

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Present: Philip Ailiff, Greta Alquist, Neal Baxter, Alex Cecchini, Julia Curran, Scott Engel, Bob Loken, Dan Herber, Don Ostrom, Julia Tabbut; Matthew Dyrdaahl, Mackenzie Turner, Sarah Stewart, Joe Bernard, Ben Somogyi, Gina Mitteco, Heidi Schallberg, Kelly Yemen, Mike Mechtenberg.

Welcome

Chairman Greta called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM, and asked all present to introduce themselves.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes

Scott moved the minutes; Julia T. seconded. Approved.

3rd Avenue—Chris Engelmann

The goal of this project was to adjust the 5-lane road to accommodate a protected bikeway. Chris apologized for the unusually fast pace of this project. The City Council urgently asked Public Works to replace in 2016 bike routes lost elsewhere downtown. No distinguishing feature of the 2 plans threw the weight of opinion in favor of the 4-lane option. The plan used will depend on the City Council's vote on April 15. Discussion included the following:

Ben: how did the 4-lane version come about?

CE: No answer for that.

Don: It's too bad you have no visuals or graphics to illustrate what the 3-lane option would do. Third Avenue gets to be a traffic jam as cars wait for pedestrians to cross.

Julia T.: Both plans have right turn lanes, in fact.

Don: How many cars generally turn at 6th & 8th Streets?

CE: I can't address these spots in particular, but we looked into use at those intersections.

Alex: the safety benefits of 3 lanes vs traffic flow concerns—I hope you present that trade off before the Council on the 15th.

Scott: No plans to change the City Hall sidewalk. Why?

CE: the block has an areaway, an underground extension where the Evidence Room is only one foot below the surface of the street. Also, the priority of this project was building the bike route. The problems of this block only add time and expense that would delay completion.

Julia C.: bike parking cuts into the sidewalk width, too.

Alex: When will 3rd Avenue be fully re-designed? Soon or late?

CE: the Council wants a re-model, so probably sooner than the 40-50 year normal life (from 2004).

Greta: Which advisory groups passed resolutions in support of the 4-lane option?

CE: Property owners were the only group to advocate that plan.

Agency and General Announcements

Julia T.: we should vote on another resolution before the 15th.

Scott: there's not a public hearing, because CMs Reich and Palmisano [*chair & vice-chair of the Transportation & Public Works Committee*] chose not to have one.

Joe: why not delay the project until fall, and during the summer demonstrate the virtues of 3-lane streets?

Dan: was fixing the sidewalk around City Hall ever a viable option?

MD: Yes, back in November there was a concept that added sidewalk space. That was not vetted from an engineering perspective at that point.

Dan: I'd like a resolution calling for bringing the walk up to the 8-foot legal minimum. Period.

NB: moved, to adopt the following resolution about the 3rd Avenue project; Dan seconded. **Approved**, with Don abstaining. The PAC strongly agrees with all points in the recent BAC resolution on 3rd Avenue as copied below.

The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee supports the original, three-lane layout proposed by Public Works staff for the portion of 3rd Ave S to the south of 7th Street, and opposes the removal of the center medians and/or the proposed planted buffers in that section. The original layout already represents a compromise for bicycling and walking but remains a Complete Street for all users because it is more fully protected for bicycles, more protected and pleasant for pedestrians, and safer for motorists because it is not a four lane configuration. The BAC would support a one-year pilot of a three-lane layout that leaves the center medians in place but defers the construction of the planted buffers until the end of the pilot.

Additionally, the BAC is concerned that the original layout, which was vetted twice by this committee, has been replaced by a substantially different and significantly worse layout without any communication with the BAC.

In addition, while we acknowledge that this is primarily a bike-focused project, we feel that *any* street redesign or reconstruction in the City should be seen as an opportunity to correct deficient pedestrian environments, such as the 4'8" unobstructed sidewalk currently along City Hall. Council should adopt a specific timeline for improvements there as part of the approved plan for this project.

We are also concerned that a proposed 'compromise' that would make up for lost median greening by adding planters behind the curb will clutter and constrict the pedestrian right-of-way.

From a pedestrian perspective, few improvements would make up for the safety that could be gained by reducing traffic lanes.

Sarah: the Health Dept has announced an opportunity to work on engaging communities around health issues. Also, the victim of the March 18 accident is one of our high-rise study residents, and lives at Lyndale & 18th North. She lost a leg due to the accident. She's the 3rd public high-rise resident hit by a motor vehicle since October 2015.

Gina: Mpls looked good, ahead of its peers, at the conference I just attended.

Bob: I attended the Marcy-Homes land use meeting about the block with the White Castle along East Hennepin. The design for the block is very bad, and includes an FAR of 0.12!

MD: Two jobs have opened up. One applicant will replace Simon Blenski, and the other job is in the Traffic division. Also, those of you who received my e-mail need to re-apply for the PAC by the end of April.

Bike/Ped Safety Initiative—Matthew Dyr Dahl

There's \$955 million to spend on these projects. Public works is considering a framework that is moving towards replacing crosswalks with durable zebra markings. The "Crossing Improvements" money will speed this change.

Seward Bike Blvd. was approved (along 29th Ave.) as a Safe Routes to School project.

Parklets news: 3 community-funded parklets will appear in 2016, in front of Morissey's (Lake & Bryant), Canteen coffee shop (33rd & Bryant) and 1 more (to be announced). The City-funded parklets will appear in Wards 6, 8 and 12. Ready in early May.

Next year we will use an expedited re-application process.

Scott: this is money for 2016. Will like amounts be available next year?

MD: Yes, we anticipate these funds to be available going forward.

Sarah: the Housing project people would propose excellent ideas for this fund, too, if asked.

Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee—Scott Engel

We heard about the 5th Street SE foot bridge. The bridge will move due to uneven land. The County has consulted with no one yet, as this project will be built in a few years.

Making the Hiawatha-Lake mess pedestrian-friendly featured next. Three tiers of improvements are on offer, from a few minor changes to a complete, \$6 million overhaul. No dedicated funds so far, but the plan is finished.

We also discussed the Lake Calhoun & Harriet Master Plan. Considered are improvements at Dean Boulevard, 37th Street and the Lake Street bridge, to name a few. Separating bikes from pedestrians around the food areas is part of the plan. \$3 million is available from the Met Council for this project.

At the Godfrey Bridge re-design, the impact on Park land will prevent widening the bridge.

Programs & Policies Subcommittee—Alex Cecchini

Bob Loken illustrated how a developer uses the City codes and zoning while designing a project, by presenting a project he has worked on. This was a very interesting segment.

We also looked at the resolution our ad hoc committee put together, urging changes to the admirable update of the Complete Streets policy. Proposed changes: community language needs to be stronger, and exceptions to the modal hierarchy need full City Council approval. Julia Curran seconded the resolution. **Approved.**

To: Minneapolis City Council and Public Works Staff
From: Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Re: **Complete Streets Policy**
Date: March 29, 2016

The Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) largely supports the Complete Streets Policy as presented on 3/15/16. This document represents an extraordinary amount of work on behalf of DPW and great progress forward for the city of Minneapolis in providing a framework that allows walking, bicycling, and taking transit to be the priorities they must be in a vibrant, thriving twenty-first century city.

The PAC recommends to the policymaker work group that a few areas need to be worked on before final presentation and passage.

1. Under Planning (last paragraph)
 - Community engagement language must be stronger than "when appropriate and accessible". It also must include language around transparency and equitable engagement.
2. Under Exemptions
 - The exact language is critical in this section and needs work to uphold the principles outlined in the policy. The PAC recommends: "When adopted city plans and goals call for facilities following the modal priority framework, and a proposed project does not include those facilities for the modal priority framework- an exemption will be required from the City Council based upon the following list:"

As concerns the list of projects proposed for the Regional Solicitation, we narrowed the list to the most feasible choice.

Phil seconded the resolution. **Approved.**

To: Hennepin County Board of Commissioners; Hennepin County and Minneapolis Public Works Staff
From: Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Re: **Regional Solicitation Recommendation**

Date: April 6, 2016

The Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) hosted both Minneapolis Public Works and Metropolitan Council staff with the purpose of learning more about the annual Regional Solicitation process for federal funding for transportation projects. We support many of the city's proposed projects that will include pedestrian improvements. However, we would like to see local government take advantage of funds available for a *pedestrian-driven* project.

As such, the PAC established a working group to examine potential projects. The following considerations steered our discussion:

1. Likelihood that we can get to a concept design by June.
2. Scoring criteria
3. Minneapolis pedestrian priorities
4. Equity
5. Transit

Whereas Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis stated goals include improving pedestrian safety and promoting walking for transportation and health, the PAC resolves to recommend Hennepin County put forth a proposal for addressing the Complex Intersection at Excelsior Boulevard and Lake Street, also known as the West Lake project.

In addition, the PAC looks forward to working with Hennepin County and the city of Minneapolis to prepare future proposals for pedestrian-driven projects by four general categories:

1. Sidewalk widening
2. Sidewalk gap
3. Bump outs
4. Complex Intersections

Kelley: this list is a PAC success.

Julia Tabbut moved to adjourn; Neal seconded. Approved, and adjourned at 6:03 PM.