

# HENNEPIN COUNTY

## MINNESOTA

## Active Transportation Committee

Date: Monday, August 21, 2023

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. 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:

- ✓ Cole Pardridge, HC Public Works
- ✓ Jim Skoog, MnDOT
- ✓ Danny McCullough, Three Rivers Park District
- ✓ Josh Bowe, Three Rivers Park District
- ✓ Julian Fernandez-Petersen, HC Public Works
- ✓ Mark Lindeberg, MnDOT
- ✓ Kristine Stehly, HC Public Works
- ✓ Jim Henricksen, MnDOT

## Notes

- **Approval of the July 2023 minutes** **4:02 – 4:04**
  - Tammy McLemore moved to approve the June 2023 minutes. Courtney Costigan seconded. The minutes were approved by voice vote.
  
- **Cedar Avenue under I-94 considerations** **4:04 – 4:30**
  - Jim Skoog, the ombudsman for MnDOT, introduced the Cedar Avenue under I-94 considerations project.
  - MnDOT has been working on the project since 2018.
  - The goal of the presentation tonight is to hear concerns, share concerns we've heard and introduce 2025 project to provide more structural support for the bridge. The project could complicate an already complicated pedestrian environment. Looking for a way to



make the space work for everyone, including people who want to exercise their protected right to passively panhandle.

- Just north of here has about 2,000 pedestrians per day. Not many options to get across I-94 here in Minneapolis aside from Cedar Avenue.
- The 2025 project would build concrete walls under the pier cap. People walking would then have the option to walk between the iron fence and the wall, or they could walk between the wall and the curb, which is less than three feet. Today people are walking in the travel lane in part because the sidewalk often is obstructed by an encampment.
- East sidewalk is closed today. One Constituent idea is to permanently close the east side sidewalk to people walking and reserve it for people to passively panhandle or camp.
- Currently there are concrete pyramid barriers on the east side.
- The wall is being driven by need for support. Bridge maintenance folks realized the pier caps need to be filled in to better support I-94 above.
- The sidewalk is 5 feet, 2 inches wide inside the piers, 2 feet, 8 inches wide between the piers and curb.
- Length is 250 feet. Every 200 feet we should have a 5x5 pedestrian passing area, so that is a consideration.
- One constituent suggestion is a barrier-protected pedestrian access route, with bollards or walls.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Street under 35W is a nearby example of a similar project. MnDOT installed fence, leaving a 5-foot wide sidewalk. But at Cedar and 94, the iron fence does not wall off the area in the same way.
- Open questions include:
  - Should the east side be closed?
  - Should a barrier-protected route go in on the shoulder
  - Should the curb be extended?
  - Should the area between fence and piers be walled off?
  - Should changes be made now or should they wait until the 2025 project?
  - Who should respond? Lots of parties involved with different outlooks.
    - City regulatory services
    - Hennepin County is the roadway authority for Cedar Avenue
    - MnDOT is the authority for I-94 and has conducted multiple clean-ups under the bridge and installed deterrents for \$10,000. Relief from clean-ups is often short-lived (often 24 hours or less). 5Ps prevent placement in shelters (pets, paraphernalia, partners, need for privacy)
    - Department of Human Services will administer funding for overdose prevention centers.
    - Some tribal governments support indigenous-led Red Road Village proposal for culturally responsive healing services.
- We're trying to find an engineering solution for a human services and enforcement problem.
- Greg Anderson: It's a very challenging problem. In some ways it seems the wall would go the wrong way, make it like a cave. It's a social problem, engineering problem and transportation problem.
- Luke Van Santen: As I was reviewing the pictures earlier, I had two ideas, one maybe more plausible than the other:

- To make more room after the wall gets added, can that slope paving be sawcut — I don't know how far back — and a new retaining wall be placed to grant more horizontal space on the inside of those piers?
  - I don't know how wide those lanes are or how wide they need to be, is there any way we can do something similar to Hennepin Avenue with a raised bikeway taking a couple of feet out of the road?
- Jordan Kocak: Jim, I can connect you with county staff who can help looking at different striping configurations that aren't four lanes, which could open a lot of options.
  - Gilbert Odonkor: My comment is kind of tied to Luke's suggestion. It looks like there's a lot of space on the ends of the bridge. If it can be sawcut — I don't think the concrete is structural, it's just to retain soil — that would give more space between the pier and the slope. It doesn't solve the encampment, but it would give more room for people walking.
  - Jenny Ackerson: Adding more lighting and changing how daylight will come through in the future, so people could see clearly would help. It's pretty unacceptable to have all these constrained walkways under bridges. The premise is to support the bridge structure, but that's a pretty poor tradeoff. There's 60 feet of space for cars in what is pretty much a glorified onramp situation.
  - Jordan Kocak: You mentioned some of the city ordinances, I'm curious if you've communicated with city staff and their perspective. Jim: I shared it with our ADA person who happens to also handle encampments, who is in regular contact with the city. I'm not getting a really clear answer; it is a delicate situation. Why aren't they enforcing prohibitions on encampments? A resident said it's been passable only three days of the past three months.
  - Greg Anderson: When you do the bridge sweeps, you mentioned \$10,000, is that city funds? State? Jim: MnDOT's funding it and having contractors do it. It is typically \$10,000 a pop.
  - Lou Dzierzak: One of the first slides had numbers on use, but it's hard to put that in context. How busy is that thoroughfare for biking and walking? Jim Skoog: I see a pedestrian under there about once a minute. I think it's worth it to have a survey and get an accurate count. The 2,017 pedestrians were counted at 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Cedar. Lou: Is it consistent throughout the day, or more other times? Jim: Most of my site visits have been 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. Residents say no matter the time, it's obstructed.
  - Greg Anderson: Are there other places like this that come to mind? It's so tight and it's going to get tighter. Not to belittle the plight of those who make it their temporary home, but it seems almost uninhabitable already. It's a very noisy place with a concrete roof over your head. Jim Skoog: The closest would be 31<sup>st</sup> St and 35W. I looked at all the underpasses on 35W and 94.
  - Jordan: I'll follow up with you Jim on the county roadway perspective on how we can work with you.
  - Courtney Costigan: I'm perplexed, it's a very tough situation. I'm trying to think of what we can do, and it's a very big problem. I'll continue to think about it. Thank you for bringing it to us. Jim Skoog: Thank you, take your time to think about it and let me know. I'm open to ideas. I'm kind of overwhelmed and stumped myself.

- **CSAH 112 Wayzata Boulevard Reconstruction**

- This agenda item was removed, as the presenter could not make the meeting.

- **Bassett Creek Trail Project**

**4:37 – 4:52**

- Cole Partridge from Transportation Design introduced himself, Josh Bowe from Three Rivers Park District and the project.
- It's a unique project, with two federally funded project together, one by Hennepin County and one by Three Rivers. Construction scheduled for 2025, goes to Theodore Wirth Parkway. Two intersections with signal replacement, at Noble and Hidden Lakes Parkway.
- Improvements at intersection at Regent. Working on preliminary design now, concept will be together soon.
- It will be a local trail from Douglas to Regent, Bassett Creek Regional Trail from Regent to Bonnie Lane, Regional Trail LRT extension to the east.
- Consultant expected to be under contract in September.
- Will need to acquire some right of way.
- Will bring the concept to the committee once it's ready.
- Josh Bowe: Do we want to touch on the possible lane options on the local segment and the culvert? Cole: There are a few areas we're looking at lane reconfiguration, including on the west side at Bassett Creek. We're looking at possibly one lane in the westbound direction to avoid any impacts to the bridge. We're looking at that in preliminary design.
- Danny McCullough: If you're not as familiar with the area, the Bassett Creek Trail comes into this new project on Regent from the north. It'll cross 100 and head to French Regional Park.
- Billy Binder: Thank you Danny for extending the trail out to Douglas, which is another off-street trail that will go under 55. I've been working on this project for a long time. I was really encouraged by the plan, I believe it's off-street trail on the south side. I hope it includes the section just west of Xerxes seamlessly, it's an on-street bike lane. Did you say when this will be done? I've been trying to get the bike stencils on Golden Valley Road refreshed for a while. It's a great place to bike, it connects Douglas, downtown Minneapolis and the Chain of Lakes. Cole: That would be something we'll have to reach out to our County Operations group to get that done ahead of the project. The project should be done in 2025.
- Dave Carlson: Will the roadway bike lanes/shoulders be retained along the corridor? Cole: We're planning on putting bike facilities on the whole length, behind curb. Josh Bowe: The local trail on the west side, curb line would remain as is. The dark blue regional trail on the map, that will maintain existing right of way and move the south curb line north to accommodate the trail. I think it's a four lane right now, will be milled and overlaid, reduced from four lane to three lane. Two-lane segment will have 10-foot trail. Greg Anderson: So will any on-street bike lane or shoulder disappear? Josh: Yes, the trail would be constructed in lieu of shoulder. Greg: That's a bit disappointing. You'll be back with this, correct? Jordan Kocak: I think once you have a concept the committee would like to see it and what might be possible. Josh: We had a concept to get the federal grant. Right now our concept is about 60 percent and near the point where we wouldn't make any wholesale changes. For the Park District, it's more about at the culvert and the lane changes. A lot of this was vetted during the federal application process a few years ago.

- Greg Anderson: On Duluth Street, where the culvert is, the trail will be on the north side? Josh Bowe: Correct. Greg: And then it will switch over? Josh Yes, at Regent. Greg: I'm sure there's a reason for that. Josh: It's a regional trail project and local trail project. The regional trail follows Regent and crosses 100 on a bridge.
- Billy Binder: What are you doing with the lanes between 100 and Douglas. It's four lanes right now, will that be reduced? Josh Bowe: 100 to Regent, those will remain as is, is the current plan. From Regent to Noble, the plan is to have a reduction to a three-lane roadway. Billy: And trail on the north side Regent to Douglas? Josh: Correct. Billy: I'd sure like to see your plans as soon as possible. Cole Pardridge: We'll coordinate that with Jordan to bring it to the committee.

- **CP Rail Regional Trail Planning**

**4:52 – 5:25**

- Danny McCullough from Three Rivers Park District introduced himself and the CP Rail Regional Trail planning project.
- This is an update on long-range planning project in St. Louis Park and Golden Valley. You might have seen some of this, but I wanted to give an update. You can go online (at [https://www.letstalkthreerivers.org/CPRail\\_RT\\_GV\\_SLP](https://www.letstalkthreerivers.org/CPRail_RT_GV_SLP) (note there are underscores in the address, not spaces)) and look at maps, attachments, fill out a survey or just leave comments. You also can email me or use the project email address, [CPRRT-GVSLP@threeriversparks.org](mailto:CPRRT-GVSLP@threeriversparks.org).
- The whole trail corridor is from Bloomington to Crystal and New Hope. Some of the trail is there now. Years ago we completed the planning for the southern segment, in Bloomington and Edina.
- It's a 20-plus mile long corridor. We broke it into segments for planning and for construction. Segment A, the southern segment, is pretty much done. The north segment, Segment D, we did the planning work last year. We have a final route alignment in New Hope, Crystal and into Golden Valley. The plan is about 85 percent done, we just need to write it. Segment C is in Golden Valley and St. Louis Park. Segment starts at the Perpich Center for Arts Education and goes down to the Cedar Lake Trail.
- You're all pretty familiar with us, but Three Rivers builds and operates multipurpose regional trails that typically are 10 feet wide. We have about 180 miles of regional trail in operation today and another 58 miles planned but not constructed. The segment Josh Bowe just talked about was planned many years ago.
- Some areas of this corridor are residential, some commercial.
- The high level concept is a paved trail at 10 feet next to the road with a boulevard. In some places it might have to be back of curb.
- We've been working with city staff, city councils, park commissions on four route options. We've done about 10 public meetings on them and are doing more. We're doing a lot of engagement, especially because it is such a built-up area. We're in the public engagement phase now and probably will go past Labor Day. Will take feedback to city councils and recommend a route. Then we'll have to find the funding before it gets built.
- It's a super important regional trail, a big north-south link. Connects Luce Line and Cedar Lake Trail.
- Trail underpass being constructed right now will connect the Luce Line to the Perpich Center.

- Danny showed a route map with the four alignment options. The map is available at the project [Web site](#).
- It would be virtually impossible to put a trail along the CP Rail corridor in St. Louis Park unless the railroad completely abandons the railroad. Until that happens, we need another option.
- One tricky thing about the project, we have only two spots to cross 394 on pedestrian bridges, at Florida Avenue and Pennsylvania Avenue. It will have to cross at one of those two points.
- About 70 percent of people favor the eastern route, with the rest favoring the western route.
- Luke Van Santen: At Louisiana, is there enough space going over the railroad? I think of biking or driving that, if Louisiana can be knocked down to one lane there'd be enough space. Danny McCullough: We've done some right of way analysis. Louisiana is challenging. It's also a busy road, not a lot of other routes over interstates and railroads. There is right of way, though. The bridge is one challenge. You probably can make it work narrowing it there. Traffic study definitely would have to be done. Probably some private property impacts, you'd have to purchase some property. But it could be done. We don't dive that deep into exactly where the property would need to be purchased; it's doable, but would be expensive. Luke: More so than Dakota? Danny: Probably. The trail also would have to go to 8 feet, would have to reduce lanes, move some curbs. Ideally if the bridge ever got reconstructed that would be the time to do it.
- Luke Van Santen: Using the Dakota option on the east, that would literally run right through or next to the elementary school, which would be a big win for encouraging kids to bike or walk to school. Danny McCullough: We're going to hang fliers in that corridor and have a neighborhood meeting and show exactly what it would look like on Dakota. Corridor is very residential, it's a neighborhood. There's an elementary school, park. It's a busy corridor with school buses, but the street's really, really wide. We think we can get a trail in and minimize tree loss. It's a very wooded corridor. It might require losing some parking. We're exploring all of that. It's going to come down to, Do you want tree loss or parking loss? There already is a sidewalk to the school, but we did hear people would use the trail. It might reduce some traffic.
- Luke Van Santen: This will not cross at Douglas at the underpass? Danny McCullough: No, it will. They're building the underpass under 55 that connects Luce Line to the Perpich Center. We would utilize that. It's the start of our planning. It's awesome that there's going to be an underpass and you don't have to cross at grade. Luke: Is there going to be an issue crossing the frontage road at Florida? Danny: It is a question. There would probably be some sort of, I don't know, signal, we'll identify in the plan that we'll need to figure out a treatment for that crossing. We'll address it in the plan, but not get into a lot of detail. That comes in design.
- Dave Carlson: Once the plans are finalized, will this section be constructed all at once or in portions? For instance, GV-3 trail (segment identified on the map) might be a good start as roadways elsewhere could be used in the interim. Danny McCullough: Who knows how and what timing segments would be built. Say Three Rivers is building this eight years from now, which is realistic if the plan is approved, we'd probably break it into segments to Cedar Lake, then north Cedar Lake to Cedar Lake. We'd find logical connections, favoring connections to other regional trails.

- Dave Carlson: Dakota Ave. is a recent bikeway... sharrows north of Minnetonka Blvd., bike lanes south of Minnetonka to Wooddale. Greg Anderson: I'd agree that's a pretty natural choice.
  - Lou Miranda: As someone who lives near the southern terminus and travels the north-south roads quite a bit, Louisiana route is pretty awful, it's a highway for part of it. For Dakota, it's a bike route. We're talking about parking, there was a lot of people who turned out and complained about losing parking. Do you guys generally have painted on-street bikeways? Danny: We do not. We do in some very limited locations, one in Robbinsdale where the regional trial goes through a very very low volume street — less than 40 cars a day kind of street — and a very narrow right of way, so it made sense to do a sharrow. We wouldn't do that on Dakota. Near Dakota Park, we're looking at taking parking for a block or two, which would save the trees and the sidewalk and fit an 8-foot regional trail. About 20 percent of trees are ash, but there are some nice trees. People are concerned about tree loss, and so are we; we're a park agency. Keeping the parking, you would lose the sidewalk and trees and put the trail closer to residences. We would not advocate for an on-street facility and nothing else. Lou: It surprises me when people in suburbs who have garages and driveways want street parking. Danny: We did a parking study that determined the parking there now is adequate. It's a hard balance. Everybody wants everything. But how much of a responsibility is it for a public agency to deliver parking for private vehicles?
  - Billy Binder: Talking about private property, is the railroad on board with using their property? Danny McCullough: Verbally, yes. We have nothing in writing. Railroads notoriously are difficult to work with, but we have a good relationship. There is a lot of space there. If we build a trail on the far west edge of the property and build a fence, they might lease it to us. If they ever kick us out, we would have to go to the road. But so far they say it's feasible. Billy: Is this the same railroad abandoning the spur? Danny: That's farther north. It's really low and it doesn't connect a lot. Billy: It goes under both 100 and 55. Danny: But the spur beyond that is an orphan segment. I'm not saying it's a totally bad deal, but unless they come back with a different proposal I don't think it's useful. Billy: There are few opportunities to make connections under 100 and 55.
  - Please go to our project [Web site](#) and leave feedback. We'll probably wrap up engagement at the end of September.
- **University Avenue and Fourth Street SE MnDOT project draft resolution      5:25 – 6:00**
    - Jenny Ackerson: Myself, Billy Binder, Tammy McLemore and Jordan Kocak met to discuss the University and Fourth project and draft a resolution. MnDOT seemed to jump to a conclusion on what would be there, with a one-way bikeway on University and Fourth, even though the county has a two-way on University. We wanted to be sure the public could see all options before a decision is made.
    - Jenny Ackerson read aloud the draft resolution.
    - The resolution requests that MnDOT create a two-way bikeway concept with street level and sidewalk level suboptions on University and to share it as part of the engagement process.
    - Lou Miranda moved to adopt the resolution. Billy Binder seconded the motion. The floor was opened to discussion.

- Billy Binder: This is a hugely important corridor linking the U with dormitories, Central Avenue to downtown and all the massive amounts of housing being built. This corridor always has lots of university students. 564 bikes a day in 2017, 348 bikes a day in 2022. Those are massive numbers. The Midtown Greenway exceeds that, but I don't know what else does. The ATC studied it carefully when we presented options on the same street from Oak to 10<sup>th</sup>. This takes 10<sup>th</sup> further west. We suggested two-way on University because people ride that way as it is. About 6 percent today ride the wrong way. The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee chair, Elissa Schufman, was there and she said she accepts reality and supports two-way because that's how people are using it. She said she supports consistency and safety. Jordan Kocak: The way the resolution is written is a little different, it's just asking, the two-way option wasn't even allowed to be on the table when it went to the public. It's asking to have a chance to talk about the merits rather than eliminating it beforehand.
- Courtney Costigan: I appreciate you, Jenny, Billy and others who worked on it. I think we need to option to look at two-way. If we're all cyclists or walkers, we've gone through that area of the city. I strongly agree with what you've written here.
- Suzy Scotty: I'm the representative for MnDOT on this committee and I'm on the project team for this project. I appreciate you writing this resolution. It's definitely something the project team will be talking about. I joined the project about six weeks ago and can't fully attest to how that decision was made. This project ended up with the options it has because of the seriously constrained space. On the other side of 35 they have a lot more space to work with, and traffic looks different as far as biking and walking goes. With the limited amount of space not only on University, but also on Fourth, which is even narrower. The one-way bike lanes were just the best option to have the most amount of comfortable riding space. But again, I do think this resolution is important and is a very important point to bring up. Please reach out to me with comments or questions now or later. My email address is [suzanne.scotty@state.mn.us](mailto:suzanne.scotty@state.mn.us).
- The resolution was adopted on a voice vote.
- Jordan Kocak: I'm going to ask Ben Klismith, who presented on it last month, for a response. I think it's appropriate and warranted on this project. I'll ask them to take action in some way.

- **Member Announcements**

**5:39 – 5:45**

- Greg Anderson shared some highlights from his trip with Dave Carlson to northern Spain and France for the Tour de France. They caught the beginning and end of Stage 1 of the in Bilbao. This was Dave's I think second time at the Tour. We saw the end of stage 2 in a very crowded Saint-Sébastien. It was I think the first time it started in Spain, so that was interesting. I have a high school friend who lives in France and it went right through the city. They go pretty fast; we never made it to any really high stages where they're going slower. We made it to Stage 6 through Pierrefitte-Nestalas, then they went on a climb. Maybe Dave can put some videos together and share them later. It's very, very active biking in Paris, even with lots of traffic. It was a blast. We were in Paris on Bastille Day, too. Jets flew over, parades. It was a very bikecentric trip. Spent four days biking in the Pyrenees. It was a lot of work, but we survived. I hope to share more than this at some point.



- Laura Mitchell: If you haven't already heard, the city of Minneapolis is looking to end their partnership with Our Streets for Open Streets. Please read more and reach out to your city council member (if you're in Minneapolis) with your thoughts! I'm happy to answer any questions. [https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/public\\_statement\\_on\\_open\\_streets\\_mpls](https://www.ourstreetsmpls.org/public_statement_on_open_streets_mpls)  
Our Streets is the nonprofit that does Open Streets for Minneapolis. Greg Anderson: They still maintain a good relationship, or not now? Laura Mitchell: I would say probably not if the relationship on Open Streets ends. It sounds like there will be a budget conversation on Thursday. Public Works proposed entirely cutting it. Jordan Kocak: If there's a lot of public pressure, they might be able to find another way to fund it.

- **Adjournment**

**5:45**

- Courtney Costigan moved to adjourn the meeting; Luke Van Santen seconded. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Next meeting:

September 18 | 4 – 6 p.m.

Remote via Microsoft Teams