

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Active Transportation Committee

Date: Monday, January 22, 2024

Time: 4 – 6 p.m.

Location: Microsoft Teams conference call

Committee Members:

- ✓ Tammy McLemore, Dist. 1
Gilbert Odonkor, Dist. 1
- ✓ Billy Binder, Dist. 2
- ✓ Jenny Ackerson, Dist. 3
- ✓ Laura Mitchell, Dist. 3
- ✓ Dave Carlson, Dist. 3
Larissa Lavrov, Dist. 4
- ✓ Haley Foydel, Dist. 4
- ✓ Lou Dzierzak, Dist. 5
vacant, Dist. 5
- ✓ Luke Van Santen, Dist. 6
- ✓ Lou Miranda, Dist. 6
Greg Anderson, Dist. 7
vacant, Dist. 7

Ex-Officio Members:

- ✓ Jordan Kocak, HC Public Works
- ✓ Dan Patterson, HC Public Works
- ✓ Suzy Scotty, MnDOT
- ✓ Danny McCullough, Three Rivers

Guests:

- ✓ Aaron Warford, Bolton and Menk
- ✓ Peter Bennett, City of Minneapolis
- ✓ Nathan Ellingson, Hennepin County
- ✓ Colleen O'Dell, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- ✓ Chad Davison
- ✓ Kristine Stehly, Hennepin County
- ✓ Tom Musick, Hennepin County

Notes

- **Approval of the December 2023 minutes** **4:03 – 4:05**
 - Billy Binder moved to approve the December 2023 minutes. Lou Dzierzak seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

- **Election of new ATC co-chairs** **4:05 – 4:08**
 - Jordan Kocak led the ATC through the process to Greg Anderson and Lou Miranda were nominated for co-chairs. Lou Dzierzak made the motion to Luke Van Santen seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote.

- **Franklin Avenue Reconstruction** **4:08 – 4:47**



- Nathan Ellingson from Hennepin County Public Works Transportation Design introduced the project and himself. Design consultant Aaron Warford from Bolton and Menk and Peter Bennet with the city of Minneapolis also are representing the project.
- At the 30 percent stage. The project has been to the ATC three times prior.
- Working toward city approval of layout in March 2024.
- Aaron Warford took over the presentation: Reconstructing Franklin Avenue between Lyndale and Chicago, 1.25 miles. The city reconstructed Franklin west of Lyndale, where it is a city street.
- Franklin is an important corridor in Minneapolis, a critical multimodal corridor. Connects to a lot of important arterials.
- This is a full roadway reconstruction, which doesn't happen very often — every 50 to 70 years. Opportunities for safety improvements, pedestrian, bike and transit improvements, streetscape and stormwater improvements. Right now Franklin is pretty much just pavement.
- Previous planning study completed in early 2020. 2022 started design. Construction starting in 2025, likely lasting two years.
- Working on existing conditions in late summer 2022. Goals and priority developed fall and winter of 2022-23. Preliminary design fall 2023 to spring 2024. Final design summer 2024 to spring 2025.
- Three open houses. 600+ survey responses, 25+ pop-up events, 15 neighborhood meetings, presented to the ATC, Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Formed a project advisory group from the previous study.
- Proposed design is one lane each direction with a center turn lane with landscaped boulevard, bike lane behind curb, concrete sidewalk. Can add median in places. Allows separated bike and pedestrian facilities. One segment can't maintain separated bike and ped for two blocks, near 35W.
- Eliminates on-street parking. Study found current off-peak on-street parking today does not get used a lot.
- Still developing
 - Stormwater management
 - Right of way encroachments limit available space, including things like stairs to apartments. Generally will not remove encroachments.
 - Overhead utilities will remain overhead. There was discussion of potentially burying utilities, but that will not move forward.
 - Determination of public utility improvements in spring 2024. Water mains go back to 1800s, will make sanitary sewer adjustments.
 - Pavement evaluation and selection in spring 2024. Should it be concrete? What are the ramifications if it is.
 - How to stage construction thoughtfully.
- Aaron Warford showed the layout and talked through it west to east:
 - Will not reconstruct intersection of Lyndale and Franklin; Lyndale reconstruction will cover that. We are coordinating to make sure we tie in well. Will make sure Lyndale remains free-moving during Franklin construction.
 - Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board did a tree survey. The most critical segment was on the north side near Pleasant Avenue, then Pillsbury down the

hill. They identified 22 trees as high value. We are proposing to move the bike lane in to behind-curb and maintain existing boulevard, saving 20 of those trees.

- East of Pleasant, another run of trees we're able to protect. Some of these trees survived the previous reconstruction.
- Pillsbury Avenue offset intersection with potentially conflicting left turns, so layout introduces a median to prevent left turns. Also creates refuge in the middle.
- Luke Van Santen: How wide is the Pillsbury refuge? Aaron Warford: The minimum width for domes is 6 feet, these are 5 feet, so pass-throughs but not with raised domes, following PROWAG [Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines].
- Luke Van Santen: Is there an opportunity for a leading signal at La Salle? Aaron Warford: That is something we're talking about to increase safety benefits.
- La Salle Avenue, able to bring bikes off the street and cross at protected intersection.
- Transit facilities at Nicollet Avenue, where two of the highest use transit routes in the city intersect. Transit loading areas, upgraded shelters (working with Metro Transit to introduce heat). Wider boulevard areas to allow some of those improvements.
- Stevens Ave is unique in that they're opposing one-ways. Opportunity to make those right-in/right-out, with refuge for pedestrians.
- Third Avenue, this is the one segment where we combine bike and ped facilities. East of this, we get down to 66 feet, too narrow for separated facilities. Certainly conscious of need for clear zones for walking and biking. Might not even have enough room for a green boulevard for signs. Right up against retaining walls, buildings. Good news is it is limited to this two-block stretch.
- Luke: Can the lanes be narrowed to 10 feet from Third to Clinton? Aaron Warford: We labeled them as 12 feet, which includes the 2-foot gutter pan, so really they are 10 feet.
- Potential new design to remove signal at 1st. It has extremely low volumes. Can reroute left turns. Gives more space to deal with traffic, including eastbound left turn lane to enter 5th and 35W. Vehicles queue back.
- Between Portland and the bridge over 35W, we would add a westbound through lane, effectively what's there today. The through lane will allow right turns on 5th, then the lane drops on the bridge.
- Looking at opportunities to separate the bike lane on the bridge. We will not redeck this new bridge. May be able to provide curb or median. Heard from a lot of people that having separation is critical.
- Proposing moving bus stop a block east from west of Portland, to midblock east of Portland. Introduce median at Oakland Avenue, improving safety and providing refuge.
- Park to Chicago, weird situation with sidewalk in front of Peavey Park. Most of the sidewalk is on park property and not fully on the county's right of way. We're leaving the sidewalk in place and just constructing a bikeway. Gives green space and buffer. We are coordinating with Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board whether to reconstruct sidewalk solely on the county right of way.

- Not reconstructing all the way through Chicago, this was recently done. We are looking at how to transition to east of Chicago, where there are not bike facilities. May put bikes on the shoulder or into Peavey Park and south. As of right now, we're stopping short of Chicago and tie into already improved facility.
- Luke Van Santen: Any chance of a double left from Franklin eastbound to 5th northbound?
Aaron Warford: We looked at that early on. The problem is the width of 5th, one-way northbound with parking allowed. Parking is essential for building tenants. City staff not comfortable with double lefts without two full receiving lanes. Would require a pretty major reconstruction of 5th. Also safety concerns with dual left across crosswalk. Luke: It looks like roughly 100 meters of parking, which is maybe 20 spaces? Is 20 spaces really life and death or so important for those two apartment complexes? Peter Bennett: I know Aaron portrayed it as solely about parking, but it's also about having two travel lanes on this street. We don't have a lot of appetite for two lanes when it's a one-lane access to the interstate.
- Dave Carlson: Could the right lane of westbound Franklin at 5th Ave. be right turn only? That would free up more room on the I-35W bridge and not have merging traffic on the bridge. Aaron Warford: We ran a bunch of iterations of this, several including dedicated right turn lanes. The lane we're adding is the right lane. There are some general benefits for stacking, if they can stack in both lanes. It's more about stacking than capacity. Instead of needing a dedicated right, this helps maintain just three lanes of traffic and giving more space for bikeway and sidewalk.
- Billy Binder: I represent a different district, but I know Franklin Avenue has had tremendously high crash rates for biking and walking. A lot of encroachment in sidewalks, which you mentioned. We had a total reconstruction on Golden Valley Road in 1999 and we undergrounded the utilities. When you have all sorts of competition among bikes, peds, buses, traffic, why not underground when you have a chance? Aaron Warford: Certainly a component of that is cost. I don't know all the ins and outs. The city and county have certain rules on who does what and who's responsible for costs. There's also coordination, when we underground a lot of times we need to buy right of way, this was not going to be an expansion project. There are a lot of encroachments that have been there a long time. Early on we said we weren't going to expand right of way. When you underground utilities, you have to find more space for them. We're already in a spot where we're running out of room. And it's not just power, there are other utilities leasing space on Xcel's poles. Peter Bennett: This was a question of whether utilities should be undergrounded was given to me by Hennepin County. It would be a Minneapolis cost. We looked at similar projects and did not find precedent. Today the utilities are in the middle of the sidewalk and that's not acceptable to anyone at all. The layout gives us space to put the poles somewhere, in the boulevard. If you underground, we did some cost estimating, and we saw a high cost. We looked at other city priorities, and undergrounding here would cost some other project elsewhere. We also pay for these projects through assessments and we would pass along costs to property owners, which on Franklin includes a lot of affordable housing. And we'd ask them to connect into the new underground utilities on their dime. It's unsatisfying, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but the numbers don't really work. Nathan Ellingson: Another element is all the feeds; you can't force landowners to underground their feeds, so it ends up you might have a pole in that location anyway. That's in the equation as well. Billy: I agree

with you all that that's a very unsatisfying response. I just wish you would make an investment in this community. So many accidents, so busy. There is where the investment should be made. I agree your answer is unsatisfactory.

- Jenny Ackerson: Is there a reason why there are some large painted hatched yellow medians instead of lengthening a median? Aaron Warford: We're conscious to not have turning vehicles stop in the through lane. E.g. we wanted to give people an opportunity to get out of the through lane to turn left into the alley. When introducing medians, we were very conscious of their length. We wanted the safety benefit, refuge, but also not stopping people from getting where they need to go.
- Colleen O'Dell: Aaron — for MPRB, please contact Siciid Ali at sali@minneapolisparcs.org about implications for our long range Peavey Park plan, as well as Carrie Christensen at cchristensen@minneapolisparcs.org regarding bike trails and transportation in parks. Nathan Ellingson: Thanks, I will check in with them.
- Jordan Kocak: I don't think the ATC has done a resolution on this yet. Nathan mentioned this is going to the city in March. I think if the ATC wanted to do a resolution, now would be the time. I'll get in touch with the District 4 members after this meeting to potentially bring a draft to the February meeting.

- **MPRB Mall Park**

4:47 – 5:08

- Colleen O'Dell from Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board introduced herself and the project.
- The project Web site is https://www.minneapolisparcs.org/park-care-improvements/park-projects/current_projects/the-mall-park-woonerf-trail-and-site-improvements/
- The project is in Uptown adjacent Hennepin Avenue. It includes a woonerf and trail connection that happens to coincide with Metro Council sewer project.
- Phase I project addresses shared used woonerf on east end; Midtown Greenway connection; forest and greenspace added on east side.
- Doing project now since Metro Council completed much of their work on Humboldt Avenue, which crosses The Mall. They now need to tear up part of the roadway, so we'd like to do it all at once. Once they repair the sewer, they'll replace The Mall to the planned condition, which is greenspace rather than pavement.
- On the east side, going from one drive lane and parking lane each way, to a woonerf possibly with pervious pavers, traffic calming, focused on safety for biking and walking but still will accommodate cars.
- Woonerf is a Dutch term for shared living street.
- Has been some flooding in this area. It is near Bde Maka Ska and Lake Harriet, so we want to address water quality as well.
- Phase II or III would include a plaza at Hennepin Avenue.
- Already begun engagement and design work. Hoping to construct this fall and final restoration in 2025.
- There's been a lot of concern with loss of parking. Residents definitely want to preserve mature trees. Lot of interest in trail connection and facilities, such as drinking fountains. Some would like to see other parts of the plan implemented rather than the woonerf.
- We're playing with ideas for the eastern part of The Mall, where the new bike and ped connection goes.

- Option A: It goes down the middle of The Mall, and would be expanded from five-foot sidewalk today to shared use trail.
 - Option B moves the trail to the north side of the park, which likely would remove additional parking.
 - Option C would have bikes use the woonerf instead of being totally separated. With planned improvements and traffic calming it should be safe for bicyclists.
- Luke Van Santen: Who are the people expected to be driving on the woonerf? Colleen O'Dell: Primarily people living in the area. There is multifamily housing to the south and the Hennepin County library. People drive up to the book drop-off and the underground parking for the library.
 - Colleen O'Dell: How do people feel about a separated bike path vs. woonerf?
 - Lou Miranda: Looking at the three options, on the one hand C is interesting. It doesn't go anywhere, cyclists could cycle on the woonerf. But if there's still parking, people will be driving and trying to parallel park. It's such a small area, a dedicated space for biking makes sense to me. Separating people walking and biking is standard practice in an urban area. Cyclists are either trying to have fun or get somewhere, separating from peds makes a lot of sense. Laura Mitchell: I agree with Lou – I'd prioritize separation of all modes as much as possible.
 - Dave Carlson: The only thing about B is you have a two-way bike trail, so you'd have bikers going eastbound almost directly into traffic. I don't know if it's possible to combine B and C. Colleen: Do you have the same concern if it's separated? Dave: If it's separated with a boulevard, that'd be preferable.
 - Lou Dzierzak: The combined on C, where bikers are riding with the cars: The idea of cars being parked there, I've lived in that neighborhood and used The Mall for the library, the lakes, the Y. Seems like an opportunity for lots of accidents, though maybe not major ones. I kind of like the idea of B where the bikes are separate. A, going down the middle, I can see people walking with their strollers and there being conflicts.
 - We intend to have a stopping point with fountains, benches, maybe an information sign. It's a key area with Uptown this way, Greenway this way. We're thinking at Humboldt.
 - Luke Van Santen: Are there any thoughts of plans for other woonerf-style infrastructure being built in the city? Is this the first, the only? Could it be a "pilot" test? Colleen O'Dell: There's one I know of the city built at 29th Street, about a block long. I've heard mixed reviews. MPRB tried our hand at one. It started as a parking lot and it still reads as a parking lot. This one would be designed as a true woonerf, where bikes and peds are the focus and cars are accommodated. Luke: Our conversation on 4th and University, maybe making them into a high-value feature, maybe a woonerf in that same sense makes sense here. Let's have this kind of infrastructure here in our city, make it a full-on woonerf. I get the separation aspect.
 - Jenny Ackerson: I prefer separation for bikes in general where there's space. Car volumes are probably pretty low here, and I don't think it's a high-risk scenario. My major comment is all three propose widening and joining bike and ped at Hennepin. I know the plaza is a future project, but with the bike lane on east side of Hennepin, thinking about how those connect to the crosswalk where bikes also will need to cross at signal. I know they all join together, but I wonder if there's a way to channelize those two modes at the crosswalk.

- Dave Carlson: The traffic on The Mall, if it were just parked cars for apartments and homes... A fair amount of traffic with library parking garage, might be more than it might seem.
- Concept includes sketch of tents for farmers market and Uptown Art Fair. Dave Carlson: In that case I wouldn't put bikes down the middle in more congestion.

- **Mississippi River Trail expansion**

5:08 – 5:30

- Danny McCullough from Three Rivers Park District introduced himself and the project.
- Three Rivers is drafting a grant proposal for regional trail on West River Road in Champlin. Would be part of the Mississippi River Trail, U.S. Bike Route 45.
- TRPD is applying for \$8 million in a federal RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) grant to construct a trail from 109th near border of Brooklyn Park and Champlin up to Mississippi Point Park in Champlin. Currently no trail. Fairly high traffic, speed limit 45 or 50. Total cost with TRPD contribution would be \$16 million.
- South of project area West Mississippi River Regional Trail exists, connecting to Mississippi River Gateway park.
- Great project, it's a major gap in the system.
- Originally when the state was working on the Mississippi River Trail route, they wanted to put signage on the road but the county was not comfortable given the speeds and volumes. It was identified for a future trail.
- Project would include 3.5 miles of new trail where no trail exists today.
- Today it's a typical rural county road with pretty wide shoulder but not bike or pedestrian features. Trail would be on west side separated from traffic. Some places it would be close to back of curb. We would improve the entire roadway. 18 intersection improvements. Adding turn lanes to cut down on rear-end crashes. North end would convert existing four lanes to three. Working pretty closely with the county on this.
- Would propose roundabout at West River Road and Winnetka Avenue.
- Dave Carlson: Is there enough right of way to maintain shoulders and maybe move the trail back off the roadway? Danny McCullough: Yes, we'll be required to keep some shoulder. We're not getting rid of the shoulder, there will have to be some kind of reactionary shoulder. We're not in final design at all. We've been working with the county. I can't say if it's going to be 2 feet or 3 or 4. I suspect wider in some areas, but there will be shoulder.
- Tammy: I've biked there through the years with bike clubs. Trail would go on west side. Is that land the back of people's yards, does it affect anyone's property? Danny McCullough: For the most part no. We're starting into more detailed design. We've found a few areas with a need for a few feet, but not major impacts. County right of way here is fairly wide. I can share when we have more detailed design. Conditions change as you go through the corridor. In some areas some buffer, some with trail on curb with shoulder. It varies in the corridor a little bit. We always try to minimize private property impacts. There are some areas where we'll need some easement.
- Tammy McLemore: What's the source of the match? Danny McCullough: \$8 million match from Three Rivers.

- Tammy McLemore: Brooklyn Park area, I see a lot of work at the nature center, is that TRPD? Danny McCullough: Mississippi River Gateway is our park, where we're doing a massive project. One of the biggest projects we've done, \$28 million or \$30 million. Just massive, redoing the whole park and visitors center. This project would connect right into that.
- West River Road in Champlin, this project ends west of Winnetka. City has some trail there. Future phase is a trail all the way up to the Crow River in Dayton along W. River Road. Unfortunately probably a long time in the future. At least five to 10 years down the road, minimum. Tammy McLemore: Still, a game plan connecting all parts of the metro Tammy McLemore: What is the separation going to be? Danny McCullough: Typical 10-foot wide regional trail with boulevard where there is space. We have trail south of 109th taking you to Mississippi River Gateway Park, which gives you an idea of what it would look like, but with shoulder on the road. Tammy: Will you take space from the opposite side of the road? Danny: No, we'll work with the space we have. The intersection improvements should help driving, too, with the addition of turn lanes. Tammy: I assume that will include lights? Danny: I don't think a lot, probably at 109th. I don't recall between 109th and Winnetka there being a lot of signal. It's mostly trail, grading, roadway work. Tammy: Consideration for pedestrian crossing improvements? Danny: Some intersections will have crosswalks, haven't worked out where we might need a signalized crossing. We have maybe a 20 percent concept that includes crossings. We don't have it all figured out yet.
- We chose the west side for the trail because that's where most of the residents are, that's what will serve the most people. We will provide some crossing improvements for people on the east side.
- Jordan Kocak: Danny requested if the ATC could do a resolution supporting the grant application. Usually we take the time between meetings and vote at the next meeting, but due to the time frame for submittal, the committee would need to vote tonight. Danny came up with a draft. Jordan then read the draft resolution.
- Dave Carlson: I have to leave the meeting but I will support the resolution... hopefully keep existing roadway shoulders. Thanks.
- Tammy McLemore moved to approve the resolution. Jenny Ackerson seconded.
- The motion passed unanimously on voice vote.
- Tammy McLemore: When applying to the feds, is it the U.S. Department of Transportation? Danny McCullough: Yes. The deadline is in February before your next meeting, which is why we asked for a resolution tonight. So, thank you.

- **Member announcements**

5:30 – 5:36

- Billy Binder: Thank you, Tammy, for your great work as chair. Every single time we had an issue in the second district Jenny and I were able to call on you. University, Fourth, Lowry, etc. You've helped us do better projects in our district and Hennepin County. I wanted to thank you personally for your wonderful patience and work. Laura Mitchell: Thank you Tammy! Lou Miranda: Thank you, Tammy.
- Tammy McLemore: BikeMN on Friday celebrated their 15th year in existence. They have a new executive director. They're tapping into quite a bit of money available with safe routes to school and what the late Bill Dooley was able to get going.

- Jordan Kocak: Districts 5 and 7 are up for renewal. Dan Patterson and I have interviewed applicants and are awaiting confirmation from commissioners. Hopefully in February we'll have new members for districts 5 and 7.
- Luke Van Santen: If anyone interested in something that seems to me is inspirational, google the West Davis project outside Salt Lake City. A little discouraging in that they're making the road bigger, but they're dropping in 10 or 12 miles of bikeway. It seems if we can have with new roads or conversions down or up, if we could have improvements like that. Just looking at the map it's a long trail.

- **Adjournment**

5:36

- Lou Miranda moved to adjourn the meeting; Lou Dzierzak seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

Next meeting:

February 26 | 4 – 6 p.m. (note this is the 4th Monday of the month due to Presidents Day)

Remote via Microsoft Teams