

MAJOR STREET PLAN

A major street plan involves the study and development of an efficient circulation system to carry vehicular traffic within the urban setting. A large number of persons either living, working, shopping or playing in a specific location creates a need for efficient vehicular movement to and from that location. While a street may be wide and have good alignment, it must also serve the community's traffic generators in order to be an effective part of the circulation system. When streets are developed to serve actual traffic needs, an efficient and safe traffic circulation system should result.

Land use within a community is a vital element of the major street plan. While a single family home may generate only a few vehicular trips per day, some commercial businesses may generate hundreds of vehicular trips per day, yet use approximately the same amount of land area. State and federal highways entering the community are also major traffic generators. The Major Street Plan proposed in this study is a circulation system designed to efficiently carry traffic to and from major traffic generators in the community. It is essential to plan a circulation system for a long range period of time in order that street rights-of-way of adequate width, proper alignment and location can be acquired before they are actually needed and development occurs. Subdivision activity has a direct effect upon the Major Street Plan because it is at this point that alignment and development of streets occurs. Too often, the objective of the subdivider is to get maximum profit from his land investment, and gives little thought to traffic circulation outside his subdivision. Consequently, streets in one subdivision may not relate to existing streets in the surrounding area, resulting in the city's street system being composed of a seemingly endless series of jogs, abrupt changes, dead ends and isolated neighborhoods. This method of street development prevents an efficient circulation system from developing by inhibiting the flow of traffic. While the proposals outlined in the Major Street Plan strive toward the development of an efficient circulation system of arterial and collector streets, problems with local streets have yet to be resolved. The city should probably undertake a special study with regard to its local streets to determine if some might be closed or tied in with other streets in order to achieve total efficiency.

STREET TYPES

Streets in Butler may generally be grouped into three types, based upon their functions and traffic carrying capacities:

Local Streets: These streets are the typical residential streets which account for most of the street area in Butler. Their primary function is to provide direct access to adjacent properties in a safe and efficient manner. Because local streets primarily carry traffic in residential areas, vehicular traffic should be slow and low volume. Through traffic should be discouraged from all local streets.

Collector Streets: The function of this type of street is to "collect" traffic from local streets and carry it to major trafficways. Collector streets serve a very important function because they allow local streets

serving residential areas to remain low volume, without congestion or through traffic. This function enhances the living environment of the residential neighborhood by keeping it quiet and safe for young pedestrians. Since the smooth flow of traffic is important for collector streets, parking and driveways may be restricted when congestion occurs. Sidewalks and bike lanes should be provided to reduce possible traffic conflicts. Collector streets are normally located at half-mile intervals, but this spacing may vary depending upon density of development and traffic generated.

Arterial Streets: The primary function of an arterial street is to quickly move large volumes of traffic to and from major traffic generators. Direct access to small individual properties is in conflict with the function of an arterial street. The elimination of on-street parking or limiting the number of curb cuts for individual driveways may be necessary in order to effect a smooth traffic flow. Sidewalks and bike lanes should be provided alongside arterial streets so that automobile conflicts with nonvehicular traffic may be reduced. Arterial streets are normally located at one-mile intervals in urban areas, but may vary depending upon location of major traffic generators and other needs.

PROPOSED SYSTEM

Arterial Streets

Business Route 71 (Orange): This street will serve as major north-south traffic carrier for commercial and industrial oriented traffic. It appears that traffic congestion is becoming a problem in this area, as a result of strip commercial development. The use of joint or community driveways should be encouraged on Orange Street rather than allowing the proliferation of individual driveways.

Main: This major street serves as the primary north-south route to the downtown, and links the northern and southern limits of the city.

Mill: Mill Street is the primary east-west traffic carrier linking the northeastern area of the city and beyond with Business Route 71, routing through traffic to U.S. Highway 71 and to the industrial areas.

Fort Scott: Fort Scott is the major east-west traffic carrier serving the downtown, and linking the city to the U.S. 70 interchange. Fort Scott Street should be continued as platted westward in order to serve the eastern development as it occurs.

Nursery: This east-west traffic carrier serves as the major street serving the hospital, the school complex and Bates County fairgrounds. As development occurs to the south and southeast, Nursery Street should increase as a major carrier of traffic between residential areas and the highway.

Collectors

Rice Road: Rice Road should emerge as an important link between the proposed industrial area in the western area of the city and U.S. 71 highway, via Ft. Scott Street. Rice Road should be completed between Mill and Fort

Scott Streets in order to serve as the industrial traffic carrier. Rice Road would also allow direct access from the southwest to the industrial district.

High Street: High Street should be extended south from its present terminus south of Nursery to the proposed street south of the golf course to serve residential development as it occurs to the south.

Estate Drive: This proposed street would provide a link between the major streets of Business 71 and Main Street south of the golf course. As residential development occurs to the south, this proposed street would allow much needed access to the two major north-south streets in this area.

Fulton: This collector street serves the school complex and proposed high density development to the west of downtown. Would also serve as a primary route for fire and police equipment to the city's major streets.

Broadway: Broadway should be developed as platted between Smith and Mill Streets to afford access as development occurs to the east. Broadway would also serve to carry traffic from the northeast to the fairgrounds during the fair season.

The Major Street Plan presented in this study draws largely from the city's 1968 Plan and its 1972 revision. The objectives and circulation principles contained in the 1968 Plan promote the development of an efficient circulation system, and the subsequent plan outlines the necessary steps in order to achieve these goals.

All streets named in this study as either arterial or collector streets, including proposed streets or extensions, were included as such in both the 1968 Plan and 1972 revision. This current revision does recommend some deviation from the previous plans, based upon current community trends and a more conservative population forecast.

IMPROVEMENT POLICIES

Streets are a major concern of every planning commission and city council. In Butler, streets occupy a total of 194 acres, and are as a category, the third largest land user in the city. With the automobile remaining as the primary means of travel, streets and traffic circulation will continue to be important considerations in the overall development policies of community leaders.

Communities seldom approach street improvements and traffic circulation networks with the same systematic approach as is used in the provision of other public services and utilities. In many cases, streets are developed or improved only after property owners petition and demand improvements. With this type of policy, streets are developed only in new subdivisions when the developer needs them in order to sell lots, or in higher income areas where property owners can afford the special street assessment. The end result is that streets are developed on a piecemeal basis with a complete traffic circulation system never being achieved.

Without an efficient network of major streets, vehicles are forced to use various local streets in order to arrive at their destinations. As

traffic increases, still other local streets are used to bypass the congested streets. As a result, many local streets begin to carry an increased amount of through traffic, a function for which these streets were not designed.

A more efficient traffic circulation system can be achieved if policies for the development and financing of Butler's street system are based upon the Major Street Plan. A logical approach to the development of a traffic circulation system might follow similar procedures used in the development of a utility system. Certain streets, as well as some utility services, are required in order for the entire city to function. Other streets and utility services may be considered of secondary importance when needed only for an individual property. Thus, financing of improvements should be determined from need for, as well as benefit derived from those improvements.

The major street network is the very backbone of a city's traffic circulation system. Such traffic generators as the downtown, schools, athletic fields, business and employment areas, and major highways are only as accessible as the city's major streets allow them to be. The city can hardly afford to have these major streets developed only on the basis of adjacent property owners' desires or their abilities to pay for the necessary improvements. Since major streets serve the total city, they should be financed, developed and maintained by the city at large. This method would be similar to the water utility system, in which the treatment plant and major water mains are needed and thus, paid for by all users. Such an improvement policy should also include the responsibility of the city to maintain some degree of control of private property adjacent to major streets, in order to protect the city's investment from traffic congestion caused by curb cuts, parking, advertising or the encroachment of development upon the desirable right-of-way. The local streets should be installed in accord with city specifications by the developers of the adjacent land. Once the streets have been installed in compliance with city specifications, they should be dedicated to and accepted into the city street system and then be maintained by the city.

The street designs established in the 1968 plan are referenced and suggested to be a part of this report.

