

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Online

Present: Abigail Johnson, Neal Baxter, Julia Curran, Peter Vader, Adelheid Koski, Aaron Berger, Paul St. Martin, Donna Hemp, Christopher Hoffer, Barbara Olson, Sarah Goodell, Chris Ross, Matthew Steinrueck; Matthew Dyr Dahl, Chris Kartheiser, Julie Danzl, Emily Kettell, Sonja Burseth, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Heather Gillich, Heidi Schallberg, Emma Pachuta, Millicent Flowers, Mackenzie Turner Barga

Chair Abigail called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM and read the official notice regarding online meetings.

Millicent read the roll to account for all those present.

Approval of the Minutes for the December and January Meetings

Donna moved to approve the minutes for both meetings: Christopher seconded. Approved.

Welcome and Orientation to the PAC—Matthew Dyr Dahl

Matthew welcomed all members, new and returning. For the next hour we got acquainted. Matthew asked everyone to introduce themselves to the group, referring to these questions:

What are you most looking forward to on the PAC for new members

What caused you to join the PAC all members

What is your most and least favorite walk all members

What is your favorite aspect of the PAC returning members

After everyone had a chance to speak, Matthew said a few words about the Public Works website, and the major divisions of the Department. For the work of the PAC, the major divisions are Transportation Planning and Programs (Matthew and Chris's division); Transportation, Engineering and Design (which takes the ideas of TPP division and works out the details); Transportation, Maintenance and Repair (which builds the streets, repairs them and plows in winter); and Traffic and Parking Services (which manages the flow of all modes of traffic—via signals, striping and signs—and also manages parking).

For the business of the PAC, Millicent manages communication, and Chris supervises the subcommittees.

The purpose of the PAC is to advise the City Council and the City departments about all aspects of walking and rolling. To do this, we primarily craft resolutions, which we send up to the City Council. These resolutions are most often generated in one of PAC's subcommittees. The subcommittees are also the venue where PAC members hear details about projects and programs that have an impact on the walking environment in Minneapolis. The subcommittees carry on the bulk of the PAC's business, and it is in the work of the subcommittees that the PAC wields most of its influence.

PAC has a two-tiered membership. The 15 citizen members represent the city's pedestrians, and vote

on resolutions and other business. The agency members are staff from the University, the public schools, county and state government, and other agencies. They bring information and insights from their agencies to the PAC and take back the PAC's concerns and suggestions.

Members should be familiar with the City's LIMS website for access to the agenda, and with the PAC's website in order to refer to minutes and resolutions from previous meetings.

Members are expected to attend the monthly PAC meeting, and at least one subcommittee meeting each month.

Elections of PAC Officers

Matthew and Abigail explained that we will hold elections in July, at the beginning of the next term. They went on to describe the role of each of the seven officers of the PAC: the chair, vice chair, secretary and the 2 co-chairs of each subcommittee.

Abigail moved to re-appoint the current officers until the July 2021 PAC meeting; Barb seconded. Approved.

Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee Report—Barb Olson & Aaron Berger

We have 5 resolutions from the December meeting to present. Christopher recommended reading all the resolutions, then voting on them as a slate. Aaron read the resolutions on the Osseo Road, 2nd Street NE, West 31st Street, Franklin West and Farview Park sidewalk gap projects. Next Aaron read the resolution on the Lowry Avenue NE reconstruction project (from the January meeting). Neal seconded the motion to approve all 6 resolutions. Approved.

Programs & Policies Subcommittee Report—Julia Curran & Peter Vader

We heard from the planners of the Upper Harbor Terminal project, on the bank of the Mississippi River in North Minneapolis. Peter read the resolution on the Upper Harbor project; Neal seconded. Approved as amended.

We also heard from MnDOT's Lisa Austin about using the vacant land under highway bridges. And we had a preliminary discussion of the CIP list. We will continue to discuss Capital Improvement Projects, and work on a list for the next fiscal cycle at the February meeting.

Abigail: for some insight, see my e-mail dated January 29.

Announcements

Abigail: Don't forget about the social time we will schedule at the beginning of each subcommittee meeting.

Chris K: We'll soon send out e-mails to invite PAC members to update their connection to TEAMS and the PAC meetings.

Julie Danzl: Our youngest pupils will be returning to school on Monday, February 8. The school system will continue to provide weekly food boxes to all who need them.

Adjourned at 5:54 PM.

Resolutions

Osseo Road Reconstruction

The Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee feels that the Osseo Road Reconstruction design does not do enough to connect neighborhoods currently divided by this high-speed road. A design speed of 35 miles per hour is unacceptable for a reconstruction of any street in Minneapolis. The design speed should be 25 miles per hour. As stated in our earlier resolution, we ask for all legs of all intersections to be built to accommodate legal pedestrian crossings, specifically the west side of the intersections with 45th Avenue N and Queen Avenue N and the east side of the intersection of 44th Avenue N/Penn Avenue N. We further reiterate that NACTO road width guidelines for urban streets with transit call for travel lanes no wider than 11' in all project sections. The currently designed medians are incompatible with appropriate lane widths and pedestrian crossings. Further, removal of the staircase to Osseo Road unnecessarily removes a pedestrian amenity. We also ask for pedestrian wayfinding for the stairway connection and an accessible alternative.

2nd St. NE/3rd Ave. NE Pedestrian Improvements

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports the design for pedestrian safety improvements at 2nd St NE and 3rd Ave NE. We would like to see crosswalks at the stop signs on 3rd Ave to improve pedestrian safety. This design should be a model for improving pedestrian safety throughout the city.

West 31st Street Pedestrian Safety Improvements

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports the bumpouts for pedestrian safety at West 31st Street. If possible, we would like to see further narrowing of 31st Street with temporary materials until a bicycle facility is installed.

Franklin Avenue West

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports the overall concept of the 15% design for the Franklin Ave West reconstruction. We ask for consideration of RRFBs at the intersection of Bryant and Franklin, to provide greater visibility for pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and features such as a handrail to support pedestrians with the slope of the hill.

Farview Park Sidewalk Gap

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee supports the current design for the Farview Park sidewalk gap. We would like to make sure the sidewalk is legible for users with vision impairment.

Lowry Avenue NE Reconstruction

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee requests that Hennepin County and Minneapolis fully research protected bike lanes or an off-street, multi-use trail for the Lowry Avenue NE reconstruction from Johnson to Washington Streets to provide all-ages connection between the community and the river.

Upper Harbor Terminal Draft Coordinated Plan

The Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee largely supports the changes to the Upper Harbor Terminal Draft Coordinated Plan. In particular, we support the following strategies, listed on page 31 of the plan, and hope they will be reflected in the final plan as well as the signed community benefits agreement:

- Continue to work with Metro Transit to expand new local, limited stop, and/or express service to the Upper Harbor site

- Build accessible pedestrian and bike connections between Northside neighborhoods and the site
- Upgrade bicycle lanes to off-street trails that are separated from sidewalks and pedestrian paths
- Provide wide boulevards that offer separation from vehicle traffic and allow for healthy trees, landscaping, furnishings, public art, and pedestrian level street lighting
- Design safe streets that prioritize and encourage safe travel behaviors

We offer conditional support for the following strategy, again on page 31, but urge all entities to commit to removing urban highways entirely as part of restorative justice and climate action, rather than continuing to invest money and effort into token measures to address both.

- Continue to explore funding and partnership opportunities with MnDOT to reconfigure the Dowling Avenue Bridge and construct a new non-motorized bridge across I-94

We are also excited about the planned multi-modal hub that integrates biking and other sustainable modes on the site. We remind the City that true walkability requires the ubiquitous presence of seating/benches (not affiliated with transit stops) and public restrooms, shelter/shade, water, charging stations for electric wheelchairs, and food sources.

Additionally, the PAC is disappointed that the plan continues to incentivize driving by planning for and providing parking. We strongly oppose the 420-stall parking ramp on parcel 7A. With 586 parking stalls identified in the plan, it continues to provide incredible incentives for driving. To comply with its own Complete Streets policy, Transportation Action Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Climate Emergency Declaration, the City must remove the vast majority of this parking from the plan (retaining parking for people with disabilities). We support keeping any remaining parking near the edge of the site in order to reduce conflicts between people driving and people walking, using wheelchairs, or biking.

Reserving so much space for cars is especially egregious given that the parking ramp is not planned to be operational until at least 2025, when the City should be well into massive emissions reductions. Approving a parking structure of this nature would set the City back decades and would represent a massive failure to act on the policies that are the first steps necessary to slow climate change globally and create resiliency locally.

Lastly, the PAC strongly urges the City to ensure a small maximum block size in this rethinking of the urban grid. While we support high density, mixed use development for the benefits to walkability, super-blocks, as seen in stadia around the Twin Cities and in much of the North Loop, discourage walkability.