

Hennepin County
Complete Streets Task Force Minutes
May 16, 2011 2 - 4 PM
Hennepin County Government Center
C2350 Conference Room
300 South 6th Street, Minneapolis MN 55487

Attendees: James Andrew, Jill Boogren, Scott Bradley, Dave Carlson, Sandy Colvin Roy, Gail Dorfman, Steve Elkins, Ethan Fawley, Kathi Hemken, Margot Imdieke Cross, Tom Johnson, Linda Loomis, Peter McLaughlin, Bill Neuendorf, Karen Nikolai, Marthand Nookala, Tom Oestreich, Peggy Reichert, Rose Ryan, Carissa Schively Slotterback, Kimberly Spates, Peter Spuit, Mark Stenglein, Craig Twinem.

1. Integrating Complete Streets into Hennepin County roadway design

Craig Twinem, Hennepin County Transportation Design Division Manager

Design: Craig Twinem presented information, along with photos, to explain how the county carries out its roadway design projects. Design development begins with gathering data on existing and forecast traffic volumes, traffic generators, crash statistics, and an inventory of existing features. The project team also completes a multi-page Complete Streets checklist.

Commissioners McLaughlin and Dorfman suggested that the Task Force review the Complete Streets checklist. These criteria can change the outcome of our projects and we should review the checklist to see if anything is missing.

Ethan Fawley asked whether the checklist was applied to mill and overlay projects. Craig responded no, that these are maintenance projects completed by the Road and Bridge Operations Division. In routine overlays, they try to review and find the best candidates for restriping, but these projects move quickly. There are still opportunities to restripe after the mill and overlay.

Steve Elkins asked whether the county could consider resurfacing trails when resurfacing the roadway. Craig said that trail/sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the municipalities and that there currently is not funding for the County to take on this role. Gail Dorfman suggested that we might want to consider resurfacing trails in future projects and budgets.

Maintenance: Craig explained that Hennepin County looks for 4 to 3 lane conversion candidates in maintenance projects. Medicine Road and Douglas Drive are examples. Minnetonka Boulevard in St. Louis Park is an example of a roadway where parking lanes were converted to shoulders, and the corridor is now signed as a bike route. Eleven foot lanes are used where allowed.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked whether current speed limits are reconsidered in these projects. Craig noted that the state sets speed limits based on an internal process, not based on legislation.

The county or a city can petition to lower the speed limits. Decisions are based primarily on actual monitored speeds on a roadway. Speed limits are set at the 85th percentile speed (85% of vehicles travel at or below this speed) but also are based on crash history and access points such as driveways. Petitions to request a lower speed limit are usually initiated by city council action. Steve Elkins noted that 4 to 3 conversions tend to lower actual driving speeds, which makes it easier to lower the speed limit. Commissioner McLaughlin suggested that the Task Force discuss this at a future meeting.

Reconstruction Projects: Lake Street, Lyndale Avenue, Silver Lake Road, and a trail project on County Road 19 were shown as examples of pre-Complete Streets reconstruction projects that incorporated Complete Streets designs.

Commissioner Dorfman asked whether we could include bike lanes if Lyndale Avenue was reconstructed under our Complete Streets Policy. Craig Twinem noted that there was not enough room to include bike lanes and preserve the tree canopy, and there is a low traffic parallel route. Scott Bradley said that Complete Streets means planning for systems, not necessarily all modes on all roads. Karen Nikolai asked how we determine whether a parallel route is an adequate alternate or not, and how we work with other jurisdictions to ensure bike facilities on these parallel routes.

Bill Neuendorf noted that there are a lot of destinations on Lake Street and other county roads, and that we need to consider whether people can access these destinations when it's determined that a parallel bike route is better than having bikes on the county road. The Midtown Greenway only has access to Lake Street at specific points that can be unclear for users. Margot Imdieke Cross asked what considerations are given to sidewalk surface, based on the negative experience with enhanced scoring on Lake Street. Craig responded that sidewalk surface and scoring of the pedestrian zone of sidewalks are now part of the critical review of projects.

2. Hennepin County Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) applications

Tom Johnson, Hennepin County Transportation Planning Division Manager

TAB funding is the responsibility of the Met Council and the Met Council TAB. Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding has five categories, including a bicycle and pedestrian category. The bulk of the funding is spent on A-minor arterials. Most county roads are minor arterials, such as Lyndale and Lowry Aves. The Met Council is conducting a study of A-minor arterials. In this round of funding, the criteria allow points for the age of the roadway in the augmenter category which is a subcategory of a- minor arterials, which targets needed reconstruction of roads in disrepair. Previous solicitations gave points for adding capacity, but now they are trying to rely less on expansion and instead to support reconstructing old roads.

Hennepin County's applications will concentrate on inner ring roads. Projects will be selected from the county's 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Projects will probably include provisional, unfunded CIP projects. These projects have been identified in the CIP, but are not scheduled because they are unfunded. Peter McLaughlin asked how the county determines when a project is designated as a maintenance project and when it's an improvement. Tom responded

that mill and overlays are operations projects. If the project takes out the base of a roadway, then it is a CIP project. There are 6-8 years between mill and overlay. The base lasts about 50 years.

CIP projects are selected based on pavement condition, safety, capacity, and complete streets criteria. Public Works recommends projects to the Hennepin County Board. Communities and cities have input on the budget process.

Bill Neuendorf asked how TAB criteria is revised. Steve Elkins said that it is revised every other year. TAB wants to revisit criteria after this year. Proposed criteria gets public input and formal review. County staff and commissioners are on the TAB. Commissioner Callison represents Hennepin County on the TAB. The Met Council approves the criteria, but never goes against the TAB.

3. Minnesota GO and Research and Evaluation of Complete Streets in Minnesota

Carissa Schively Slotterback, Assistant Professor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs

Minnesota GO: The U of MN is working with MnDOT on an approach to public input that is different than usual. The goal is to develop a 50 year vision for transportation in Minnesota. The vision will inform a statewide multimodal transportation plan. The visioning process includes a steering committee, online activities, advisory groups, public workshops, public hearings, and workshops for high school students.

The public workshops include scenario planning, engaging participants to think about what life will be like in 2061 and the implications for transportation planning. Participants are asked to consider 3 alternative futures and how transportation can help us get to where we want to be. The scenarios were developed based on a series of interviews with experts, online discussions, and advisory groups. The website (www.MinnesotaGO.org) has videos, polls and a document library.

Complete Streets Guide to Planning and Implementation: This research is funded through MnDOT's Local Roads Research Board. The U of MN is conducting research to learn lessons on better planning and implementation of Complete Streets at regional, community, corridor, and project scales.

The project will examine transportation systems at community and regional scales, focusing on:

- Approaches to analysis, evaluation, and prioritization
- Process and decision making
- Coordination across jurisdictions, disciplines, and departments
- Funding and maintenance

The project will conduct 10 national in-depth case studies and review local models. The product will be a guide to Complete Streets planning and implementation. It will be an integrated resource for agencies and communities moving from planning to implementation. There will also be a project website and three regional training workshops in fall 2012.

4. Integrating Complete Streets at MnDOT

Scott Bradley, Director of Context Sensitive Solutions, MnDOT

Peggy Reichert, Statewide Planning and Analysis Director, MnDOT

Scott Bradley: Complete Streets at MnDOT

MnDOT has funded research on the implications of modifying state aid standards. The project will gather data on other case studies and evaluate changes based on operations, safety, and other issues.

At MnDOT, Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Solutions have been aligned. The Complete Streets feasibility study was completed in 2009 and determined that Complete Streets were feasible on the state level. MnDOT formed a Complete Streets external advisory group helped inform that study, and statewide Complete Streets legislation was passed in 2010

For more information, visit <http://www.mncompletestreets.org/gfx/MNCompleteStreetsLaw.pdf>. Also visit the MnDOT Complete Streets site for more information on what the state is doing to implement Complete Streets: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/completestreets/index.html>

Challenges:

- Coordinating across jurisdictions. The Transportation Research Board Strategic Highway Research Program is funding a pilot multi-jurisdictional Complete Streets planning process in Grand Rapids, MN to help figure this out.
- Allocation of space: how much space and for what?
- Managing speed is highly important for accessibility and safety. There is an 85% likelihood of pedestrian fatality in crashes with vehicles traveling 40 mph. If you create a physical and visual environment consistent with reduced speed, then speed limits can be lowered.
- Operations: comparing Marshall Avenue in summer and winter demonstrates that lanes narrow and bike lanes disappear in winter.

Peggy Reichert: Statewide System Plan Update

MnDOT is beginning the Highway Investment Plan in January 2012, informed by the long range vision from Minnesota GO. Estimated needs for state highways are \$65 billion, but forecast revenues are \$15 billion, meaning that there is a \$50 billion gap. Priorities include:

- System preservation
- Bridge program
- Pavement conditions
- Performance characteristics
- In the metro, optimize existing systems rather than building more lanes
- Complete Streets
- Access improvements
- Sustainability

MnDOT is committed to multimodal transportation and Complete Streets, but how will we do it? MnDOT needs to collaborate and learn from others: Wisconsin and PennDOT. Mill and overlay projects will probably be more common. The big questions are: Who will pay for projects? Who will maintain projects? What is the right sized next step for MnDOT?

5. Action Items

- Staff will distribute information on transportation terminology
- Task Force members are encouraged to review the Hennepin County Complete Streets checklist and provide feedback to craig.twinem@co.hennepin.mn.us by the end of the day on **Friday, July 8.**
- Staff will follow up on suggested agenda items for the next meeting
 - Discuss the process of changing speed limits
 - Review taskforce member feedback on the Complete Streets Checklist used for Hennepin County Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects
 - Leave room on the agenda for additional items from the task force

6. Next meeting

Due to summer scheduling conflicts of several attendees, we will **CANCEL** the July 11 meeting. The next meeting is Monday, September 19 from 2-4 pm in C-2350 at the Hennepin County Government Center.

Meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations are now online at
www.hennepin.us/activeliving