

Meeting Minutes
Lake Street Design Project
Project Advisory Committee #1
March 17, 2016 | 8:30 AM to 10:30 AM

Members: Allison Sharkey – Lake Street Council, Chair
Connie Williams – East Business Representative
Barry Mahaffey – West Business Representative (*For Tom Roberts*)
Cole Rogers – West Business Representative
Bob Speeter – East Business Representative
Crystal Windschitl – Phillips West Neighborhood Organization
Marion Biehn – Whittier Alliance (*For Ricardo McCurley*)

Staff: Jim Grube – Hennepin County
Max Holdhusen – Metro Transit
Nathan Koster – City of Minneapolis
Mike Kotila – S.E.H.
Bob Kost – S.E.H.
Jason Owens – S.E.H.
Charleen Zimmer – Zan Associates
Alex Magee – Zan Associates

Housekeeping – Chair

Allison Sharkey welcomed all meeting attendees and noted that the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) will make recommendations to decision makers on this project. Allison touched on the ground rules for the meeting and provided a reminder that all members are representing and advocating for their organizations and will act as a liaison between the PAC and their organizations. Members are expected to attend all meetings or send an alternate in their place. She reminded the group that if a committee member discusses this project with the media they are only to represent their personal opinions not those of the group. This committee will seek a consensus through discussion; otherwise, a vote will be held, if necessary.

Allison noted the May 19th meeting will not be held; however, a meeting in December will be held instead. Allison also added that the project team wants to hold Thursday morning PAC meetings at an alternate time that works better for everyone. The committee agreed that PAC meetings will be held from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. moving forward.

Jim Grube commented that the meeting schedule is every other month; however, there will be two in a row in the beginning since this first meeting is more introductory. Next month's meeting will get into more detail.

Update on I-35W Transit/Access Project

Jim discussed the I-35W Transit/Access project handouts that were provided. The Lake Street design project is being constructed from Blaisdell to Stevens on the west and Second Avenue to Fifth Avenue

on the east and is referred to as the Connections project. Decisions made for the Lake Street Connections project will go hand in hand with the I-35W Transit/Access project. MnDOT will be the lead agency for construction, and bids are intended to be let in June 2017 with full construction beginning Spring 2018. The intention of the Lake Street Connections project is to have a package ready for MnDOT to review and approve by January 2017. The Lake Street Connections project has some overlap with the I-35W Transit/Access project since it will go to First Avenue on the west and Third Avenue on the east. Jim noted that the Transit/Access project is part of three projects that will all be packaged into a four-year construction schedule. The Rehabilitation project goes from East 42nd Street to East 32nd Street. The Transit/Access project goes from East 32nd Street to East 26th Street. The Chapter 152 project goes from East 26th Street to the I-94 interchange. These projects will be a coordinated effort and, while the majority of the work will be on the freeway, local streets will be impacted as well. Even though it is a four-year construction plan, local streets will not be impacted for that long. The project team still needs to figure out where Lake Street is in that schedule. Jim noted that he and Nathan Koster, City of Minneapolis, would be happy to provide presentations to any interested organization.

Jim provided an overview of the schedule for approvals. In May, MnDOT will look for municipal consent approval from Minneapolis and Hennepin County for all three projects. If they are approved, the Lake Street Design project can move into more detailed work about landscaping, bus stop locations, etc. On March 28, the EA document will be available for review and comment, and on April 5 and April 19, there will be open houses where the public can get a better understanding of these three projects.

Marion Biehn asked if input is being taken for changes to the plan or just general feedback. Jim responded that all comments will be taken.

Crystal Windschitl asked if design approval has anything to do with the construction phases. Jim answered that the design approval does not include construction staging. The agencies are working on that right now and expect a Transportation Management Plan to be completed by the fourth quarter of this year. Crystal noted her concern about 26th Street and Lake Street being closed at the same time. Jim stated that construction staging will consider factors like this. Crystal asked if Lake Street would be one of the last components to be built since it will likely have wear and tear due to increased traffic during construction elsewhere. Jim said that would make sense but there isn't an answer for where it lies within the construction schedule yet. The project team will make sure that local businesses and residents understand the construction staging plans when they are available.

Marion asked if the re-opening of Nicollet Avenue would be available during construction. She also asked if the city has considered altering traffic patterns for better flow during construction. Nathan Koster responded that the city is aware of the concerns around the re-opening of Nicollet; however, there is no current timeline for the re-opening. He also noted the city would likely not alter traffic patterns as the community would be best served with streets as they currently operate.

Max Holdhusen asked for an explanation of the lane reductions on Blaisdell Avenue south of Lake Street. Nathan responded that currently south of Lake Street decreases from two lanes to one lane. The plan is to switch parking from the east to the west and have a one lane reduction to accommodate a buffered bike lane south of Lake Street.

Jim Grube noted that the EA will be available for public comment on March 28, not the 21st as noted on the handout. Also, an additional open house has been scheduled on April 19. Crystal asked what the EA document entails and asked if a maintenance plan would be included. Jim responded that it includes the

project scope and impacts but does not include a maintenance plan. That plan is being worked on separately by the responsible agencies.

Overview of Lake Street Project and Budget

Jim Grube provided an overview of the Lake Street Connections project. He noted that the Lake Street roadway reconstruction budget is established, and it will be paid for by Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis. Landscaping and streetscaping has a separate budget. The committee will look at options for base level streetscaping and enhanced level streetscaping. Once those items are decided on, there will be an additional budget determined. Next month, the team will provide a breakdown of planning level numbers so there is a comparison of the different levels of streetscaping. The project did receive a federal grant of \$600,000 which will cover a significant portion of the landscaping and streetscaping cost. With help from the city and county, the cost will be reduced to 10-20% of the overall cost. The cost of streetscaping not covered by the project would be a special assessment

Crystal asked if the project would include the cost of streetlights. Nathan Koster responded that the City of Minneapolis recently adopted a new process for street lighting costs. Since Lake Street is part of a pedestrian lighting corridor, the cost will be included as part of the project budget and not assessed to businesses unless an enhanced lighting option is selected.

Overview of Lake Street Design Issues for PAC Discussion

Mike Kotila, S.E.H., provided an overview of the Lake Street Connections project opportunities and concerns. The Lake Street project extends from Blaisdell on the west to Fifth Avenue on the east. The middle portion will be completed as part of MnDOT's freeway work. The design for the middle portion will be consistent with the Connections project. Mike went over the layout.

On the west side of Lake Street, there are five lanes – two westbound, two eastbound, and one center turn lane. That operational configuration will remain for this project. Mike noted that the current lane widths are 11' lanes; however, the proposed lanes are 10.83', which is consistent with the design along the rest of Lake Street. This dimension is the metric equivalent of 11'. There will be four lanes of traffic on the east side – two eastbound and two westbound plus two parking lanes and sidewalk on each side.

Mike noted that the biggest impact to the project footprint will be the location and length of transit stops. Metro Transit is planning for arterial BRT on Lake Street in the future. A large decision for this project will concern how much should be done now to accommodate the future arterial BRT.

Marion asked if the streetscaping decision would include the bus stop locations. Jim responded that the PAC will need to recommend where bus stops should be located but Metro Transit's service plan will also be a factor. He also noted that the Good Grocery/CareFree Rental building will be acquired due to the Transit/Access project, and staff have already begun helping them relocate.

Max asked if the median shown on the plans would be painted or concrete. Mike responded that it would be painted to accommodate truck movements.

Mike noted that bus layover spot on Second Avenue would likely move under the bridge.

Crystal asked if Second Avenue would become a local street after this project is complete. Mike responded that 2nd Avenue will no longer connect to 28th Street after the Transit/Access project is built due to the new ramp at 28th Street. The local bridge over the Greenway will be eliminated to

accommodate the new 28th Street ramp. Crystal asked if the freeway footprint would be wider or narrower than it is today. Mike responded that it would be wider in this location.

Mike noted that east of Third Avenue to Fifth Avenue, there are curb extensions (bump-outs) with parking bays shown in the concept plan. The bump outs will be used to facilitate boarding for transit stops and shorten crosswalk distances. Each block will need to be evaluated for bump-out design, bus accommodations and parking impacts. Allison asked which areas would have the main parking loss. Mike responded that the main parking impacts would be between Third Avenue and Fifth Avenue but just at the curb extensions/bus stops.

Marion asked if there would be a drop-off/parking lot area for BRT riders under or near the I-35W bridge. Max responded that there wouldn't be any parking under the bridge. Jim added that there would be a pull out for buses that could be used for drop-offs without blocking traffic.

Crystal asked about planned sidewalk widths and guidelines for minimum sidewalk width. Mike responded that the planned cross-section with bump-outs shows that sidewalks could be expanded to 16.84' at the bump-outs. Nathan added that the City of Minneapolis aims to have minimum 10' wide sidewalks. Bump-outs will only be on the east side, not the west side.

Mike provided an overview of the future arterial BRT line. Currently, Lake Street has three local transit routes – 21, 27, and 53. With the future arterial BRT, riders would pre-pay boarding fares which reduces dwell time, higher frequency with limited stops, and higher amenity stations. Max noted that the arterial BRT will replace Route 53. Mike reminded everyone that, in considering the future arterial BRT, the PAC will need to consider what should be done now to accommodate future service and facilities.

Bob Kost discussed streetscaping and landscaping elements which will be discussed during the next PAC meeting. The team has been reviewing the condition of existing facilities to determine how well they are holding up and which elements do not meet current ADA requirements – for example, the size of concrete scoring. This will help determine if existing materials and products should be continued or whether they should be changed. Streetlighting, furnishings concrete color/pattern, tree types, etc. will be reviewed. The PAC will need to also discuss if there are any elements that should be included to show neighborhood identity.

Mike and Nathan provided an overview of special assessments, which are fees collected from property owners that benefit from certain public improvements. These are improvements provided by the city which are not covered through general property taxes. The City establishes a Uniform Assessment Rate annually and this rate is applied to all roadway construction projects in the city. Special streetscape assessments will only be applied if there is a decision to move forward with streetscaping. Finally, a special service district for maintenance needs to be considered.

Mike discussed areaways which are basement extensions under the sidewalk. The team needs to determine where these are, and get feedback from the affected property owners. These are usually fully/partially abandoned or the roof is reinforced when a roadway is reconstructed.

Marion asked how far areaways typically extend into the average 8-10' sidewalk. Nathan Koster responded that it really varies, some have been very small and some have been very large that extend underneath the street. Nathan noted that the property owner can hire a certified professional to abandon/partially abandon an areaway or reinforce the ceiling, at the property owner's cost. It may be included as part of an assessment to the property owner to have it fixed as part of the project. A notification letter will be sent to property owners to inform them about areaways and the need to abandon them. Project staff will coordinate with property owners individually.

Next Steps

Detailed related field work will begin Spring 2016 and will include Gopher One utility marking, soil borings for structural investigation, soil sampling for environmental investigation, areaway investigations, surveying and traffic counts.

A project website will be implemented in the next month. PAC materials will be posted to the website after each meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 21, from 10 AM – 12 PM on the third floor of the Colin Powell Center, 2924 4th Street S, Minneapolis.