

# HENNEPIN COUNTY

## MINNESOTA

## Active Transportation Committee

Date: Monday, January 24, 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 (excused absence)
- ✓ Lou Dzierzak, Dist. 5
- ✓ Courtney Costigan, Dist. 5
- ✓ Bob Byers, Dist. 6
- ✓ Lou Miranda, Dist. 6 (excused absence)
- ✓ 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:

- ✓ Jason Staebell, HC Public Works
- ✓ Tom Musick, HC Public Works
- ✓ KC Atkins, HC Public Works
- ✓ Crystal Myslajek, HC Housing and Economic Development
- ✓ Luke Ulstad, HC Public Works
- ✓ Aaron Warford, Bolton & Menk
- ✓ Stephanie Devitt, SDK
- ✓ Aaron Tag, MnDOT
- ✓ Kelsey Fogt, Minneapolis
- ✓ Luke Sandstrom, Metro Transit

## Notes

- **Introductions**
- **Approval of the December 2021 minutes** **4:13 – 4:18**
  - Kristel Porter moved to approve the December 2021 minutes. Lou Dzierzak seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.
- **Hi-Lake interchange reconstruction** **4:18 – 5:01**
  - Jason Staebell introduced Stephanie Devitt from SDK Communications and Consulting, Aaron Tag from MnDOT and Luke Sandstrom from Metro Transit, who all are working on the Hi-Lake interchange reconstruction. They're working with MnDOT, leading



- construction and design. County leads outreach. Metro Transit and Minneapolis also are involved. Metro Transit has light rail and B Line at the project site.
- <https://www.hennepin.us/hi-lake>. [Jason.staebell@hennepin.us](mailto:Jason.staebell@hennepin.us)  
[stephanie@sdkcommunications.com](mailto:stephanie@sdkcommunications.com)
  - Goal is to reflect public's primary goals of creating a safe area that reduces climate change. That leads us to change the single-point interchange to a tight diamond interchange. Current it's a single-point interchange, with one point where all traffic crosses. Good for moving motor vehicle traffic, not good for biking or walking.
  - Phase 1 in 2016 studied short- and long-term improvements for all modes. Phase II developed longer-term options.
  - Community is rebuilding following riots.
  - Designing space under the bridge in 2021-2022 and rebuilding bridge by 2024.
  - Future is to build a tight-diamond design with two signals, one at each side, and squares up the intersection to slow speeds. Narrowed offramps, eliminating one lane each. There's 50-75 feet for walking on either side along Lake.
  - Safer, more connection and climate friendly is the goal while improving connectivity and access across neighborhoods.
  - The redesign would reduce conflict points at crosswalks and shorten crossing distances.
  - We're looking for input on what space freed up from changing to a tight diamond. We're trying to make it a place where people are more comfortable passing through or being there. How can we match the values of the community (safer, more connected, climate-friendly) to the space under the bridge. We're working with East Phillips, Longfellow and Corcoran neighborhoods.
  - Nearby destinations include: Hennepin Healthcare; Hennepin County Human Service Center; YWCA; Hi-Lake Shopping Center; The Lift Garage; Target; Cub Foods; South High school.
  - Traffic counts are 6,800 people walking or biking a day; 4,500 people using transit a day 40,000 people using motor vehicles a day, mostly on TH 55.
  - Example project in Milwaukee: Brighten the Passage. It includes artwork under a bridge.
  - Example 2: Skate Park, under TH 169 in Hopkins, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lair Skate Shop.
  - Other options include ride share, lockers for mobility hub.
  - We're getting input in winter 2022, spring/summer share updated design with incorporated feedback. Final design 2022. Construction 2024.
  - B Line station already built in southwest quadrant. New westbound station will go on the north side as part of this project.
  - Existing trail crosses 55, connects to the north.
  - Southbound exit ramp, will extend trail connection south from 28<sup>th</sup> to Lake Street.
  - Lee Newman: I'm fascinated by skate park idea. Where is the closest skate park to here?  
Courtney Costigan: There is one at Brackett Park, Lake and 36<sup>th</sup>. Might be one closer, but that's one I know of.
  - Kristel Porter: The logos represent safety, community and climate; you showed a mobility hub. I think it would serve a couple of those purposes. It would be nice to have something there for oversight. Mobility hub would be a place to pick up bikes, car-sharing, etc. But, a lot of concrete is problematic when it comes to water. So think about those effects. When doing outreach, engage East Phillips and Little Earth and South High School. Spend time with students, they use that space quite a lot. Stephanie Devitt: We've

put together a small advisory committee to make recommendations. We have representatives from each neighborhood, the East Phillips representative is in Little Earth. I have met with the South High principal. The second class period is for talking about the community. Next week we'll talk with them during that period. Online map and survey coming, too.

- Bob Byers: Kristel mentioned as an aside the oversight safety issue. This area has had a number of issues not related to infrastructure per se, nor to typical county responsibilities. It's really critical that these various agencies and neighborhoods, organizations, it's critical that we have all those people involved. We're going to need some commitments on how this space is managed. It probably won't be the county. What are the project limits? Jason Staebell: From just west of 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, replacing the signal there, through the interchange and planning on replacing the signal at Snelling, then just east of Snelling. Bob Byers: That's great, that helps make sure the pedestrian connections are made across this whole area.
- Jason Staebell: The south curb line is staying where it is, and we're building to the north. We're reducing lane widths. It is federally funded for 2024 construction. You'll eventually hear more detail about the B Line and what that's bringing to Lake Street. We're a lot of the same people, so we're making sure they work well together.
- Jordan Kocak: About the B Line: It looks likely it'll be on our agenda next month. On the limits, several months ago there was some discussion about possibly extending a trail to the east, trying to get toward Minnehaha. Jason Staebell: With narrowing lanes, there is potential for more of a trail on the north side. There are some mature trees, we'll have to see how we could get a trail toward Minnehaha. It might not come with this project.
- Tammy McLemore: I took the trail a lot in south Minneapolis and did bike advocacy. Little Earth did a lot with their community garden, what are the thoughts to engage all those organizations on what green space is going to be there, and to let people know what is in the community? Signage. Our goal is to get people walking and biking, and information can help with that. Stephanie Devitt: Is the question what strategies are we using to hear those voices? Tammy McLemore: How do we make sure they're aware of what ideals they can bring to the table. English is a second language for many of the people in the neighborhood, how do we make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak up? Stephanie Devitt: If there's anything we're missing, it's not an intentional omission, let us know, we want to make those connections. The advisory committee provides some connection and transparency as we figure out the final design. Making that decision will go deeper than just what the public opinion might be. It includes representatives from the neighborhoods, green transportation advocates and others. Over the next 6 to 8 weeks we'll be making the community aware this project is coming. We'd like to hear what priorities are for the community in that space. Is it mobility hubs, or art or something else. Late February, early March open house [Feb. 22 with Spanish translation and March 1 with Somali translation]. Looking for opportunities to engage specific groups and organizations. I've met with the apartment building managers next to the interchange to create opportunities for residents living and working in the area. We're always happy to add to the list. Jason Staebell: The virtual events are planned to have live translation in Spanish and Somali. We hope to do more in-person and pop-ups. Mid-winter and Covid has made that a challenge.

- Tammy McLemore: You mentioned surveys, would it be possible to delegate to organizations if I don't have a smart phone or I'm just getting housing and my feet under me? Stephanie Devitt: We have a couple of tools to support that: We do have a phone number for voicemails, we also will create yard signs and drop boxes.
- Jordan Kocak: On project partners and stakeholders: In Hennepin County Public Works we don't deal a lot with homelessness or issues like that, but there are other branches of Hennepin County that do. Have you connected across county business lines to talk to staff or residents? Jason Staebell: The simple answer is yes. I spoke with the head of the homelessness area at the county. We're in contact and keeping each other informed as best we can. It's a complex issue. One of our first outreaches was to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, they've shown interest in what this space could possibly be, whether they'd be willing to take on any operations and maintenance responsibilities. We'll see.
- Kristel Porter: Will you provide funding to the organizations around the intersections to do engagement, small pockets of funding? Some of them are really connected to people on the ground, they have relationships and can get responses. Jason Staebell: We do have some funding for stipends, but we're fairly limited on what we can do. There are a few tools we can use there.
- Jordan Kocak: Will you be coming back, when might we expect updates or to consider a resolution? Jason Staebell: We'll have this round of engagement, then probably in March or April we come back with a layout of the infrastructure. What's happening under the bridge I think will be a longer conversation. We can talk in April about what we will have heard by then. I expect there will be a lot of ideas. Tammy McLemore: Are there concrete dates in February and March? Stephanie Devitt: Feb. 22 and March 1 Signs and materials should be available Feb. 3. We have a pretty good toolkit to facilitate engagement for organizations, so if you have ideas you can reach out to me or Jason. We do have a list of key stakeholders. Jason: We'll list organizations and names and send it out.

- **Minnetonka Boulevard Reconstruction**

**5:02 – 5:45**

- Jason Staebell introduced the Minnetonka Boulevard (CSAH 5) reconstruction. Aaron Warford is on the call from Bolton/Menck. You've seen this before, but we'll refresh background and overview, then look at some concept layouts.
- <https://www.hennepin.us/minnetonka-boulevard>
- The project is from TH 100 (Salem) to France Avenue in St. Louis Park. It's a key regional connection between St. Louis Park and Minneapolis, part of St. Louis Park's Connect the Park initiative. 15,000 motor vehicles per day.
- Space is limited, at 66-foot right of way. Trying to fit modal needs in the corridor, balancing separation and flexibility of space. Maintenance also is a topic.
- We're in the design phase. We've developed some concepts and evaluated them. We're moving forward with preliminary design and municipal consent by end of summer
- The project priorities are: safety, accessibility, multimodal, sustainable, implementable, equitable and health-promoting.
- Two concepts have risen to the top: Option A is a three lane with 10.5-foot general lanes, 6-foot boulevards on each side and 9-foot trails on each side. 11-foot center turn lane. It

supports equitable, safe, health-promoting, sustainability and operations goals. Supports portions of ped, bike transit and implementation goals.

- We see people here biking contra-flow to avoid crossing the street twice, so a multiuse trail would help with that.
- Overhead power is shown, city would like to put it underground. That's not a sure thing, there is a cost to it.
- Option B: Three-lane, 6-foot boulevard on south side, 5-foot sidewalk. On north side 3.5-foot buffer, two-way bikeway at 10 feet, 1 foot buffer and 5-foot sidewalk. General lanes are 10.5-feet each.
- Supports equitable safe and health-promoting, operational goals. Supports portions of bike and sustainability goals. Somewhat supports ped, transit and implementation goals. Less green space than option A. There could be people biking on the 5-foot sidewalk on south side, but this concept wouldn't accommodate that.
- We eliminated an Option C with a wider trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other side. We thought the benefits of Option A were better than this one.
- If you have the multiuse trail or cycle track on the north side, how does that connect at 100 and west? There're on-road bike lanes west of 100. We need to transition from these lanes over 100 to three lanes. We're working on concepts to go from two lanes each way to one. For the multiuse trail, if they want to get off the road they could stay on the trail on either side and not need to cross Minnetonka Boulevard. On the cycle track you would have to cross if going eastbound to get to the cycle track. We expect that happening on the east side of the interchange. We're trying to minimize impact to private property there.
- At the east end there's the intersection with 25 to France. We're looking at concepts to clean this up and simplify it and encourage traffic to stay on 25 rather than take 5 (Minnetonka Boulevard). 25 has the capacity and is divided. We're trying to add this to the scope, hopefully we'll have a concept next time we're here. We've looked at signal options and roundabouts. It's not looking promising for roundabouts. The traffic isn't balanced enough at France to work very well traffic-wise.
- In the next month we'll present these preliminary concepts for feedback and arrive at a preferred option to advance to preliminary design.
- Tammy McLemore: Is the funding all county? Jason Staebell: City, county, federal funding. It's for 2024 construction.
- Tammy McLemore: Do the three entities make the decision jointly? Jason Staebell: The federal government doesn't really, though there are a few key criteria. The city has municipal consent. What their council will support, we'll go with.
- Kristel Porter: Option B, there's less green space, in the rendering, there could be green space in that buffer of 3.5 to 5.5 feet to limit runoff. Jason Staebell: There would be 3.5 feet with the cycle track. With less than five feet it doesn't stay green. Things don't grow, trees don't survive. Kristel Porter: If you do go with Option B: If no boulevard, you should look at permeable pavers.
- Lee Newman: Would it be viable to narrow those cycle track lanes to four feet? Jason: It is a possibility, but the guidance is five feet. We'd have to dig into it more. You could do that for a short stretch, but for how long would be OK? Lee Newman: What kind of usage is anticipated for biking? Jordan Kocak: I can tell you what our current numbers are and I assume it would become more as it becomes more comfortable to be in that space. At TH

100 in 2019 we estimated the average biking per day was 10. I would guess it would be significantly more. Right now it's not a safe or comfortable place to bike. Just east of here is the East Lake light rail transit station and possible connections to the Midtown Greenway. That probably will increase desire to walk and bike along Minnetonka Boulevard. Lee Newman: That would argue against having four feet. Jordan: I would guess if after engagement the decision is to go for the cycle track, then there would be more discussion of dimensions. Jason Staebell: I think it comes down to whether it's about the commuter going along Minnetonka Boulevard, or is it more about local trips better served by the multiuse paths.

- Tammy McLemore: Similar to what we talked about Hi-Lake, are you reaching out to schools, organizations that could benefit from this? Jason Staebell: We did a lot of outreach in the summer digitally and pop-ups. We sent postcards to people within a few blocks with a link to a survey. We got responses in the 100s. We'll focus more on the business outreach. The area has a lot of Jewish residents, synagogues and schools. We've had some initial meetings and will reach out to them again. We'll also be in the city's quarterly newsletter. This past fall we had sidewalk decals with QR codes to our Web site.
- Courtney Costigan: If I could avoid crossing Minnetonka Boulevard I'd sure like to do that. I'd like to hear what users of the corridor think on that. I'd love it if I could just stay on one side.
- Jay Eidsness: On Option B: I grew up on Ottawa and Minnetonka, I don't see any issue with the multiuse trail in Option A, and I think it might be nice to have cyclists on both sides. If people can stay on their side with a path, I think that's great. I don't see a huge conflict between bikes and peds here. There's a Little League baseball field on the south side. I used to bike there all the time when I was growing up. I think the two trails would work well here. I think the bigger improvement is going to three lanes and slowing traffic. Jason Staebell: City has a project to add a trail to Ottawa to cross 25 to connect to the Southwest light rail transit station. Whatever we do here will connect to that trail. I think the city also wants to extend that trail north on Ottawa.
- Dave Carlson: As a St. Louis Park resident I've worked a lot with the city as they explore ways to accommodate bikers. Because there are bike lanes west of TH 100, I think there's benefit to having on-street bike lanes here for continuity. They did put a cycle track on Cedar Lake Road, one-way in each direction. Maybe that's something that could be considered. Maybe a 5- or 6-foot cycle track and a 5-foot sidewalk. I think keeping bikes and pedestrians at least somewhat separated would be beneficial for safety. I think a fair amount of people walk here, there are apartments nearby. If there is a two-way cycle track, there are advantages in getting more sunshine, and people maybe be heading to Cedar Lake, but the LRT station will be on the south side.
- Jason Staebell: Your trail should be 5, sidewalk minimum is 5, you should have a tactile separation up to 11 feet, which would eat up boulevard and make it less likely to be green. Aaron Warford: There were strong feelings from the local partner and the community and they thought it would be shame to take away the option for a green boulevard.
- Lou Dzierzak: This is great. On Option A, with trails on each side, are those trails considered one-way or two-way? Jason Staebell: We currently have it at the rider's convenience, so they could go either way. Lou Dzierzak: Would these trails be cleared in winter? Jason Staebell: The city has said they would clear these.

- Jordan Kocak: Where the design is now, you have the green space plus more separation for walking and biking from motor vehicles, not at the back of the curb.
- Jason Staebell: With the three-lane section, those who want to bike on the road they can, and it provides a way for people driving to pass in the center turn lane. In the current situation it's a little more challenging. That's consistent in both Option A and Option B.
- Lou Dzierzak: on Option A with the green space, is there a standard or a plan for distance between trees and how many trees would be in these sections? Would they be purely decorative, or creating shade for that side? Jason Staebell: There is guidance, what goes out right away is 1- to 2-inch diameter trees. The county's foresters will choose tree types, I feel like spacing is 50 to 100 feet. Keep in mind there will also be signage and lighting in the boulevard. I don't think we'll have that tunnel effect for a long time.
- Tammy McLemore: Would the 4-3 affect dropping the 35 mph speed limit? Jason Staebell: We'll look at it to see what we can do. The cities can sign their own speed limits, but the county doesn't have that ability and would need a speed study. Our minimum would be 30. If we show that bikes will be on the street, we possibly could get down to 25.
- Jordan Kocak: It sounds like you'll be talking to the public, but it sounds like it's approaching a decision point for Option A or Option B. Would a resolution now be helpful? Jason Staebell: I think that would be nice if the committee is ready to do that. Jordan: I will work with the co-chairs and District 3 representatives to work on that. Jason Staebell: I think we'll be back in about May.
- Tammy McLemore: Will it be possible to get a questions for people who aren't using the corridor now but maybe will in the future? Jason Staebell: People don't react to what they don't know, there aren't bike facilities here now. It's tough. With our outreach, Web page, story map, we're trying to get some of that.

- **Lowry Avenue NE reconstruction resolution**

**5:45 – 5:40**

- Kristel Porter described the resolution for the project: On March 22, 2021, Billy Binder and Kristel Porter sent a letter to Commissioner on the reconstruction. We were worried there weren't bike lanes between Marshall and Central. This opportunity would not come again for another 50 years. Adding bikeways would address racial equity and greenhouse gases. Not having bikeways would affect safety, divide north and northeast Minneapolis. Adding bike lanes also would slow motor vehicle speeds. On Dec. 30, 2021 Billy and Kristel drafted resolution presented to the Active Transportation Committee.
- Most of the resolution did not save, so ATC members drafted new language: "The Hennepin County Active Transportation Committee supports the Lowry Avenue NE reconstruction option to implement a continuous multi-use trail facility from Johnson Street NE to Marshall Street NE. The ATC requests that the trail be oriented on the north side of the roadway and be a minimum of 10 feet in width."
- Bob Byers moves to adopt the resolution. Kristel Porter seconded the motion.
- Resolution passes by voice vote.

- **Member announcements**

**5:40 – 5:45**

- Jordan Kocak: District 1 and 2 member seats are up for renewal. There's a call for applicants out there. Terms are three years. We state in the charter that there will be an open call every three years, and I hope current members will apply again. Applications will be open for three weeks and depending on number of responses we might keep it open longer. Tammy McLemore: Whenever any term is up a member has to submit an application again to keep things open, fair and competitive. Jordan: Yes, to increase transparency and credibility, as this is a public committee.

**Adjournment**

Lee Newman moved to adjourn the meeting and Courtney Costigan seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Next meeting:

February 28, 2022

4 – 6 p.m.

Microsoft Teams Meeting