



Meeting Minutes

DATE: Monday, June 21, 2021

TIME: 4 – 6 p.m.

LOCATION: Microsoft Teams conference call

Committee Members:

- ✓ Tammy McLemore, Dist. 1
- ✓ Kristel Porter, Dist. 2
- ✓ Dave Carlson, Dist. 3
- ✓ Jay Eidsness, Dist. 4
- ✓ Judy Jones, Dist. 5
- ✓ Bob Byers, Dist. 6
- ✓ Greg Anderson, Dist. 7

Alternates:

- ✓ Gilbert Odonkor, Dist. 1
- ✓ Billy Binder, Dist. 2
- ✓ Sara Maaske, Dist. 3
- ✓ Hokan, Dist. 4
- ✓ Lou Dzierzak, Dist. 5
- ✓ Lou Miranda, Dist. 6
- ✓ Lee Newman, Dist. 7

Ex-Officio Members:

- ✓ Jordan Kocak, HC Public Works
- ✓ Dan Patterson, HC Public Works
- ✓ Arman Rajaeian, Metro Transit
- ✓ Eric Bauer, U of M

Guests:

- ✓ Elissa Schufman, Minneapolis BAC
- ✓ David Davies, Metro Transit
- ✓ Jason Staebell, HC Public Works
- ✓ Derek Sunstrom, HC Public Works
- ✓ Sandy Cullen, U of M
- ✓ Matt Christensen, TKDA
- ✓ Mackenzie Turner Bargaen, MnDOT
- ✓ Denetrick Powers, NEOO Partners

- **Approval of the May 2021 minutes** **4:01 – 4:05**
Lee Newman made a motion to approve the minutes; Sara Maaske seconded the motion. The May 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

- **University and Fourth roadway improvements project resolution discussion** **4:05 – 4:20**
 - Hokan gave an overview of a resolution supporting one-way bike lanes over two-way bike lanes because one-way bike lanes tend to be safer. For example, the author of “Copenhagenize” book, Mikael Colville-Andersen, writes that in Denmark the on-street two-way facility was removed from standard practice more than two decades ago. In part because roadway users do not expect traffic to come from the “wrong” way. NACTO suggests a two-way bikeway may work on a roadway with few conflicts, but University has several conflicts.
 - Jordan summarized the previous month’s discussion, where several members generally supported two-way while others supported one-way.
 - Billy Binder: I strongly favor the two-way bike lane. It has the highest bike volumes in the city, county, probably the whole state. It’s estimated between 1,000 bikes and 1,500 bikes per day. There is a lot of wrong-way riding, about 50 per day, on University and most of the destinations





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are on the south side of University. We should accept that people are going to bike the wrong way and engineer that in. This is historically a street where we've done innovative things.

- Dave Carlson: Generally I oppose two-way bike facilities because of driveway crossings and street crossings and people not expecting the contraflow. It's dark at 4 p.m. in winter and people would be riding just a few feet from cars right into their headlights. However, there are a lot of dorms and students and people already are using it as a two-way. If we went two-way and kept it one-way on Fourth? Would that be feasible? Maybe a two-way up to 10th and then a one-way on University? The conflict seems to be between 10th and 15th.
- Lee Newman: At the last meeting I suggested the possibility of researching that other Big Ten schools, maybe Madison, Ann Arbor, Iowa City, Columbus – all these campuses have at least the same student populations. Has anyone looked at how these schools handle their traffic? Jordan: I think the project team did, but that's a good idea and we'll look into it more.
- Lou Miranda: Generally I'm against two-way bike lanes. But, if you look at Copenhagen, they don't have the three-lane one-way streets like the U.S. does. There is a need for people to go both directions without having to go a block away and then back. I think it's a special case with the three-lane street and enormous destination in the U. I think a two-way makes sense here.
- Billy Binder: I agree with Dave Carlson's idea, maybe ending the two-way at 10th.
- Dave Carlson: Could we get additional right of way for a trail? What might be the additional cost? Jordan: The two-way bike lane proposal would move the curb to get about 10 feet. If it stays as a one-way, the curb would not move.
- Bob Byers: Four or five years ago this was looked at all the trade-offs in depth. It doesn't necessarily come down to one answer. It might be helpful to track down the analysis from back then to weigh those trade-offs. Jordan: That's a good point, we'll look for that.
- BAC members were polled on whether they supported moving forward with the one-way resolution or whether they would need more discussion (three favored moving forward with one-way; five favored more discussion). Discussion will continue at the end of the meeting if time allows or at the next meeting.
- The county's project page is at <https://www.hennepin.us/universityandfourth>.

- **Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee coordination**

4:20 – 4:30

- Elissa Schufman, Minneapolis BAC chair: I just wanted to say hello and open lines of communication between our committees. We're also currently reviewing University and Fourth, for example. The Minneapolis BAC has been around in its current form for about 10 years, and in other forms long before that. We push the city to adopt visionary policy. Now we're wrestling with how we change Minneapolis Public Works culture to align with these visionary policies. We're pushing the city to have more systems-wide thinking rather than focusing on individual projects.
- Judy Jones: I wanted to have a chat about some of the similarities and differences between our groups. We're adding walking to our mission and am curious about how you handle that. Elissa: We also have a pedestrian advisory committee, and we let them be the pedestrian experts but we do try to think about pedestrians, too.
- Billy Binder: What did the Minneapolis BAC do with University and Fourth? Elissa: We haven't taken action on the most recent presentation yet. Broadly speaking we're in favor of designing





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for things that are going to happen anyway. So broadly speaking we generally would support two-way. We have subcommittees, including engineering and infrastructure, which has reviewed it.

- Jordan Kocak: Just like the Hennepin County BAC, Minneapolis BAC meetings are open to the public. The one on Wednesday might be a good one to attend if you're interested in following their Hennepin and Fourth discussion. Where can people find a link? Elissa: <https://lims.minneapolismn.gov/Boards/bac> and our meetings are recorded and posted on YouTube after a slight lag. Folks also can email me at schufman@gmail.com

- **Southwest LRT project update**

4:30 – 5:00

- David Davies: Earlier this year I reported that we have encountered some challenges. It's quite unlikely we'll meet our goal of opening in 2023. The two main reasons among others are focused in Minneapolis, with the tunnel and excavation with the Cedar Isles condos, and inclusion of a corridor protection barrier in Bryn Mawr going into downtown. They are focused impacts but they have broader impacts for the contractor as they rephase their construction across the entire 14.5-mile corridor. We don't yet have updated schedule information as we're working it out with the contractor. There will be some cost changes, too, and more to come. We hope to have a more clear schedule later this year.
- Gilbert Odonkor: There is a part of the community interested just in the trail opening, when that might be done. Could we get just a schedule for that? David Davies: We still plan to open the whole thing at once. I'm not aware of any plan to open in phases. When I'm talking schedule I mean overall construction schedule. In 2019, we said Cedar Lake was supposed to open in 2021 and Kenilworth in 2022. We're not on target to meet those goals. Around the tunnel, to get Kenilworth back in operation, we're pouring massive amounts of concrete, basically what anchors the tunnel down. We're pouring 1,000 cubic yards at a go for each of 31 cells and it takes four weeks between those cells. So that's one example of what it's taking. For Cedar Lake Trail, we're not on target for 2021. There are a couple of elements Dave Carlson brought up in his letter that we discussed with Three Rivers Park District. It's still early to give estimates of segments might be open in 2021, but we're hoping to open Wooddale to Beltline and around Hopkins Depot west to 11th. Work is progressing there to a point we think we'll be able to safely open the trails without construction activity continually interrupting it. Caveat on Wooddale to Beltline: The trail bridge will not be ready to use if it opens this year, nor would the underpass, so the trail operations would be at grade and coordinated within the construction site. Dave also mentioned Wooddale to Louisiana. It's still very tight here with other work going on, even though the trail looks like it's in an advanced stage. We hear loud and clear everyone wants these trails open as soon as possible, but we have to do it safely. As for reopening followed by intermittent closures, we feel like it would be frustrating and unsafe if people are expecting a trip only to find a detour.
- Lee Newman: In the original SWLRT corridor design, I presume that the 31 cells in the tunnel and X among of concrete poured and how long that would take, those dates were known very early on. There was a timeline made based on known construction elements. What changed to delay that? David Davies: There was a lot of work from the design team estimating timeline based on strategies they thought the contractor would take. It's a means and methods based contract. In some places we've prescribed certain things, but in most places they can use what means and methods they seem best. You might have seen in recent articles issues with soil settlement that





have made us reexamine how it is being constructed. We had to pause before it became potentially unsafe knowing we were approaching a sensitive area at the Cedar Isles condos, and that had to be reworked. We also have to take an additional step before we excavate that includes grouting where steel sheets come together to ensure no soil is going through those sheets. That was somewhat unforeseen circumstance that out of an abundance of caution we are addressing. Lee: I understand, but I'm also frustrated. I would submit that in the early planning stages, the time estimates should have been left open until the contractor was consulted. It seems these time estimates were put together without reliable information or with information that was certainly subject to change. If there are unknowns that cannot be known, the timeline for opening the trails should have been moved out, say five years. And in a best-case scenario we're open it in three years or whatever and it's a surprise in a good way.

- Dave Carlson: Thank you David for your detailed presentation and explanations. I am glad to hear that you are seriously considering opening up the two sections of trail you mentioned, this will be very important. I do wish there could be that final link between Beltline and France... any possibility of an at grade connection from Beltline if the bridge overpass cannot be used? David Davies: I wish we could. The tunnel area — this is not necessarily due to the work to the east being such a hot area — but the traffic between Beltline and France, we haven't seen a peak in construction traffic yet. We're going to rely on Beltline even more. In order to have that much traffic moving east, it's just not possible to integrate trail traffic in a way that would safely accommodate both uses. As we move to advance stages of tunnel construction, when there's less need to put dozens of trucks on the road at a time, we could consider that, but we need to maintain a safe condition.

- **Vernon Avenue bridge replacement**

5:00 – 5:30

- Jason Staebell: Matt Christensen, our consulting project manager, also is here to answer any technical questions. The Vernon Avenue project is primarily a bridge replacement in Edina. The bridge was built in 1926 and it's time to replace it. We're looking at what should be put back to last another 100 years. We're also looking at the nearest intersections, with Interlachen, and at Highway 100. We're looking at a westbound left turn lane at Interlachen, redesigning the eastbound onramp to 100 to be more of a right turn rather than a big free right and we're looking at what we can do to enhance the pedestrian and bike experience. In the short term it will be more about pedestrians, since there's no bike facility over 100 and nothing to the west. But we want to be future-proof, so this project will allow for a future bikeway. The extra wide sidewalk (12 feet) on the north side can be converted to multiuse trail. The TH 100 bridge is from I think the 1960s and isn't due to be replaced any time soon and so will continue to be a barrier. More information is at <https://www.hennepin.us/vernon-avenue>.
- Hokan: What is the speed limit, can it be lower? Jason: I think it's 35 and it probably can't be reduced as part of this project.
- Judy Jones: Did you say there no bike facilities on Vernon? Jason: South of Eden Avenue there is, between Interlachen and 100 there is not. Judy: It dies out around the commercial area. Your focus is just on this bridge? Jason: Correct, plus a little bit of work on these intersections. We're able to beef up the sidewalks on each side. Judy: Can you add a bike lane? Jason: Based on the bike plan, it crosses Eden to get to 50th. Jordan: The preferred route in our plan doesn't go through here.





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- Dave Carlson: I'd like to see a few feet for on-street bicyclists, but more importantly there are bike lanes on Interlachen and I would love to have bike lanes right to Vernon. Jason: Interlachen was reconstructed in the past few years, and the decision the city made was to put people biking on the trail on the southwest side. We're not doing a lot on Interlachen.
- Lou Miranda: The removal of the free right onto 100 is great. That was in the Grandview transportation plan. I was on the Edina Transportation Committee when that plan was approved. The wider sidewalks are good, you mentioned it later can be made a trail, what's the difference between the two? Jason: It's what it connects to. Without facilities on either side we're just calling it a sidewalk. If things get connected, it might look the same but get called a bikeway. Lou: The open house talked about separating bikes and peds; do the general lanes get widened? Jason: We're making them narrower than currently. Lou: I'm concerned about the turn lane onto Gus Young, you're taking a two-lane urban street and making it more like a highway where cars can travel faster. It seems contra to making it more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. Is that part of this? Jason: With the left turn lane, right now left-turners stop in the through lane and back up traffic. So the turn lane frees that up. We feel it's a necessary safety and traffic flow Lou: How is this helping to reduce vehicle miles traveled? Jason: The Climate Action Plan sets up that goal. Leadership and the staff level are working on how we get that goal. This project is out ahead of where our guidance is. I don't have an answer for you on how this specifically would do that. The number of through lanes is not changing. Lou: You said it's for traffic flow, which is getting more cars through here, which is contra to the goals. How many roads will you reconstruct between now and 2040? Jason: A fair amount. I know a few in Minneapolis probably going from a four lane to a three lane. I would say not a lot of projects are in the county hopper for expansion. Lou: Suburbs don't have a lot of commercial districts that people nearby walk and bike to; this is one of about a half dozen in the city. Traffic lanes going into this busy area, you'd think you'd do anything possible to reduce the number of cars and increase people walking and biking. I'm skeptical building a wide sidewalk is going to do it.

- **Hennepin County accessibility program**

5:30 – 5:55

- Dan Patterson gave a macro view of the transportation system and how it favors people who drive at the expense of people who don't. Derek Sunstrom then gave an example of accessibility infrastructure: We use truncated domes and ramps so sight-impaired and people with limited mobility can use sidewalks. We try to replace diagonal ramps with directional ramps and we also have intersections that lack ramps. It's not just important to have ramps at one side, we need it on both for people to cross county roads. We also install audible pedestrian signals, which are the ones that talk to you for sight-impaired people. Every traffic signal should have an audible cue, and you'll see more of these as we install them. They often are on separate stanchion and are much larger push buttons with Braille. We also try to remove obstructions, such as median noses in crosswalks or utility poles in sidewalks. Derek showed Street View examples of types of accessibility improvements.
- Sara Maaske: With diagonal ramps, aren't you essentially pointing people straight into traffic? Shouldn't the ramp point in the direction that the crossing is? Derek: Basically, yes. We try to replace them with directional ramps where we can, and it would be the last resort if we were building new.





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- Sara Maaske: Are there cases where you would be improving ADA first? Derek: If we had more funding available, possibly, but we don't really have the funding. This would really be a shift in prioritization to fund projects to make it safer for people who walk, bike and roll.
- Dave Carlson: At 66th and 35W, there isn't much space in the northwest quadrant right near the push button (<https://goo.gl/maps/2KtHixZC3fRjQkXi7>). Judy: Last week a woman was pushing a baby carriage as I was riding past. Dave: If we want more people biking and walking we need to pay attention at intersections like this.

- **Midtown Greenway access improvement project** **5:55 – 6:00**
 - Denetrick Powers with NEOO Partners introduced the Midtown Greenway access project between Garfield and Harriet Avenue on the north side, next to Soo Line Garden: We kicked off engagement two weeks ago. We had a good turnout with a community meeting last week and a survey coming up. Second round of engagement will be in August and September to get feedback on designs, before a final round of engagement in December. The project will create ADA-compliant access in this portion of the Greenway. We've heard some early concerns about losing green space, pollinator garden, trees and garden space. We also have heard there is a need for ADA access and access to the LynLake business area. I wanted to introduce myself and the project, and once we have designs we'll be back to share those. The county has a project page at <https://www.hennepin.us/midtown-greenway-access>.
 - Dave Carlson: I'm a member of the Midtown Greenway Coalition and they sent out last week a drawing with a wall and long ramps going up; they're find with the ADA ramp but would like more gently sloping ramps and more gardening area. Denetrick Powers: Early in the project they had some drawings of what it could look like, but they aren't being considered now. There will be new designs based on feedback.

- **Member Announcements** **6:00**
 - Greg Anderson: Dave Gepner had a virtual going-away earlier, but 5 p.m. Thursday at the Luce Line Brewery next to the Luce Line Trail in Plymouth <https://lucelinebrewing.com>
 - Jordan Kocak: Last Tuesday the Public Works Committee advanced the charter change to become the Active Transportation Committee and update language to the full Board tomorrow, which is expected to be more of a check-the-box. Thanks for everyone who helped get it to this point. A lot of the Board members were really supportive of the committee, especially the three new commissioners, have been pleased with the members and the committee has been doing. Tammy and Gilbert made an impression on Commissioner Lunde; he had good things to say.
 - Hokan: There's a League Cycling Instructor seminar scheduled for July 14, if you're interested. The announcement is at bikemn.org under education (<http://www.bikemn.org/education/courses/event/954>).

 - Jordan: I just wanted to revisit University and Fourth and whether people wanted to stick around for extended discussion or table it for next month.

- Judy Jones adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.





- **Extra-meeting discussion on University and Fourth:**

- Dave Carlson: I suggested if it is going to be two-way, I was worried it would be shoe-horned in existing curb, but it looks like they can move the curb out to create more space for a two-way. I do know there are a lot of people who go the wrong way there. If it is a two-way between 10th and 15th... Jordan: East of 17th, the project team plans to go from three to two general lanes, so there's a lot more space to work with there. If there is a two-way, going all the way to Oak Street makes some sense, because Oak has a two-way bikeway that's part of a network around the campus.
- Lee Newman: I believe a lot of clarity could be brought to this issue by learning what other universities have done. We're not doing this in isolation.
- Billy Binder: I see the wisdom in keep it 10th to Oak. I'm strongly in favor of two-way. It's our chance to shine and accommodate thousands of people every day. It'd be great to see what other universities are doing, too.
- Dave Carlson: Years ago, I was in Madison and the bike network seemed mostly one way on road bike lanes and general right side traffic lanes for buses, right turns and bikes.
- Jordan: Hokan and Jay made the draft resolution; I wonder if anyone feels they can craft something that's more of a compromise or that better represents the views we heard today.
- Greg Carlson: I'm softening a little, but I have two main concerns. When I've experienced riding two-lanes, especially in urban settings... I was in Seattle and I didn't feel comfortable on one and I later learned there had been a fatality there. In general I'm not for them, and I share Dave's concern with night and facing right into headlights. And will this encourage bad behavior with people continuing westbound toward 35W.
- Dave Carlson: If the two-way ends at 10th, but they are now turning 10th into a two-way bike trail as well. I think it'd be easy to go up a block and get onto Fourth or even Fifth to the new bridge over 35W.

Next meeting:

Monday, July 19, 2021

4 to 6 p.m.

Microsoft Teams meeting

