

HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

Active Transportation Committee

Date: Monday, February 28, 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
Kristel Porter, Dist. 2
- ✓ Dave Carlson, Dist. 3
- ✓ Laura Mitchell, Dist. 3
Jay Eidsness, Dist. 4
- ✓ Hokan, 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:

- ✓ Danny McCullough, Three Rivers Park Dist.
- ✓ Tom Musick, HC Public Works
- ✓ Jason Gottfried, HC Public Works
- ✓ David Gepner, former BAC member
- ✓ Ben Brasser, Minneapolis Public Works
- ✓ Chad Ellos, HC Public Works

Notes

- **Introductions**
- **Approval of the January 2022 minutes** **4:02 – 4:05**
 - Greg Anderson moved to approve the January 2022 minutes. Bob Byers seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously on a voice vote.
- **Minnetonka Boulevard reconstruction project resolution discussion** **4:05 – 4:40**
 - Dave Carlson described a draft resolution to support two-way cycle tracks on Minnetonka Boulevard in St. Louis Park, in follow-up from discussion at January's meeting.
 - Dave Carlson: The city is giving us two options, and we can pick one. I don't like two-way cycle tracks, that gives you crossing issues, safety issues, oncoming traffic nearby. But at least it's dedicated space. We were leaning toward two-way cycle track. The cycle track is



inconsistent with the bike lanes to the west and different from the cycle tracks the city has put on roads around the city. I spoke with Billy Binder, and he wondered whether we really want either one. The trouble with cycle tracks on both sides would be the loss of green space, and residents really want that. So that's why it's on these two options. What do other committee members think? Do we hold out for on-road bike lanes or cycle tracks on each side?

- Dave Carlson: The last paragraph says we further encourage the project team to consider a two-lane roadway section for a majority of the corridor, except where left turn lanes are needed at major intersections. This would allow for on-street bike facilities consistent with on-street bike facilities west of TH 100 and more boulevard space.
- Laura Mitchell: If we had to choose, we would err on the side of two-way cycle track.
- Jordan Kocak: I followed up with Jason Staebell on the last paragraph supporting a two-lane roadway: You can choose to leave it in but it's unlikely the county would consider the two-lane roadway feasible.
- Billy Binder: What is going to happen west of TH 100? You can't just design a section in a vacuum, you have to think of what's happening in the rest. Otherwise you have problems with transitions and crossing multiple lanes. We're setting the course for what would happen all the way west to TH 169. I just don't see why we wouldn't want one-way paired cycle tracks on the whole corridor. Why not? Jordan Kocak: I think the big reason the project team didn't advance that option is if you try to get the one-way pair you don't have room for green space. You run out of space and it's all hardscape. They heard from the public they wanted that greenspace and trees. Billy Binder: I get it, and I'll probably vote the way Dave votes. I get the green space, but you're giving up a lot as a transportation corridor. The road is in rough shape to the west and it'll have to be redone soon. I imagine it'll be repaved with bike lanes, which is great but not the future.
- Dave Carlson: The city of St. Louis Park in their corridors, priorities are listed as pedestrian first, bike second, transit third and cars fourth. I don't see greenspace in there. It looks like bikes have dropped down to fifth place. You're going to have people having to cross four lanes of traffic to get to a cycle track. It might encourage some riders who don't mind a narrow cycle track, but any serious or commuter biker are really going to have a substandard facility. I have a question; would the two-way pair cycle track have some green space buffer between the cycle track and the curb?
- Lee Newman: I'm struggling with this issue. As a committee we want to support bicycling as a safe and efficient transportation mode. On the other hand I'm a big proponent of maximizing green space. At this point I don't know how to vote; I don't know how to reconcile those two goals.
- Dave Carlson: It doesn't preclude green space on the other side of the sidewalk, on private land.
- Greg Anderson: We always get into these sort of discussions where there's no right or wrong answers. I get the impression the most likely users are going to be nearby residents. Where are they going to go? It's good they're doing something in the planning and we won't be too far off the mark if we go with your recommendation for a two-way cycle track. I'm curious about the volumes, and something is better than nothing.
- Bob Byers: They have 3.5 feet between the cycle track and the curb, which is pretty minimal for trees, not necessarily minimal for other greenery. You gotta be careful with some of that for sightlines, especially at intersections. I also have questions whether the

volume of people biking here warrants full protection. If you go west of 169 and we have trails and shoulders but I don't see a lot of people biking. I don't see a lot of conflict between bikers and walkers, which there are more of. I would say the midblock crossing problem is a bigger deal than conflicts with pedestrians. That's where I would come down on this one. We just went through this conversation on University. There you have high bicycle usage and the pedestrian and bike mix is a bigger deal. Here I'm not sure mixing pedestrians and bikers is a big deal.

- Dave Carlson: University is a whole different animal. I think a lot of people use Minnetonka on the road, but not on the trail. How wide is that two-way cycle track? Bob Byers: 10 feet, and that's about right.
- Lee Newman: Is there a population of people along this corridor who would use this track for commuting if it were tenable for higher-speed bike traffic? Do we know that? Jordan Kocak: I'm sure some would. Further east you can connect to the Midtown Greenway and west has bike lanes.
- Jordan Kocak: 1. Is most of the group in agreement with the first paragraph supporting the two-way cycle track, or are there mixed feelings? And 2. Do you want to keep in the second paragraph encouraging two-lane roadway with on-street bikeways?
- Greg Anderson: I haven't heard anyone come out strongly against what we have.
- Lou Miranda: I don't prefer the two-way cycle track. Generally I do support one-ways. Here I think mixed use makes sense because the number of cyclists and pedestrians are not huge because it's mostly single-family homes. If you're just going a few blocks most people are not going to cross to use a bikeway. I think the one-way pair trails make sense here.
- Bob Byers: 1. Do we know the projected volume of pedestrians and bikes. I don't think the conflict will be that great. 2. Do we have any idea of the future of the corridor? We have chunks of on-road and off-road and how are you going to get over that bridge. What does it mean if there isn't going to be anything to the east for 50 years? Are we serving mostly the neighborhood if it's hard for commuters to connect? Jordan Kocak: I don't think this ever will have so much volume that you'll have lots of conflicts. On the other question, there is potential for the bikeway to extent to France Avenue or even beyond by a block. That gets you close to the light rail station. To the west I don't think we have a plan. If we reconstruct that, it may be a trail, but I don't know that we'll reconstruct that anytime soon. Bob Byers: To the west a buffered bike lane might fit in better.
- Dave Carlson: I agree, there hasn't been a lot of bike usage in that area because it's a four-lane without bike facilities. I think there would be a fair amount of bikers and pedestrians. There's city hall, apartments, senior housing and businesses. A multiuse trail, you probably will have people biking on the street in one lane. From the west there's an on-road facility and I think people will stay on road. I think two multiuse trails, I'm disappointed we couldn't get something better.
- Jordan Kocak: Maybe we should do an informal poll to inform how we move forward with a resolution? 8 members favored the two-way cycle track, 4 favored multiuse trails.
- Lou Miranda: I would like to remove the paragraph about two-lane roadway. The city had trails on either side and painted bike lanes on the street, which encourages people to drive faster with a wider road. I think the separation makes it safer.
- Dave Carlson: I would want to keep it in. A lot of people bike on road. If you look at Beltline, they were adamant that we keep them in there. It makes a complete street, if you

are comfortable on-street with 30 mph traffic, it gives you space to ride. I think we should keep the paragraph in. Complete streets means for all users and there's a lot of people who bike on-street.

- Jordan Kocak: Maybe another straw poll on whether to leave in the second paragraph concerning a two-lane roadway. 8 members wanted to leave the paragraph in, supporting a two-lane roadway with on-street bike facilities.
- Newman moved to approve. Costigan seconded. Six in favor. Two abstain. Two oppose.

- **Three Rivers Park District update**

4:40 – 5:15

- Danny McCullough introduced himself as the Regional Trail System Manager for Three Rivers Park District: Once a year I try to come to this group and update you on what's going on with the regional trail system, construction and planning. The things I'm going to go over from the past two and a half years or so should touch every single commissioner district. During Covid we kept our master plan work going as we continue to expand our regional trail system.
- We recently completed a regional trail master plan, now in the 30-day comment period. It's been approved by most of the cities, the next step would be to get approval from Metropolitan Council. The plan covers nine trails that previously did not have master plans. Many of the trails were done 15 years or so ago.
- Letstalkthreerivers.org has the plan, where you can review it. The trails are: Cedar Lake, Lake Independence, Lake Minnetonka, Luce Line, Medicine Lake, Minnesota River Bluffs, North Cedar Lake, Northeast Diagonal and Shingle Creek.
- This plan focused on subgrade and maintenance. The trails already exist, so we went through and highlighted what needs to be improved. North Cedar Lake we would widen from 10 feet to 12 to 15 feet.
- Lake Minnetonka, we would pave the trail around the lake and Excelsior. I'll let you go to the Web site and explore on your own.
- We just got approval for the Eagle to Bryant Lake trail. I talked to this group about a year ago. Starts on Plymouth Maple Grove border at Eagle Lake Park down to Minnetonka Boulevard. This was a large undertaking with a lot of engagement. At TH 55 and CSAH 73, we're working on getting an underpass under TH 55. The area is kind of a tangle town. The trail will go down Baker Road. On north end the trail will be on the west side, then east side across Excelsior Boulevard. There's plenty of space on Baker Road, including boulevard space. We recommend narrowing each lane by a foot, which hopefully will address speeding.
- We're kicking off planning for the CP Rail Regional Trail in Crystal/New Hope/Golden Valley. About three years ago planned from the Minnesota River up to near 494 and Edina. Now we're planning to the north. It will not be in the rail corridor. We don't think a rail corridor route is feasible, after talking to the railroad and the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority. So instead we're looking at a community based trail connecting parks and other destinations.
- We're about to wrap up a huge project, the Diamond Lake Regional Trail, starting in Rogers down to Wayzata. It took two years to plan. It's kind of a circuitous route because we're taking advantage of some development, and also because we're working with a lot of cities, each of which has their own priorities and expectations. Soon to be released for public comment. Soon there will be information online with details.

- Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail at 169 and Brent Road. Years ago MnDOT reconstructed 169 and put in a tunnel for us. Currently the trail goes on a sidewalk. We're now constructing boardwalk to Lincoln Drive where it will connect with existing trail. They're out doing the work right now.
- In Carver Park Reserve, early stage of Baker/Carver Regional Trail. Already constructed from Nature Center to Highway 7 in the fall.
- Lee Newman: Will that tunnel on Nine Mile be open this summer? McCullough: Yes, hopefully. They're constructing boardwalk right now, they have to do it in winter. As long as we don't get a super early thaw they're on track to finish the boardwalk this spring. Then the paved portion of the project should be ready by mid-summer, once asphalt plants open.
- Dave Carlson: That was the worst section of Nine Mile, that'll be a big improvement. north cedar lake trail widening will be a lot better. For Diamond Lake Trail, are you going through wooded areas? It looks like it's not along roads. McCullough: It's a mix and a huge corridor. There are definitely elements of the trail that are along a road, a lot are not. Especially in Corcoran, we're tying it into development. Some is in natural areas. We had envisioned this being a very nature-based corridor, like a Rush Creek with a wide corridor of natural space. We met resistance in areas from residents. A lot of this area is wet. You're having to plan this around a four-mile boardwalk that would cost so much money, or private land that would need to be purchased. It's a happy medium in terms of being a nature-based route and a roadway route. At Hamel Road into Baker Park, we had wanted to go south through Medina and it just wasn't feasible. On the north end it ties together a bunch of lakes that will make a really nice trail. In Corcoran there also are some areas that are pretty scenic. Soon it will be online and you can look closer.
- Dave Carlson, it looks like you're really close to Elm Creek Regional Park, are you able to connect to there? McCullough: We're debating it right now. The northwest part of the park is old-growth forest and the most sensitive. It's the one part of the park we most want to protect. I don't see a connection going in right there, but maybe north of there. We'll see. There're also some wetlands in the area. There are a lot of good reasons to not connect in.
- Greg Anderson: Is Crow-Hassen connection possible? Danny: We're acquiring land to make that connection. Unfortunately it's going to take a long time to make that connection, but once we do it'll be a really nice natural corridor.
- Lou Miranda: As someone who lives close to CP Rail, Segment B, any idea when that will be planned or designed? McCullough: If I remember correctly we start that next year, maybe the next year. I'll confirm and email you. Miranda: Will it be along the rail line? McCullough: Probably not. Miranda: Also, great progress on the tunnel under 169, I toured it a while ago and it looked great.
- Dave Carlson: Do you have projections on when construction will be complete? McCullough: No, we complete a master plan then go looking for funding. For example Eagle Lake Bryant Lake. We're never going to build it all in one shot. So, I'll be back next month hopefully asking for a resolution of support for a regional solicitation application. We want to build the trail from south of Medicine Lake to Bryant Lake. If we were to get funding that would be 2026. It would be done in three separate projects and we're applying for all three of those. We're applying for a total of 12 projects: gaps on Basset

Creek, reconstruct end-of-life trails, three are what I just showed, Shingle Creek to lift trail out of flood zone and build boardwalk, they'll be listed on that resolution request.

One of the first things on Diamond Lake Trail in downtown Wayzata, we will actively seek funding to get that done as soon as possible.

Billy Binder: Are you interested in adopting a trail on north side of TH from downtown MPLS to Burlington Northern Trails, once part of the Bottineau LRT line? That area has a raft of bike riding and a real need for a trail. McCullough: Probably not, because once we cross into Minneapolis we don't do any planning work in Minneapolis. On that resolution request, one of the projects is Golden Valley Road on the gap where we got funding two years ago, stopping at Bonny Lane, and close the gap to Theodore Wirth. It was supposed to be done with Bottineau, but since that changed we're looking for funding. Michael Samuelson: MnDOT, with the change in alignment on Olson moving north from 55, a lot of the improvements MnDOT was going to do have been pushed onto a roadway project toward the end of the decade. Not just trail improvements, but also ADA improvements and crossing improvements.

- **Lake Street corridor study and B Line transit project**

5:15 – 5:55

- Chad Ellos, Hennepin County Transportation Planning manager introduced Jason Gottfried from Transportation Planning and Ben Brassler from Minneapolis Public Works, who've been working with Metro Transit and Minneapolis on B Line BRT on Lake Street in Minneapolis connecting to Marshall and downtown St. Paul.
- <https://www.hennepin.us/lake-street-improvements>
- We've been working over the past year-plus to optimized planning around the B Line and Lake Street.
- The B Line runs 12.6 miles along Lake, Marshall and Selby from West Lake Station on the Green Line to downtown St. Paul.
- Service planned every 10 minutes, about 20 percent faster than existing Route 21.
- Project is fully funded with engineering now and construction in 2023-2024.
- Stations will include heating, light, real-time information, security and regular maintenance. Transit-signal priority and pay before boarding help get those faster trip times.
- Outside downtown Minneapolis, it has some of the highest pedestrian traffic. Lake and Hennepin has 300 daily ped crossing.
- Minneapolis identified it as a high injury street.
- Last reconstructed in 2007-2008; most of it is in good shape and not due to be replaced soon, but a mill and overlay is anticipated within about five years.
- Priorities are increasing transit speed and reliability, improve safety for all modes and improve conditions for people walking and crossing Lake Street. We also want to limit impacts to residents and businesses in the corridor.
- Other projects include I-35W and Lake, Hi-Lake (presented last month for 2024 construction).
- We have studied bus-only lanes, 4-3 lane conversion east of Dupont
- Evaluated several concepts with traffic modeling to optimized transit service and make for a safer roadway overall.

- Looked to climate action plan, transportation action plan, complete streets policies for city and county
- Metro Transit did a significant engagement plan for the whole corridor and got hundreds of comments.
- This would not be a full reconstruction, as it's still in good condition, so we looked at what we can do between the curbs. We came up with some new striping plans, ADA improvements and signal modifications. Also bumpouts west of Hennepin, which was not part of the 2007-2008 reconstruction.
- Ellos will show concepts for a 4-3 conversion to improve safety all-around paired with a bus-only lane. We envision a predominant westbound bus-only lane and also eastbound where there is space. We envision a 24/7 bus-only lane. The bus lane would be shared with people turning right. Dual westbound lanes are still recommended at busier intersections and known bottlenecks. We'll continue to evaluate whether we can restripe those location for continuous bus-only lanes.
- Ellos showed the existing and proposed typical section. Either a two-way left turn lane or dedicated left turn lanes at intersections and limited parking impacts.
- Half of Hi-Lake station constructed already, the other half with this.
- Concept includes six miles of bus-only lanes. On the west side it's three lanes in each direction, the outside through lane would become bus-only from Dupont west.
- East of Dupont would be a 4-3 with a westbound bus-only lane.
- We might be able to get bus-only lanes in each direction at 35W, Park, Portland and Chicago.
- Ellos showed a 10 percent concept at the west end near West Lake Station,
- Through the one-way pair Lake and Lagoon segment (possibly including bumpouts),
- Lake and Lyndale (bus-only lane drops at busier intersections to try to get traffic through the signal in one phase; could possibly stripe it as bus-only in the future),
- Lake and 35W Working with MnDOT to see if we can bring the bus-only lanes through here. It would just be restriping.
- Lake and Cedar: Similar to Lyndale. We would have two westbound lanes open to general traffic to get vehicles through the signalized intersections.
- Minnehaha to the River: 4-3 conversion with westbound bus-only lane.
- Has been previous engagement, Metro Transit corridor plans, Minneapolis Transportation Advisory Panel, Vision Zero, Minneapolis 2040, metrotransit.org/b-line-project-hennepin.us/lake-street-improvements, councilmember briefings, agency meetings with Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Bicycle Advisory Committee, Public Works and Infrastructure business and neighborhood groups. Minneapolis Public Works and Infrastructure committee March 31, 2022. Scheduling virtual open house for mid-March in the evening.
- Next steps are to communicate with businesses and stakeholders, execute agency agreements, align necessary funding, finalized plans, bid, award and construct project. The improvements needed aren't in any current projects.
- Hokan: Minneapolis had a lane downtown for buses, bikes and right turns only. They then claimed they couldn't enforce the right-turn-only so they converted that lane to a general traffic lane. What is different here? It was during the conversion of Hennepin-First downtown to two-way. It was not a reconstruction. The road was very wide, and people just drove cars in the bus and bike only lane. If you have a situation on Lake where it's

restricted to buses and right turns only, how will you enforce it? Chad Ellos: We're discussing it at the county, city and Metro Transit. Designation really helps, red paint really designates it so people know whether they're supposed to be in there. There are tradeoffs with all that red paint, we're looking into it. Enforcement is a part of it as well, and it continues to be a question.

- Hoka: Did you mention, can you have bicycle in the bus lane? Chad: That is not the intent that we've been discussing. It's always been assumed it would be transit, right turns and accessing parking. The parallel Midtown Greenway serves a large portion of the pass-through bike traffic and we're improving connections to that.
- Jason Gottfried: I do share your concerns on enforcement; we continue to discuss best practices across the country. I understand Hennepin Avenue through Uptown they've had challenges, but I don't think it's affected bus operations too significantly. New York has an effort to get cameras on buses to get license plates and automatically send out tickets. As far as bikes along Lake Street, we anticipated Midtown Greenway to continue to carry the heavy load. We do leave the door open for future bike facilities west of Hennepin Avenue on Lake Street. That perhaps would entail parking impacts, so that will be a separate endeavor.
- Courtney Costigan: Do you expect you'll see ridership increase? You mentioned crashes at Lake and Lyndale, Lake in general: Is that all car crashes, or buses or pedestrians? Jason Gottfried: It's all kinds of crashes. The whole corridor has a high crash rate, some intersections more problematic than others. Lyndale especially with high pedestrian and vehicle traffic. With a 4-3, with so many left turns, people will be able to be more patient and find a gap to more safely make a left turn. We hope we can reduce sideswipe crashes with less weaving and we believe there will be a traffic-calming element in a 4-3. The benefit to the pedestrian is dedicated left turn lane phases, to give people time to more patiently make left turns.
- Greg Anderson: Anything else to offer people biking on Lake Street, those who aren't on the Greenway? Chad Ellos: This isn't a full revisioning of the corridor, we do anticipate a calming effect and better setting expectations. There definitely has been more on pedestrians, crossing and getting to transit stations. There is a calming effect for people who choose to bike in the lanes. It is a big step to remove the 4-lane undivided sections. Greg: I like seeing the 4-3s, which are beneficial in many ways.
- Billy Binder: Lake Street is wide east of Hiawatha, what about bike lanes on that section east to the river. There's much less traffic on that stretch, too. Chad Ellos: The three agencies have looked at that. It has a lot of parking and bumpouts, so there is extra space with a 4-3, but the choice was to prioritize buses in that section as well. Jordan Kocak: Last month we had the Hi-Lake project, which is considered a limited east-west bikeway. The city wants to connect the stations around Hi-Lake to the bikeways to the north for east-west connectivity.

- **Member announcements**

5:56 – 5:55

- Jordan Kocak: In our Active Transportation Committee bylaws there is an item about an annual report or summary. In the past we rolled this into a walking and biking annual review. This year we did a standalone document for the ATC. I'll email the PDF to everyone after the meeting. Some of our members were models in a photoshoot this fall,

Tammy and Gilbert and Jay and Lou. The report highlights the work from 2021, including changing the name, resolutions and projects of interest.

- Billy Binder: I'd like to credit Jordan with good staff work on Lowry NE, Hennepin/1st, and University/4th. You did a really good job bringing these projects to our attention and I think we did a good job with recommendations.

Adjournment

Lee Newman moved to adjourn the meeting and Lou Miranda seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Next meeting:

March 21, 2022

4 – 6 p.m.

Microsoft Teams Meeting