners consider the lane on 6th Avenue for consistency.

Jerry Bird, Traffic Engineer, stated he had denied the request because it did not meet any traffic criteria for a dedicated left-turn lane. He referred to a handout of a literature review he had prepared detailing the criteria for a left-turn lane. He stated that since Fillmore was a one-way northbound street, there was no opposing southbound traffic for northbound to westbound traffic. He said traffic counts on Fillmore and 6th Avenue indicated the morning had the heaviest traffic flow and those volumes were used in the traffic study. He presented an animation using traffic modeling software with criteria taken from the intersection including signal timing, progression, initial volumes, and adjusted volumes. He advised that the level of service at all of the approaches of the intersection received a score of "A." He indicated that an explanation of the scoring process was included in the handout. He said the progression for vehicles traveling at 30 mph traveling northbound on the dispersal streets is good. He stated if left-turning traffic was moved twelve feet closer to the west side of Fillmore, drivers will encroach on the eastbound through lanes of 6th Avenue, reducing safety considerably.

Commissioners discussed the details of the intersection and agreed that a northbound left turn could be tight for drivers. Commissioner Rogers asked Mr. Bird about the volume of left-turning traffic on 6th, 8th, and 10th Avenues. Mr. Bird stated traffic counts indicate 159 left turns on 6th Avenue, 172 left turns on 8th Avenue, and 285 left turns on 10th Avenue.

Commissioner Kelley questioned if there were solid reasons for not approving the project. He questioned what the costs would be if approved by the City. Mr. Bird said he did not have an estimate at this time. Mr. Bird stated his concern was that a dedicated left turn lane would cause drivers to encroach the eastbound through lane on 6th Avenue. Large trucks making deliveries in the area would be a greater concern. Commissioner Kelley inquired about the volume of truck traffic in the downtown area

and what steps could be taken to alleviate the problem. Commissioner Rogers asked how many employees there are in the Amarillo National Bank main building and Plaza II. William Ware stated that the Amarillo National Bank and Plaza II have approximately 1000 employees.

Mr. Bird stated that the recommendation of the Traffic Engineering Department would be to deny the request because it did not meet any traffic criteria. He suggested other solutions could be investigated.

Beth Duke, Executive Director for Center City of Amarillo, appeared and said that in her opinion the area is just now getting back to normal since the completion of the Potter County Courthouse construction. She said the focus of Center City is to improve the downtown area and to encourage others to invest in it in the future. She stated that 71% of the downtown stakeholders they polled indicated they were in favor of the dedicated left turn at Fillmore and 6th Avenue. Commissioner Kelley questioned if there were plans to change any directional flows of streets in the development of downtown. Mrs. Duke said it had been suggested that 7th, 8th, 9th, and 11th Avenues should possibly be made two-way.

Commissioner Stubben made a motion to table the issue until further research could be undertaken. Commissioner Kelley seconded the motion, and motion carried with Commissioner Gualtiere, Commissioner Nair, and Commissioner Rogers voting no.

3. **Consider the Speed Limit on S. Coulter Street from Hillside Road to Sundown Lane:**
Mr. Bird stated that annexation has brought S. Coulter Street from Hollywood Road to Sundown Lane into the city limits. Before annexation, Randall County had posted the section at 55 miles per hour.

The Traffic Engineering Department conducted a speed study for Coulter south of Hollywood. The speed study revealed an 85th percentile speed of 56 mph, which indicates that 85 percent of the drivers are travelling at or below 56 mph. The 55 mph speed limit established by Randall County is correctly set.

Based upon the speed study, the Traffic Engineering Department recommends that the Traffic Commission forward to the City Commission a recommendation to modify Section 16-3-1-002, Schedule B, maximum speed limit, as follows:

DELETE:

<u>Location</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>MPH</u>
Coulter St.	Hillside Road	South City Limits	50

ADD:

Coulter St.	Hillside Road	Hollywood Road	50
Coulter St.	Hollywood Road	Sundown Lane	55

Commissioner Kelley made a motion to recommend such to the City Commission. Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion, and motion carried 7:0.

4. Miscellaneous Discussion:

- A. Commissioner Nelson suggested it would be beneficial for him to move the Traffic Commission meetings to 3:30 p.m. Commissioner Stubben polled each commissioner, and the majority was satisfied with the present meeting time. Commissioner Stubben announced that for the present time meetings would remain at 1:30 p.m., but it could be revisited at any time.
- B. Mr. Bird reported that the City Commission had approved the speed limit revision on Coulter Street between Tascosa Road and St. Francis Loop 335 as recommended at the November Traffic Commission meeting.
- C. Mr. Bird reported that the downtown parking restriction revisions in the Central Business District had also been approved by the City Commission as recommended at the November Traffic Commission meeting.
- D. Commissioner Gualtiere asked if there were any funds available to update the "Share the Road" signs. Mr. Bird said that there were no funds available in the present budget, but it could be budgeted in the future.

5. Public Comment:

Commissioner Stubben asked if anyone in the audience would care to come forward and address the Traffic Commission. No one came forward.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.



D.J. Stubben, Chairman