

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Active Transportation Committee

Date: Monday, March 20, 2023

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
- ✓ Laura Mitchell, Dist. 3
- ✓ Dave Carlson, Dist. 3
- ✓ Larissa Lavrov, Dist. 4
- ✓ Haley Foydel, Dist. 4
- ✓ Lou Dzierzak, Dist. 5
- ✓ Courtney Costigan, Dist. 5
- ✓ Luke Van Santen, 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

Guests:

- ✓ Luke Sandstrom, HC Public Works
- ✓ Kristine Stehly, HC Public Works
- ✓ Tom Musick, HC Public Works
- ✓ Bob Byers

Notes

- **Approval of the February 2023 minutes** **4:01 – 4:03**
 - Dave Carlson corrected a typo regarding bus-only lanes being “new” rather than “now.” Dave Carlson moved to approve the edited February 2023 minutes; Lou Miranda seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

- **Welcome new ATC members** **4:03 – 4:15**
 - Jordan Kocak introduced the new Active Transportation Committee member from District 4, Larissa Lavrov. He also said current members Dave Carlson, Laura Mitchell, Haley Foydel and Lou Miranda were reappointed by their respective commissioners.
 - Larissa Lavrov introduced herself and described her interest in biking and walking. Walking is her favorite form of transportation.
 - ATC members each introduced themselves and a little about why they’re interested in biking and walking in Hennepin County.



- **Mill Street trail project**

4:15 – 4:52

- Luke Sandstrom with Hennepin County Public Works introduced himself and the Mill Street Trail project in Excelsior and Shorewood.
- Project Web site is <https://www.hennepin.us/millstreet>
- The area has been studied and talked about for a long time, 10-20 years with a county-funded study in 2019-2020.
- Last presented to ATC in December 2022.
- There is some parking in Excelsior, no parking in Shorewood.
- We've gotten input from residents and city councils to keep impacts to private property low and reduce impacts to trees.
- Luke brought two layouts for review.
- Option 1's typical section has two 4-foot shoulders plus 2-foot gutter pans, 11-foot general lanes and on the east side a 10-foot multiuse trail with 6-foot boulevard.
- 10-foot trail is as narrow as we would like to go for people biking, walking, using strollers in the same space. Boulevard will have trash collection, a lot of utilities, snow storage and a buffer between the trail and roadway.
- Earlier on we had assumed we would touch only the east side. Now this project is a complete mill and overlay and adding curb in Shorewood where there isn't some now, will shift entire roadway west by 2.5 feet.
- Luke showed a plan view of option 1, starting at the southern end in Carver County, where we would tie into existing trail.
- Toward north part of project, at 3rd Avenue with the retaining walls: This location would narrow roadway to 11 feet with no shoulders; shoulders drop on either side.
- Retains existing concrete median at 3rd Avenue that provide pedestrian refuge.
- It continues a 10-foot path all the way to Five Corners where today there is a four-foot sidewalk.
- Option 2: This typical section removes shoulders altogether, moves centerline 6.5 feet west to reduce impact to property and trees. It has 11-foot lanes with 2 foot gutterpan and a 10-foot trail.
- Option 2 at retaining walls would be wider, at 11.3 feet, to avoid leaving a strip of grass that would be too narrow to survive and/or would be weeds and a maintenance issue.
- Option 2 would widen sidewalk between 3rd Street and Five Corners from 4 feet to 6 feet.
- Other considerations
 - Mail delivery, waste, recycling
 - Speed enforcement and management
 - Side slopes and grades
 - Stormwater management
 - Future projects
 - Alternatives for shoulders
 - 4' shoulder with 2' gutter
 - 5' shoulder
 - Full 6' gutter pan
 - Curb extensions bumpouts, especially at natural crossings associated with schools? Would lose the shoulder at those intersections and people biking would have to enter the general lane.
- Winter 2022 complete field survey, preliminary design

- April should see preliminary layout, first round of public engagement: April 4 virtual open house; Popup April 11 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.; Open house at St. John's on April 20 from 5-7 p.m.
- We expect final geometric design in June.
- Final geometric layout approval would be in July.
- June-December 2024 would be final design.
- Construction is schedule for summer 2025.
- We presented to the city of Shorewood Park Commission, consensus was for 4-foot bikeable shoulders.
- Greg Anderson: It looks like you made some good strides since the last time we saw this.
- Dave Carlson: I am much, much in support of the bikeable shoulders. They're adequate for people currently biking the corridor. It is an important corridor that goes north-south connecting to Pleasantview Road, Excelsior and Shorewood. The curb extensions would drop the bikeable shoulder at intersections. Something not often pointed out is that pedestrians don't always like bumpouts, as they're standing right next to traffic rather than farther back.
- Luke Van Santen: One of the options was the 6-foot full gutter pan, I don't know how others perceive those, I'm sure more durable, but they're not really awesome for biking. They have expansion joints every 8 or 10 or however many feet, they get hit by plows. I would see that as a super last-ditch option.
- Lou Miranda: The bumpouts, is it possible where it would be a little island that wouldn't affect the bike lane per se? Luke Sandstrom: We hadn't considered that to this point. Are there locations you have in mind that would help me visualize that? Jordan Kocak: Nothing immediately comes to mind. There are a couple a couple of locations where the project is considering medians in the middle to benefit pedestrians theoretically without affecting the shoulder.
- Lou Miranda: Maybe rebuilding that wall where the road gets narrow. Pinchpoints for cars are dangerous points for people walking and biking.
- Greg Anderson: Is there one key place for an RRFB (rectangular rapid flashing beacon) that would get used, to encourage people to slow down and anticipate activity? Luke Sandstrom: We've been tracking connecting to the regional trail on the north side of the project. The church and school as well as the school ¼ mile west of Mill Street. The tricky thing is we try to be data-driven when making decisions to install enhanced crossings like that when it's a new trail. We'll work with planning to update counts in the future to look at whether we should construct it in the future. We could identify locations to make sure we're set up with this project so we can add an RRFB or similar later. Greg Anderson: Knowing how it will get used, I would think that will be a good safety improvement.
- Luke Van Santen: Looking at the four-foot bikeable shoulder, could those be raised to be at the same elevation as the trail? I ask first observing that there have been higher speeds reported here and the road I suspect is still going to appear amply wide with 11 foot lanes, 4 foot shoulder and 2 foot gutter. Luke Sandstrom: It's a really good question, not something we've evaluated at this point. We, off the cuff, would have to account for drainage, account for transitions at intersections. There could be a safety benefit. If we set it up that way we might need more space. The under-grade issues keep coming up with private property impacts. We don't like to lead with minimums, we like to make things that are safe and meet needs, but we're already pretty much at minimums due to private

- property. I can work with our designers to see if that could work with our existing footprint or if it would require more space and whether the cities would find the benefit worth it.
- Dave Carlson: Regarding the different heights of the bike lane vs. general lane, it's not a good idea because as Luke Sandstrom pointed out you have drainage issues, if you have a narrow shoulder, you might have to leave the shoulder to avoid obstacles, or to turn left. With a bike trail it makes sense, but not so much for a shoulder. It also becomes redundant with the bike trail. I certainly would keep it at the same level. Luke Sandstrom: Another concern is with maintenance, we wouldn't clear it with our plows if it's at a different elevation. Also issues with mailboxes in the boulevard and how would the vehicle access those, garbage and recycling. It would open a can of maintenance concerns. Dave: You also would lose the emergency pull-off for cars. Jordan: It is a shoulder, not a dedicated bike facility with other uses besides just biking. That's another reason the bumpouts are given a little more consideration. In my mind it's not as critical that they are continuous. The real dedicated facility on the corridor is going to be the trail.
 - Luke Van Santen: Regarding the turning motion at 3rd Street to get to the regional trail, that seems like it would be *the* spot other than the school crossing for an RRFB. But it also looks narrow and I don't know if it would fit. You mentioned hills and retaining walls on the east side. Luke Sandstrom: This came up in early discussions with Excelsior, and the city would like a direct connection with the trail, the issue is the elevation. It's very steep, you'd need a switchback and really go above and beyond the scope of this project and additional funds. We'll keep it in mind so a future connection could tie in without a lot of rework. So it's not in this project but it's on our radar.
 - Luke Van Santen: If second option is put forward, where the shoulders drop on the north end, any biking or walking traffic would be routed onto the trail and there would have to be appropriate signage, right? Luke: They could bike on the trail or if they're comfortable in the travel lane. Jordan Kocak: Both options don't have shoulders, right? Luke Sandstrom: Right, we're constrained by the bridge deck. There would be signage because of that transition.
 - Greg Anderson: I don't know if drainage is an issue, as you approach the bridge, can there be a gap in the curb so people can transition off the shoulder onto the trail? Luke: We haven't looked at that thus far. We for sure would figure that out in design working with our planning staff. Dave Carlson: West End at Zarthan and Cedar Lake Road has one ([link to Street View](#)). Dan Patterson: Also Portland Avenue on our Crosstown gap closure project recently complete ([link](#)).
 - Jordan Kocak: Often at decision points in a project the ATC likes to weigh in with a resolution. Right now you have two options you plan to take to the public. Next round of engagement would be in June. Are you looking for between now and then to find the preferred option to bring forward? Luke Sandstrom: Correct. We're meeting with the public in April. We'll add the comments we've heard tonight along with those from the city and the public and bring that back. I'm open to a resolution now or later on. Jordan: The committee might weigh in on a decision early and then again in a second resolution later on. Any resolution would be in April if the committee did do an early one.
 - Greg Anderson: The District 7 reps can get together and figure out a resolution.

- Luke Sandstrom: There will be yard signs, popup events, social media postings, the open houses. Watch for those. Thank you.

- **Member Announcements**

4:52 – 5:07

- Jordan Kocak: I got a message from Michael Samuelson, MnDOT's ATC representative. He wanted me to share for you knowledge that the Plymouth Avenue bridge over 94 in Minneapolis is going to be closing this spring, possibly as soon as May, for a redecking project. The work probably won't finish until October. It's a major bike network connection, so just be aware it won't be available. When it's done — right now it's just delineators separating the bikeway — they will be putting in a curb-separated bikeway. I'll forward the email from him to the group.
- Jordan Kocak: In terms of the process for a couple of things for the new members. Generally we follow Robert's Rules of Order for motions and discussion and resolutions. The resolutions are the formal way the ATC takes a position on a topic and I send that to commissioners. When there's a desire for a resolution, we identify that from members and the members from the affected district put together a draft resolution and in the next meeting typically the ATC considers it.
- Lou Dzierzak: This whole project evaluation worksheet (see February 2023 minutes), one of the huge benefits is a bridge between old members, new members and new members to come. That got me thinking about a resource library, a glossary or access to big picture plans for the whole metro or Hennepin County where people can look at what the biggest picture is. With internal and external documents. This group has so much experience and varied interests. I know I have alerts for bikes and transportation and different things, I wonder if there would be a place to put together studies or best practices or sharing awards. The evaluation is a wonderful tool and adding a library would contribute toward the same ends. Jordan Kocak: The first thing that comes to mind is the ATC Web site. It is public facing, anyone could view those things. Otherwise a Google drive, but that's not really county-endorsed. It may be something to think about a little more.
- Courtney Costigan: Happy birthday, Jordan! Members opted to not sing the "Happy Birthday Song."
- Lou Miranda: An important topic we deal with a committee is equity and climate change. Today the IPCC (United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) released a report, call the Synthesis Report. It seems like basically they feel like nobody's listening to them. They took reports from before and put them together. They included a summary for governments and committees. It's general and for a worldwide audience, so not very specific, but it's worth reading and shows how concerned scientists are and actions groups like us might take.
- Luke Van Santen: House file [677](#) and Senate file [912](#) are the accompanying bills for an overarching bike legislation at the state. Include increased funding for Safe Routes to School, clarification on laws, the Idaho stop. Not sure on its status for moving out of committee for consideration. I hope if anyone's interested in Safe Routes to School they will contact their representatives or committee members to voice support. Jordan Kocak: I have asked someone from the county's Intergovernmental Relations group to come give this group an update on what was passed once the session is over.

- Tammy McLemore: William/Bill Dooley was the co-author on that legislation. I'm in Major Taylor as was he, he was working on it up until a few days before he passed. Bill will be missed; he was a longtime transportation advocate.
- Dave Carlson: Bike Alliance of Minnesota doesn't have any new information on their Web site about the bills. It's probably still in one or two committees. I can find out from Dorian Grilley and share with Jordan what the status is.
- Jordan Kocak: Hennepin County Bicycle Friendly Community survey is open through April 5. We've been ranked at Silver level, not sure if we'll make it to Gold. It took much less than 15 minutes to complete the survey. It's not arduous.

- **Adjournment**

5:07

- Courtney Costigan moved to adjourn the meeting. Lou Miranda seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Next meeting:

April 17 | 4 – 6 p.m.

In-person room LL 0300 Government Center and remote via Microsoft Teams