

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting minutes

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Online

Present: Neal Baxter, Abigail Johnson, Julia Curran, Raina Urton, Harmony Anderson, Austin Holik, Barbara Olson, Paul St. Martin, Matthew Steinrueck; Matthew Dyrdaahl, Millicent Flowers, Chris Kartheiser, Emma Pachuta, Eric Bauer, Suzanne Murphy, Steve Mahowald

Resolutions:

Graco Park Resolution, PAC meeting of October 2021

The PAC has the following comments about the Graco Park concept development:

1. Ensure that the at-grade crossing at Plymouth Avenue is made safer by reducing vehicle speeds and volumes, along with crossing improvements.
2. Movement through the park should be comfortable on a bike or on foot because this park is a major regional connection for people walking and biking.
3. Supports the underpass so long as climate resiliency measures are put in place.
4. Any additional parking should only be used for handicap access.
5. We are opposed to building a pedestrian walkway to Hall's Island, in the interest of preserving this area as a pure wildlife refuge.

Complete Streets Resolution

The Pedestrian Advisory Committee appreciates the time that Public Works staff took to update the Complete Streets Policy. We have a few edits, highlighted below. Overall, the PAC thinks that the Complete Streets Policy is fine, the problem lies when we see designs that do not prioritize pedestrians let alone meet the Policy's definition of a "Complete Street". Historically, a design is sent forth without clearly advancing the modal hierarchy laid out in this policy. That being said, we hope that the updated Policy will support designers' increased adherence to the modal hierarchy.

- On page 2, in the fourth bullet point, change "advance" to "achieve"—it is important that no framing allows us to seek half-measures as acceptable.
- In the "Policy Framework" section on page 3 (the third paragraph, after the bullet points), we suggest adding winter and winter maintenance concerns as part of prioritizing pedestrians (in addition to "snow storage," which is something else).
- In the paragraph on page 5 starting with "Individual routine maintenance activities...", winter maintenance must be included. Winter maintenance for sidewalks and bike lanes, especially given the increase in the number of yearly freeze/thaw cycles, must be addressed as a priority.
- On page 6, "Planning" paragraph two: Reiterate that automobile travel delay will be deprioritized in transportation decision making and add language around the importance of improving year-round travel times for people walking, biking, and especially using transit.
- Also, on page 6, in "Design" first paragraph, last sentence: "Level of service is not a

measure of success on our streets but may be evaluated as required by project partners or funding sources.” Minneapolis Public works should state they will not pursue projects that require car-centric designs in order to secure funding, if they hope to achieve a truly safe and equitable transportation system for walking, rolling, biking, and transit.

- And finally, on page 7, last paragraph: “Public Works’ goal is to obtain more data to identify and understand issues...” sentence about winter maintenance is unclear. We do not need more winter maintenance data on how dangerous and impassable sidewalks can be in winter. This should be made clear in a policy. Data collection and planning can be done in internal Public Works documents, but the policy should make clear that the city intends to act.

Chair Abigail called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM and read the official notice about on-line meetings.

Millicent called the roll; 8 voting members and 6 agency members were present.

Approval of the Agenda and the Minutes

Neal moved the agenda and September's minutes; Julia Curran seconded. Approved.

Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee Meeting—Barb Olson

The committee focused on one project at our September meeting, the new Graco Park, along the Mississippi River in Northeast. Staff brought 3 proposals and 3 concepts. They've done a lot of outreach for this project, in person and on-line. The project is scheduled for building in 2023. All three plans include a flood barrier in the park and a wildlife sanctuary on Hall's Island which will have no walking paths for people.

Concept #1 provides a lot of green space, and also a building for the Park staff and one for the community. Improvements are planned at the Selby & Plymouth intersection, including traffic calming strategies.

Concept #2 adds kayak rentals, a single building at the park's north end, a dock overlooking Hall's Island and a bee lawn. Street improvements will include storm water treatment.

Concept #3 has one park building with public toilets, public art, native prairie and woods, and intersection improvements.

We asked about the lighting for all three concepts, and were told that lighting will be somewhat dim, for the benefit of the wildlife. We also questioned the bike & pedestrian underpass in Concepts 1 and 3, which will be useless if climate change raises the water level. Carrie Christensen will take our climate concerns back to staff.

We were told that a natural habitat on Hall's Island, with no access for pedestrians, was the detail most often asked for by the public.

The PAC discussed this project, while framing a resolution. Neal moved the resolution, and Abigail seconded. Approved.

Programs & Policies Subcommittee Meeting—Julia Curran

At our September meeting, the committee heard about the Complete Streets update. Changes will include aligning storm water infrastructure policy in harmony with the MPCA's guidelines; treating all micro-mobility vehicles like bicycles; ending the exemption procedure; and adding Green Stormwater Infrastructure to the modal hierarchy graphic.

We heard next about a study conducted by the University of Minnesota, which showed that high-visibility enforcement can lead to greater pedestrian safety.

Finally, Allison Bell of Public Works informed us about the Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Landscaping Programs. These programs are expected to reduce and clean stormwater runoff before the water reaches the Mississippi River.

Austin: Why can't the City use automated enforcement of traffic laws?

Paul & NB: Some years ago, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that this stratagem was illegal.

Mahowald: I've heard that Public Works was planning to push the legislature to legalize this, in 2019.

Abigail: Let's take this issue up at a P & P meeting soon.

Curran read a resolution (#2 above); Abigail seconded. Approved.

Announcement

MD: The Lyndale Open Streets event will take place on Sunday, October 10, from 11 AM to 5 PM. Lyndale will be closed to motor traffic from 22nd Street to 54th Street.

Adjourned at 5:13 PM.