

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Active Transportation Committee

Date: Monday, July 17, 2023

Time: 4 – 6 p.m.

Location: In-person Government Center Room LL 0300/Auditorium and Microsoft Teams conference call

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
- ✓ Suzy Scotty, MnDOT

Guests:

- ✓ Matt Huggins, HC Public Works
- ✓ Joshua Colas, SRF
- ✓ Ben Klismith, MnDOT
- ✓ Amy Gage, streets.mn
- ✓ Julian Fernandez-Petersen, HC Public Works
- ✓ Becca Hughes, Stantec
- ✓ Joanne Cho, Stantec
- ✓ Tom Musick, HC Public Works
- ✓ Nicolas Grothey, HC Public Works

Notes

- **Approval of the June 2023 minutes** **4:08 – 4:09**
 - Jenny Ackerson moved to approve the June 2023 minutes. Courtney Costigan seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

- **Nicollet Avenue reconstruction — Richfield** **4:09 – 4:37**
 - Matt Huggins from Transportation Design introduced the Nicollet Avenue reconstruction project and consultants Becca Hughes and Joanne Cho from Stantec.
 - The project Web site is <https://www.hennepin.us/residents/transportation/nicollet-avenue-reconstruction>
 - The project is in the first of 12 months of public engagement, to be followed by 18 months of construction expected to wrap up in 2026.
 - The project team is meeting with the Richfield Transportation Commission often.



- A refined layout is expected next year. We're trying to get input on how people use the corridor so we know what to take into consideration. We've done research to a certain extent, but that can't get the full picture.
- We have high level goals shaped by higher level guiding principles. The project is aligned with Richfield Sweet Streets for engagement and phasing.
- Partners include:
 - Richfield
 - Metro Transit (which has local routes on the corridor)
 - Three Rivers Park District
 - Minnehaha Creek Watershed District
 - Richfield-Bloomington Watershed Management Organization
 - MnDOT
 - Richfield schools, Richfield Transportation Committee
- The interchange with 494 going away (as part of MnDOT's Corridors of Commerce project) improves conditions for walking, biking and transit.
- Needs and goals
 - Replace deteriorating infrastructure
 - Provide dedicated safe and comfortable facilities for all modes, ages and abilities
 - Support efficient transit for current and planned needs
 - Provide safer crossings and intersections for walking, biking and rolling
 - Improve mobility to enhance community connections
 - Improvements to water and sanitary sewer. We want to design for 50 years and don't want to tear it up in five.
 - Support adjacent neighborhoods, local businesses and institutions
 - Expand on guiding principles, including visual character
 - Leverage voices from underserved populations to deliver an equitable and comprehensive project that serves needs specific to residents in the area
- Guiding principles for the project come from multiple documents
 - Hennepin County
 - Climate Action Plan
 - Complete and Green Streets policy process
 - Disparity reduction efforts
 - Richfield
 - Active transportation plan (in development)
 - Sweet Streets
 - 68th Street priority pedestrian route
 - 73rd Street planned bike route / crossing improvement area
 - MnDOT
 - I-494 Corridors of Commerce
- Three Rivers Park District has a potential regional trail affecting the corridor.
- Metro Transit has a potential bus rapid transit route affecting the corridor.
- The corridor underwent a 4-3 conversion about five years ago, but the wide swath of pavement remains. It's a wide and open roadway today and this project can do some traffic calming.

- Signals, some will stay, traffic circles, roundabouts also will be considered.
- The project is expected to make Transit improvements and reach ADA compliance. Not compliant today.
- We've heard a desire to incorporate trees.
- Project limits: From 66th Street on the north to 77th Street on the south, lining up with Corridors of Commerce. It's about a mile long
- We're early in the process. Kicked off in June 2023. Preliminary design and engagement are from summer 2023 to summer 2024. Final design / communication will be in summer 2024 to fall 2025. We expect to go out for bids winter 2026 with construction from spring 2026 to fall 2027.
- Four open houses planned
 - First open house is planned for August 2023.
 - Second open house will be in the fall.
 - Winter 2023/2024 third open house, plan to come back to ATC around this point
 - Fourth open house 2024
- We will do walkthroughs and bike rides to get input, and will coordinate with the ATC to organize one if desired.
- Lou Dzierzak: At the same time you're doing this, 494 is being rebuilt. From 76th to 494 is a couple of blocks. Is this plan taking that into account? Matt: Yes. We're coordinating. Construction in 2026/2027 may come a little earlier. We certainly are aware of the project.
- Courtney Costigan: You said you learned some lessons from 66th Street. Can you say a couple of the things? Matt: There are a lot of different elements, RRFBs (rectangular rapid flashing beacons for pedestrian crossings), cycle tracks, different types of bicycle infrastructure and striping that hasn't been implemented as much on main corridors.
- Billy Binder: The city of Richfield acquired property to make 66th it as good as it is, which is almost unheard of to make things better for biking and walking.
- Jenny Ackerson: Is it considered a bike or ped priority? Matt Huggins: Yes, that's why it's identified as a need for a separated bikeway.
- Lou Miranda: Is it a typical county highway as far as width? Matt Huggins: It's hard to say what a typical county highway is. It used to be four lanes undivided with sidewalk at the back of curb. I think it was built in the late 1960s or 1970s. Right now it's a three-lane with center two-way left turn lane. I don't know if you can call that typical. There certainly is a need to modernize the design. It's very auto focused. Lou Miranda: There's always not enough room, is there enough room here? Matt: The right of way is between 66 and 100 feet wide, and there's more of a tendency to narrow the road. I don't foresee a need to add more lanes. There're a lot of advantages with the interchange going away, creating opportunity to improve active transportation. Maybe not as drastic as 66th, but opportunities.
- Matt Huggins will let Jordan Kocak know when the open houses occur, also any pop-up events, rides and walkthroughs, so he can update the ATC.

- **MnDOT University Avenue and 4th Street SE project**

4:37 – 5:07

- Ben Klismith from the Minnesota Department of Transportation introduced the University Avenue and 4th Street SE roadway project.

- It's a MnDOT-led project between Interstate 35W and Central Avenue.
- Today it has a painted bikeway, boulevard and sidewalk. It already is very multimodal. Surprisingly it does have enough space.
- These are old roads that haven't been reconstructed in over 100 years. Budgets associated with that are challenging. It's scheduled as a mill and overlay, but we should be improving the bikeway and making it grade separated, and redoing the sidewalks.
- Stakeholders include
 - MnDOT
 - Minneapolis
 - Metro Transit
 - Hennepin County
- The bus rapid transit project is dictating our schedule; we're trying to finish construction by the end of the season in 2025.
- No county roads intersecting this segment, but it's surrounded by them. The bikeways and pedestrian network are very important around the University of Minnesota.
- Roads are operating at level of service A,B or C in the morning peak for motor vehicle drivers, meaning there isn't much if any congestion. In the p.m. peak there is a level of service D at Central and University.
- There is a high demand for biking and walking.
- Proposed cross sections:
 1. Would have a curb barrier separating the bikeway in a similar layout to today
 2. Keep parking lane and general lane similar, with grade-separated bikeway and sidewalk improvements. Would be one-way directional bikeways.
 3. At the E line, even with curb-separated bikeway, we need to bring the bikeway around the stops for the E line. Buses will stop in lane.
- Grade separated bikeway would be expensive; may need to seek grant funding.
- Ben Klismith showed a concept at 6th avenue showing the bikeway behind a bus stop and curb protected lanes.
- Concept development is in July 2023. Public engagement with pop-ups, public events and Web site will follow.
- Joshua Colas: Some of our primary stakeholders are MnDOT, Metro Transit, also University of Minnesota Marcy-Holmes neighborhood, residents and businesses.
- Joshua Colas: Bus rapid transit stop locations are at University and 6th, University and Central and 4th and 6th. Looking to implement those wraparound concepts accounting for bike and ped safety.
- Joshua Colas: We will add pedestrian data that we're calibrating. We don't foresee the level of service for motor vehicle drivers changing much or going to D or F. It could change a little, though.
- Joshua Colas: We're really wanting to improve pedestrian safety. Also biking. It's also a connector for freight and vehicle traffic. We discussed a two-way bikeway option, but given the characteristics here and how they differ from University Avenue (where the county is doing a two-way bikeway), we're going with one-way.
- Joshua Colas: Will have a survey with our first public meeting. What makes you feel safe, whether biking, riding, walking. How are connections to other bike routes.
- Tammy McLemore: Did we go over the drainage? Joshua Colas: We'll be getting to that. We're waiting on additional utility information. Drainage is a big portion. Right now it's a

- resurfacing, portions a reconstruct, then what bumpouts would do, modification of any catchbasins. It's not been reconstructed in a very long time.
- Billy Binder: We're hugely interested in how this will come about. I have a lot of questions and would like to get Josh and Ben's contact information.
 - Courtney: What constitutes a pop-up event? Joshua Colas: We're still working through what that will look like. Could be in the corridor at a business, school, neighborhood association. It's a scheduled day when we're out there gathering feedback. Can be things like plugging into an existing event like a farmers market. You want to be able to catch those who are actively using a corridor, as well as those who aren't as familiar.
 - Jenny Ackerson: I'm hearing there're projects capping either end and lifting this to be a separated bikeway, and the driving factor is funding, is that right? Joshua Colas: It's a mix between a much advocated safety benefit mixed with cost. If there are two solutions with similar improvements and one may or may not be substantially higher cost, it might be reason to go with the one with lower cost. We're definitely going to analyze what the trade-offs are among all the concepts, then go into the costs. It's not the first thing we look at.
 - Jordan Kocak: I'd be interested in hearing from ATC members if anyone has a preference for a sidewalk level bikeway or curb protected. The county project to the east is mostly going to be curb separated at street level. There might be some consistency to consider.
 - Lou Miranda: This is just west of our bike ride a few years ago. We had a lot of discussions at that meeting. This is two lanes one-way. There's a lot of truck traffic. Even if curb separated is "as safe" as a sidewalk level one, you want families or young people or old people, the comfort level is not the same.
 - Laura Mitchell: I ride on a lot of two-way bikeways and it's nice for biking when it's that wide, but twice in the past week I've had people driving cars down the bikeway right at me. I'd like to see actual bollards, not just flexposts at the end. At the sidewalk level, you can have people walking into the bikeway.
 - Luke Van Santen: On street level, they seem to collect debris: broken glass, leaves, debris from crashes. Elevated at sidewalk level can avoid that.
 - Luke Van Santen: I assume one of the lanes is 13-foot because of the freight? I would very much like to see it narrower than that. Joshua Colas: It's for buffer space. It's really a 12-foot lane and a 1-foot buffer from the curb.
 - Luke Van Santen: When the proposal for separated bikeway goes behind the E Line, is there going to be enough space so people can get off the bus without stepping into the bike lane? It looked close. Ben Klismith: The bus pad is a minimum 10.5 feet wide, with tactile strips separating them. Joshua Colas: It's not as tight a space, there will be room for people to get off the bus and get their bearings. At a future ATC meeting we'll have a concept with geometrics for the platform, bikeway and roadway elements.
 - Jordan Kocak: I pass through this corridor pretty regularly. I noticed some of the curb ramps already are reconstructed. If you go with a sidewalk-level bikeway, would the new ramps have to be torn up? Ben Klismith: Possibly. That was part of our small business initiative.
 - Tammy McLemore: Will there be a cost factor on curb vs. sidewalk separation? Ben Klismith: I think we're possibly running into some issues and unknowns, if we reconstruct more, a whole strip for the bikeway. We're going to do some more investigation on

where things are, e.g. with ground-penetrating radar to find steel rail from the streetcars. If we keep looking, keep digging, we'll find more.

- Billy Binder: Lou referred to the discussion to the east, we need a lot of discussion on this segment to the west, but we have a bike ride today.

- **Member Announcements**

5:07 – 5:08

- Jordan Kocak: MnDOT is starting an ATC of their own; if you know anyone. I'll follow up with information.

- **Adjournment**

5:08 – 5:08

- Courtney Costigan moved to adjourn; Luke Van Santen seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

- **ATC bike ride**

5:08 –

- Committee bike ride will immediately follow the meeting. We will ride from downtown Minneapolis to the West Broadway Bridges project (about 30 minutes).

Next meeting:

August 21 | 4 – 6 p.m.

Remote via Microsoft Teams