

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Active Transportation Committee

Date: Monday, May 16, 2022

Time: 4 – 6 p.m.

Location: Microsoft Teams conference call meeting

Committee Members:

- ✓ Tammy McLemore, Dist. 1
- ✓ Gilbert Odonkor, Dist. 1
- ✓ Billy Binder, Dist. 2
Jenny Ackerson, Dist. 2
- ✓ Dave Carlson, Dist. 3
- ✓ Laura Mitchell, Dist. 3
- ✓ Jay Eidsness, Dist. 4
- ✓ Haley Foydel, Dist. 4
- ✓ Lou Dzierzak, Dist. 5
- ✓ Courtney Costigan, Dist. 5
Bob Byers, Dist. 6
- ✓ Lou Miranda, Dist. 6
- ✓ Greg Anderson, Dist. 7
- ✓ Lee Newman, Dist. 7

Ex-Officio Members:

- ✓ Jordan Kocak, HC Public Works
- ✓ Dan Patterson, HC Public Works
- ✓ Arman Rajaeian, Metro Transit
- ✓ Michael Samuelson, MnDOT

Guests:

- ✓ KC Atkins, HC Public Works
- ✓ Chris Bower, MnDOT
- ✓ Carl Reim, HC Public Works
- ✓ Benjamin Klismith, MnDOT
- ✓ Valerie Carr, HC Facility Services
- ✓ Marcell Walker, Bolton & Menk
- ✓ Lisa Bartels, HC Facility Services
- ✓ David Gepner, former ATC/BAC member
- ✓ Margaret Woodling, HC Libraries
- ✓ Kristian Zimmerman, city of Minneapolis

Notes

- **Approval of the April 2022 minutes** **4:00 – 4:03**
 - Lee Newman moved to approve the April 2022 minutes; Billy Binder seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

- **MnDOT TH 47 and TH 65 planning study** **4:05 – 4:42**
 - Chris Bower North Area Engineer at MnDOT introduced himself as a stand-in for David Elvin, who is on vacation. Marcell Walker of Bolton & Menk is leading outreach and Ben Klismith is handling engagement in the Minneapolis area of the project.
 - <https://talk.dot.state.mn.us/hwy-47-hwy-65-study> is a pilot site that includes this project.
 - Right now it's a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study.



- On TH 47 and TH 65, one person walking and three people driving died in crashes between 2015 and 2020. Many crashes are at Broadway and Lowry. The crashes are the impetus for the PEL study.
- This is phase II of the study.
- Primary Needs
 - Motor vehicle user safety
 - Walking, biking and safety
 - Pavement condition
- Secondary needs
 - Walking and biking mobility
 - Driving mobility
- Additional considerations
 - Cost effective implementable
 - Consistent with local and state programs, plans and projects
- In the concept development phase to develop ideas and narrow them down as we go.
- Some possible considerations
 - Shared-use path or other biking facility
 - Pedestrian lighting
 - Intersection modifications
 - Traffic signal improvements
 - Added or enhanced pedestrian crossings
 - Connectivity to transit
- 47/University possibilities
 - Two-lane parkway
 - 2-lane roadway
 - 4-3 conversion
 - Roundabouts
 - Access control
- Lowry to county line
 - 2-lane parkway
- Central from merge to Lowry
 - Additional dedicated transit lane
- The study establishes vision for the corridor, advances environmental process and positions MnDOT to pursue grant funding
- Gives people opportunity to shape future of the highway
- Marcell Walker: Engagement started in 2020 with agency and internal collaboration, then in 2021 developed purpose, need and evaluation criteria. In 2022 we're developing potential options. Will have eight public engagement meetings in July. We'll ask whether the options meet the project needs and whether any options are missing. In October 2022 we'll evaluate options with public meetings and eliminate unreasonable options. Will conclude in August 2023, identifying impacts and potential mitigation.
- Key themes and takeaways from Phase 1:
 - Pedestrian safety and transit concerns
 - Biking safety
 - Motorist safety, then mobility
 - Heard from 2,200 residents and community stakeholders

- Draft study slated for public consumption in spring 2023, accompanied by public meeting.
- July 2022 we'll have four in-person and four virtual public meetings at varying days and times looking to answer: Do these concepts address safety and what is missing?
- Established community advisory group in March to help understand context and to share information.
- Billy Binder: I think it was 10 years ago MnDOT paved 65 to the river. Then-Councilmember Reich asked for bike lanes. They got put in to 18th and eventually to 14th. So we don't yet have bike lanes connecting Northeast to downtown. We talked about a 4-3 conversion to make it happen. Where are we at on a 4-3 or other bike connection?
Chris: The PEL study is looking at everything on the table. There's a lot going on on Central. We're well aware of the demand for bike lanes. There's a desire for bus rapid transit and a bus-only lane. We want to hear everything that people are looking for.
Michael Samuelson: The city has identified this as part of the All Ages and Abilities network; it's in their plan. We like to see across all our network connectivity and removing gaps. The PEL study gives an opportunity to bite off big chunks of corridors like this. It will set us up for projects over the coming many years. We've identified this as a priority for walking and biking and are excited for the PEL study.
- Courtney Costigan: Can you talk more about motor vehicle safety and what that looks like? How does that look with bike and pedestrian improvements?
Chris Bower: We have a lot of research, especially at Broadway and Lowry. I know the county has a project on Lowry that should do a lot to improve safety. We're not trying to step on toes; we want to be good partners. The study will look at all kinds of improvements beyond this, including signal improvements to separate conflicts among modes. Changes to the roadway character, including number of lanes. Looking at roundabouts and other intersection types. We're somewhat limited with space, but as we go north into Anoka County it opens up.
- Jordan Kocak: Would be it be helpful to hear about specific safety concerns?
Chris: Yes, particularly on the types of improvements in the mix. Things like 2-lane roadways, bike facilities, changes to on-street parking, frontage road changes, roundabouts, signal improvements, access control. KC Atkins from Hennepin County Public Works is on the technical advisory committee, so you can channel comments through her, too.
- Haley Foydel: I was looking at the table at the bottom, it's saying you want walking to go from practical to enjoyable, am I reading that right?
Chris Bower: Yes. We want to take it from something at best practical to something enjoyable. We maybe want to prioritize walking, biking and transit, that's kind of what we heard from Phase I.
Haley Foydel: When you had the goals ranked, you had car safety at the top, but maybe they shouldn't be driving and the priority should be to get people out of cars and then to make it safer for people walking and biking rather than driving.
Chris: The goal isn't to make it more painful for driving, but mobility is secondary to safety.
- Greg Anderson: What's the thinking with roundabouts? They may be better for motor vehicles and flow, but when you're trying to cross free-flowing traffic, it's harder for people walking and biking.
Chris Bower: We've heard that a lot. There're a couple of roundabouts in Woodbury, Radio Drive, that I look at as examples that have grade separation. Roundabouts are a proven safety feature that can reduce serious crashes by 80 percent.
Michael Samuelson: We've talked about this a lot in MnDOT, especially

people with vision issues who use audio cues to cross, which is very difficult at a roundabout. MnDOT did a study looking at crashes involved people walking and biking and just driving, and in both classes we compared the number and rate of crashes and they were lower at roundabouts than at signals. Yes, there are opportunities to do better, but there is data already that they are safer than signals.

- Jordan Kocak: Regarding how you make walking more enjoyable, on county projects we're looking at — as is Minneapolis — corridor greening, boulevard space, green infrastructure. It's more pleasant for walking and has environmental benefits. Chris Bower (referring to a table with potential concepts): The character of the road, does the parkway idea cover that? Jordan: Oh, yes it does.
- Tammy McLemore: We talked about ranking priorities with safety, I want to think about prioritizing pedestrians, people rolling, biking and what impact that will have on driver behavior and alternate routes. Chris: We're not at that point yet. When we have these concepts, we'll look at what happens, e.g. does traffic go onto parallel routes. Do the options meet the goals for safety. We should have answers in October.
- Lou Miranda: You talked about motorist safety, presumably based on studies from the past, what have you looked at for trends? Twenty years ago we had small cars and small parking spots but now most vehicles are big F-150s that weigh twice as much as a car. We're also going electric, which are heavy vehicles due to the batteries. Post-covid people are driving faster. What is MnDOT doing with these trends? Chris Bower: Some of the 2015-2019 safety studies will include those bigger vehicles. The safety issues we've seen continued. The number of miles traveled during covid went down but fatalities went up. Multiple things could be contributing to that. We're trying to prevent crashes from happening in the first place, regardless of what you're driving. The options we're looking at should prevent crashes from happening at all, which is the best thing we can do. Providing a different look, a different feel also should help lower speeds, so if there is a crash the severity is less.

- **2023 France Avenue mill and overlay**

4:42 – 5:08

- Carl Reim from Hennepin County Public Works introduced himself and presented slides on the France Avenue mill and overlay, including a restriping.
- The project is from 44th Street to Excelsior Boulevard in 2023. We're looking at removing on-street parking and replacing with bike lanes.
- In 2024 Metro Transit E Line construction from 50th Street to 44th Street, which will include repaving.
- Existing conditions
 - Residential blocks have parking on one side and bikeable shoulder on the other
 - Commercial blocks have parking on both sides
- Completed parking study in November 2020. Parking use on commercial blocks was more than 50 percent. Residential blocks were below 50 percent. All residential properties have driveways in front or back. Several larger businesses have off-street parking.
- We're trying to retain parking on one side for the commercial blocks.
- Southern bike lane terminus would not be 50th because we would retain parking on both sides there. 49th has a planned bike boulevard, so we would terminate the bike lanes there. The northern terminus is Excelsior.

- Would remove all parking from residential blocks.
- Constraints with the bus rapid transit stations at 47th Street and 44th Street. We don't have the width to add bike lanes and BRT stations. We might have to drop bike lanes into the general lane. The same condition at 38th with a median. Of course we'd prefer not to do this, but as this is an opportunistic project rather than a full redesign; we're hoping it's one step forward for bicycling safety.
- We're putting mailings together for residents and businesses.
- 49th St to 45th St: 6-foot bike lanes, 2-foot buffers, drop bike lanes at 47th.
- 45th to 44th: 6-foot bike lane on east side with floating E Line station, parking on west side as bike lanes drop to accommodate parking.
- 44th St to Morningside: 6-foot bike lanes, 1-foot buffers, parking and loading on east side.
- Glendale Terrace to 39th Street: 6-foot bike lanes, 1-foot buffers.
- At 38th Street: Bike lanes drop for pedestrian median.
- 38th Street to Excelsior Blvd: 5-foot bike lanes, 11-foot general lanes. We possibly have wiggle room to go to 6-foot bike lanes and 10-foot general lanes.
- Lou Miranda: I live three blocks off this corridor. I know these are preliminary, but it seems the county is at the most dangerous place — intersections — and at the busiest intersections — commercial ones — giving cars priority and giving parking priority. When it become sharrows at intersections with buses, to get five parking spaces? We're going to sacrifice the lives, safety and comfort for five parking spots? That seems insane. I have a big problem with that. Carl Reim: I understand where you're coming from. Unfortunately, it is an opportunistic project and we don't have the flexibility to move curb. The ideal solution would be to remove the parking, but we also have to play with our city partners. If we can't get support from cities, then removing parking isn't possible. We're trying to make an incremental improvement, even if it's not the perfect solution, or what we all want to see. Lou Miranda: If the goal is to reduce motor vehicle miles traveled... you aren't going to have people biking here. I was on the Edina Planning Commission, and the biggest problem identified on the Edina side is it's not safe to bike or cross France Avenue. For the number of parking spaces it doesn't make sense. Removing parking, you're not moving curbs. If it's on the cities, we're going to address this on the Edina side.
- Jordan Kocak: I do think Lou Miranda brings up a really good point. It's not all ages and abilities, it's not separated or comfortable. But we are working within our limitations. At the end of the day it's a big question whether it's better to make an incremental improvement or to do nothing? We know people ride there today. In my mind there would be benefit for people using it today. Lou Miranda: Ideally we'd have protected bike lanes, and I haven't suggested that. I'm just talking about paint, that's all parking is, is paint and signage. Even with just paint you won't get many riders; people ride on sidewalks, which are very narrow, because the street is so dangerous. If you don't have a continuous bike lane people will continue to bike on the sidewalk. Jordan Kocak: This might be a good one to have Carl return with some refined concepts with feedback from this committee. Tammy McLemore: Will you solicit feedback from the businesses? Carl Reim: We're sending mailings to all businesses and residents. Through those we'll have opportunities for comments and feedback.
- Dave Carlson: I'm pretty supportive of this, the bike lanes will be a good addition. I do see two issues: The businesses will want to keep parking at 44th. At the proposed bus station,

we have the bike lane going behind the station. Would it be better to take it around the station, so when the bus is there you don't have the conflict with people boarding/alighting? At 38th you show a center median, does it have to be that long? You could shorten it and get more bike lane. Is it possible where the bike lanes shift to paint the green stripes to give people biking an idea where to go? Carl Reim: With the bike lane behind the station, it's a concept used with new bus routes, but it's a preliminary concept at all the options are on the table on this topic. The 38th Street median already exists, so we can't change it.

- **MnDOT TH 55 biking and walking improvements**

5:00 – 5:32

- Michael Samuelson from MnDOT gave a brief presentation on what's happening on Olson Memorial Highway with the change in the Bottineau LRT project, moving away from TH 55.
- The corridor is from Theodore Wirth / Minneapolis city line to I-94, about 1.5 miles.
- Just south of TH 55 is I-394, a parallel corridor. As a result, volumes are pretty low on this stretch of TH 55, about 20,000 motor vehicles per day. It's a pretty wide surface street, not grade separated with three lanes in each direction plus left turn lanes.
- There was extensive community engagement from Metro Transit and Hennepin County around Bottineau (Blue Line extension) with stations at Van White and Penn in 2015-2017. The LRT would have run down the middle, there would have been accessibility upgrades and a multiuse trail on the north side. We heard about a lot of issues with biking and walking, including poor infrastructure, high motor vehicle speeds, etc. We had planned to take care of these with the LRT project.
- The light right extension, due to failed negotiations with the freight rail line, no longer is routed here. But we know we still have the issues identified in the engagement.
- In 2022 we have a project between Van White and Bryant Avenue to reconstruct the Bassett Creek Tunnel. We plan to close Olson Memorial Highway in September 2022 for about a month. We'll replace the culvert and bridge and include pedestrian accessibility improvements.
- We've laid out what we can do over the next few years to develop a vision for the corridor for a successful project a few years down the road, when the road comes up to be updated.
- Short- and long-term actions
 - 2022 pedestrian safety project to improve crossing conditions and slow motor vehicle speeds. From I-94 to Thomas Avenue, essentially the length of the corridor. Would reduce the number of general lanes in each direction from two to three, which should improve yielding rates, slow speeds and allow for bumpouts. We're looking at a midsummer launch. It will be quick-build materials such as plastic bollards and signage.
 - Accessibility improvements also could happen as early as 2022, with improvements to sidewalks and ramps to bring them up to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This would go from Thomas Avenue to Van White. If it doesn't happen this year, it should be 2023.
 - We're conducting planning studies for multimodal access including biking, walking and transit. The first study is just in Minneapolis this year. We'll sort of codify what we heard in previous engagement and will include additional analysis

to develop some options for a roadway vision. It will include engagement but also build on what's already been done. This will help identify future project and potentially line us up for funding applications. Working with Metro Transit on a bus rapid transit study to start this year.

- 2027 planned roadway project in MnDOT's capital programming. We don't yet know what we'll build. We do know part of the vision will include accessibility and sidewalk improvements, a multiuse trail will be part of anything we do here. We see this as the next opportunity to do something permanent and long-term.
- I know there's interest in this corridor on this committee, so I wanted to give an update.
- Billy Binder: Thank you, I'm greatly reassured an off-road trail is still an option for 2027. Until then, could you take that third lane, put in a curb and make it a bike lane until then? Michael Samuelson: We talked about what to do with that space. We thought it was a little premature to add bike lanes. We heard more about difficulty crossing, including people biking. Right now it's a high-speed corridor and not particularly safe or comfortable to bike on. We thought there are a lot of changes coming, with the lane reduction, and doing something more incremental might be easier for people to understand. We definitely see biking as an option in the future for the space. We'll see how this project goes. Bikes could be an option beyond 2022 and before 2027.
- Haley Foydel: Two questions: When you do the lane reduction, do you plan on keeping those lanes the same width, or narrower? Chris: We thought about narrowing them; but with the project coming for a few months we wouldn't want to grind off the markings and damage the pavement. So not this year's. Haley Foydel: Do you anticipate or are you thinking about making that third lane a bus-specific lane? And the frontage roads, and their impacts on biking and buses. Chris: The frontage roads aren't continuous, so it's hard to make a bike facility without building connections between them. We also talked about bus lanes, but we want to give people time to adjust to changes. Also we don't want to put something out there that people won't comply with. If we get a lot of feedback that people want a transit-only lane, we can consider that for next year and the future.
- Jay Eidsness: Have you been tracking the Bring Back 6th effort? It's not necessarily in line with this. I'd hate to see you do this and come back and have to redo it again. I would also encourage outreach to the Harrison Neighborhood Association. Michael: Our Streets and Harrison had a forum two weeks ago. Mike Barnes, district engineer, was there and spoke about the project. There's quite a bit of coordination with Our Streets. The difference in vision is they've put out a clear vision. We're going through the process before we come up with a vision. I wouldn't say the visions are different, they're just at different stages. They could end up being in line or not depending on how the process goes.
- Tammy McLemore: What methods are you using to gather the data you mentioned. Michael: We plan to do doorknocking on the temporary project, and we'll coordinate with Our Streets, which also plans doorknocking. We'll have mailings, social media, help people host their own events, attend existing events this summer.

- **2023 Marshall Street Northeast mill and overlay**

5:32 – 5:47

Jordan Kocak introduced the Marshall Street NE repaving project scheduled for 2023. The county plans to overlay Marshall from Lowry to 37th Avenue Northeast. It's just a repaving, we can't move curbs, except we will upgrade curb ramps to be accessible.

- Convert all four-lane undivided segments to three lane or two lanes.
- We're looking to add on-street bike lanes. This is an extension from the 2018 study that called for dedicated biking facilities on the corridor. That study looked at a reconstruction and recommended protected bikeways. We can't get there, but we can do bike lanes for now.
- South of Lowry, the county applied for federal funding to add cycle track and pedestrian improvements from Lowry to 3rd Avenue, north of Hennepin/First.
- South of Lowry won't be overlaid, but we will do some striping changes to adjust for the changes to the north. Near the intersection it'll be a 5-foot shoulder connecting to the parking lane to the south.
- North of Lowry, create a dedicated left turn lane.
- Lowry likely will be converted to a three lane as well.
- Bike lanes north of Lowry would be constrained, at three feet plus two feet of gutter. We might be able to squeeze a foot or two out of the general lanes.
- North of there, around 26th, it's a 5-foot bike lane, 2-foot gutter southbound and northbound would have a 5-foot bike lane with 2-foot buffer and an 8-foot parking lane on the east side. It stays similar north of there. Add left turn lanes at 27th.
- At 30th Avenue NE, there's a goofy intersection that we'll look more closely at, maybe mark the conflict areas.
- No parking north of 30th, where today off-peak parking is allowed but no one uses it. That gives us more space for the bike lanes: 6-foot bike lane, 3-foot buffer, 2-foot gutter pan. That continues north to St. Anthony Parkway.
- At St. Anthony Parkway the bike lane would end at that east-west connection. North of there it would be two-lanes with bikeable shoulders. We didn't want to mark it as a bike lane because it connects with shoulder to the north.
- Where the roadway becomes divided we would transition it to the way it is striped today, as a four-lane divided roadway.
- You're a first stop for this project, along with the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee. We also plan to talk to the city, neighborhood associations, mailings to nearby residents and businesses and following up with a committee that was formed as part of the 2018 study.
- Billy Binder: This is great to see this north of Lowry. We're looking forward to doing the same south of Lowry. I hope we get the regional solicitation money there. Let's study it, see what the city thinks and what the Minneapolis BAC thinks. Jordan: The Minneapolis BAC has said they want conflict markings. We wouldn't do that at Lowry because it doesn't connect to the south. We would do it at the other signalized intersections. I found the Minneapolis BAC engineering subcommittee generally was supportive. Billy Binder: This is great in the interim until we get funding for a trail on the west side. Jordan Kocak: Similar to France you saw earlier, we see this as an opportunity to improve safety with restriping, but there are limitations with it. Billy Binder: What's the schedule for replacing south of Lowry if you don't get funding? Jordan Kocak: We're waiting to see whether we

get funding. We do know it needs it; if we don't get the funding I would expect it would be sometime after 2023.

- Jordan Kocak: We'll bring it back once we've refined it

- **Lowry Avenue Northeast draft resolution discussion**

5:48 – 5:56

- Billy Binder showed a draft resolution on Lowry Avenue Northeast: We've been working on Lowry since 2015 and have gone from a four-lane to three lane. We've succeeded in getting a shared used path on the corridor, and it getting it on the north side of Lowry. Now the question is what the width of that path is going to be and what it can be. Jenny Ackerson, Billy Binder and Jordan Kocak met a week and a half ago and came up with language presented on the screen. We have a signature Lowry Avenue Bridge, the corridor has great potential to connect a lot of communities with a lot of bikes, pedestrians and wheelchair users. The shared used path is going to have upgraded maintenance, clearance in winter. We're OK with potentially narrowing the sidewalk on the south side from 6 feet to 5 feet, to benefit the trail on the north side.
- We'd like to amend the draft resolution to be "The ATC asks the project team to minimize significantly and notably any stretches of shared use path narrower than 10 feet wide by reevaluating the necessary boulevard width on the south side of the roadway, including locating utilities underground."
- Billy Binder moved to amend and adopt the resolution. Jay Eidsness seconded.
- Jordan Kocak: I won't push back on what Billy Binder put forward, but I want to note that on the south side some of that boulevard can't go away because it's needed for street lighting, signposts, buffer space from motor vehicles. I think it's fine to say take a good hard look and take some from the south, but there are some limitations on what the designer can do.

The resolution was adopted as amended on a unanimous voice vote.

- **Member announcements**

5:56 – 6:00

- Jordan Kocak: A few of us did meet for the social gathering a few weeks ago.
- Hennepin County is going to a hybrid work schedule. We could start scheduling in-person meetings again. I think June is a littler early, but maybe in July we could meet in person again. I might want to put it on the agenda for June to discuss it and what people's comfort level is. And what remote options are available, too. I just wanted to put that out there so people can think about it over the next month.
- Jordan Kocak: Next month's third Monday is a county holiday, Juneteenth, so I recommend having the meeting on the fourth Monday, June 27. I'll send an invite as usual.

Courtney Costigan moved to adjourn. Lou Miranda seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Next meeting:

June 27 (4th Monday of the month due to Juneteenth)

4 – 6 p.m.

Microsoft Teams Meeting