Lowry Ave Public Meeting # 2 Summary

5/11/22

Attendees:

* Kelly Agosto, Hennepin County
* Chris Kartheiser, City of Minneapolis
* Kadence Novak, Asakura Robinson
* Zakcq Lockrem, Asakura Robinson
* Gwen Jenkins, Asakura Robinson
* Arman Rajaeian, Metro Transit
* José Eduardo Sanchez and team members, Tecolotl
* 19 members of the public

**Questions and responses** (some have been edited or consolidated for clarity):

Project process and timeline:

Q: Why is the eastern portion of the project being constructed first?

A: The project team applied for federal funding in two phases, and the timeline of the funding for the eastern phase comes first.

Q: What does municipal consent cover?

A: Municipal consent is the general agreement on the concept design approach in terms of lane configuration, lane widths, and Right-of-Way (ROW) needs before additional detailed design and engineering can proceed. This includes the location of the shared use path. Public engagement continues throughout the detailed design and engineering.

Q: How much input will the public have into the detailed design phase?

A: The public will be able to give input on the shared use path (SUP) design, boulevard space usage, signal phasing, and other elements of design details. Asakura Robinson will continue to lead the engagement, and engagement will continue through construction.

Q: Will there be closed captioning and/or ADA description available for future public meetings?

A: The project team will look into accessibility solutions for future meetings. The meeting currently has the option to turn on closed captioning, and its participants can select interpretation in Spanish or English. The project team is also working on providing an accessible PDF copy of the presentation with alternative text for images and graphics, and will be uploading a video recording of the meeting in both Spanish and English that includes the closed captioning.

Shared-Use Path (SUP)

Q: Why was the shared use path moved from the south to the north side?

A: It was moved in response to comments from the public. The main reason given is that the north side will receive more sunlight, helping to avoid ice buildup on the path during the winter months.

Q: Will the shared use path have separate lanes for bikes and pedestrians?

A: No, bikes and pedestrians will use the same lanes. The path will be separated into East and West directional lanes.

Q: Has the project team had conversations about consolidating driveways to improve pedestrian and bike experience, in particular on the north side with the SUP?

A: We have not had conversations with property owners yet, but this possibility will be explored in the detailed design phase.

Q: How will the SUP interact with bus stops?

A: This is currently a high-level, preliminary design. During the detailed design phase, we will reach into our toolbox and explore treatments for dual SUP/bus stop zones. This is an issue that is coming up frequently throughout the city. Common treatments include signing, different pavement materials, and painting.

Q: How does the design account for bikers who don’t want to use the SUP?

A: Bikers still have the option to share the vehicle travel lanes with vehicles if they wish. There will not be a dedicated on-street bike facility.

Q: Are there examples of shared use paths with additional signage to make motorists aware of bicyclists and pedestrians? If so, are there opportunities for neighborhood associations to assist in the cost?

A: The City of Minneapolis’ Transportation Action Plan calls for figuring out a wayfinding plan within the next few years, but the city does not have a wayfinding plan yet. More details to be figured out on implementation

Intersections:

Q: Is there a possibility of shortening the pedestrian crossing at Central?

A: Intersection design details will be explored further in the detailed design phase. The project team is working with Metro Transit to understand how the F Line BRT will operate and how to configure bus stops and make changes to stop locations to accommodate future BRT. The project team is also coordinating with MnDOT on their study for a range of alternatives for Central, to make sure the Lowry project is compatible with these alternatives. At this level of design, curb lines will remain in their present configuration.

Q: Is there an option to consider a curb extension crosswalk at Lowry and Hayes? This is a major crosswalk for kids to Pillsbury School and others to NE Middle, Windom Park and pedestrians traveling to the Quarry Shopping Center.

A: This intersection is outside the study area for this project, but the project team will pass this request along to the Hennepin County bike and pedestrian coordinator. The county is looking at restriping this section of Lowry up to Stinson.

Q: Is there a possibility of having a dedicated pedestrian signal phase in all directions at major intersections?

A: Signal design and timing will be explored in the detailed design phase. Typically, county intersections have a leading pedestrian interval.

Q: Is the University and Lowry intersection the same size area as the Central and Lowry intersection?

A: University is narrower than Central at Lowry. Central includes parking lanes on both sides, whereas University does not.

Q: University and Lowry is the most dangerous intersection on Lowry, in my opinion. This design is an improvement but is there anything else that can be done to make it more safe?

A: MnDOT is currently conducting studies of University and Central avenues, which will narrow down a range of alternatives for a long-range roadmap for these areas. The Lowry Avenue project team is working to ensure that the intersection designs at these locations are compatible with the purpose and need of MnDOT’s studies. Additionally, intersection design will be examined in more detail during the detailed design phase of the Lowry Avenue project.

Q: Can you explain what “design vehicle” means?

A: The design vehicle is the largest vehicle that will be able to navigate turns at the intersections without encroaching into oncoming traffic. This project uses a WB-40 design vehicle, which is a truck with a wheelbase of 40 feet. Previous versions of the layout used a WB-50. Larger trucks will be able to navigate the turns, but they will have to encroach into the oncoming travel lanes.

Hennepin County does not have the power or ability to restrict trucks from traveling along the corridor.

Q: For intersections with frequent truck turning considerations, have there been any thoughts about the use of a truck curb apron?

A: We will explore the potential use of truck curb aprons in the detailed design phase in locations where it might make sense to implement.

Utilities and services:

Q: Will there be an opportunity to put utilities underground with this project?

A: Putting utilities underground is not included in this project’s budget; however we will be working to ensure that utility poles are not obstructing the sidewalk or SUP.

Q: Will there still be trash pickup on Lowry?

A: The project team will need to confirm if and how existing service will change once the project has been constructed.

Parking:

Q: Will there be street parking on Lowry?

A: No, there will not be any street parking on Lowry.

Q: Has the county reached out to the new developments up on Lowry and Marshall about the loss of parking on lowry?

A: Not yet. The new development on Marshall and Lowry includes a private surface parking lot and parking garage.

Crossings:

Q Will there be a striped crosswalk at Fillmore?

A: As a best practice, the county does not typically stripe unsignalized crosswalks.

Q: Where else are there similarly designed streets in Mpls that include raised crosswalks? What is the experience with cross streets and whether vehicles actually stop and stay stopped before the crosswalks, or creep out to see beyond the boulevards?

A: The city has worked to implement raised crosswalks on Plymouth Avenue, as well as Johnson Street and Bryant Avenue. The park board is also looking into implementing raised crosswalks on some of their roadways. Raised crosswalks in general are becoming more common in Minneapolis, and the City is working to implement them where possible.

Lane Configuration:

Q: Would the proposed medians be curb-height? Would medians prevent vehicles from turning left?

A: Yes, medians would be curb-height and would prevent vehicles from turning left. Medians will include cut-throughs for pedestrians and bicycles.

Q: Will any changes be made to the lanes on the Lowry Avenue bridge as part of this project?

A: The bridge itself is outside the project’s scope. However, the western portion of the Lowry and Marshall intersection will have striping changes to address the reduction in travel lanes coming eastbound off of the bridge.

Stormwater:

Q: How will the project include water mitigation, in particular to address flooding and runoff near the railroad bridge?

A: The project team is looking at options for stormwater treatment wherever possible within the boulevard space, and the storm sewer network will be redone as part of this project as well.

Engagement:

Q: Has engagement with Edison High School taken place?

A: We have been in communication with the principal of Edison High School and are working to find ways to engage with Edison students.

**Comments received from members of the public via the Chat function:**

* I think extending the shared used path all along Lowry is great change. Would make it a much better walking experience (though, I would need to cross from the south to the north side of Lowry).
* Really pleased to see the raised crosswalks at some intersections.
* The reconstructed Johnson St is FANTASTIC
* +1 to "reconstructed Johnson St is FANTASTIC"