

## **St. Anthony Park Community Council Transportation Committee**

February 26, 2019 (minutes by Betty as transcribed by Pat)

In attendance: Scott, Ray, Kim, Karen, Betty, Pat, guests Alden Hoffman from SSAP, plus presenters noted below. Absent: Liam, Patty, Gordon

John Mark Lucas has resigned from the committee to take a job overseas for a year or more. Charlie Christopherson has taken a leave of absence through the end of 2019, which in effect means he is resigning from the committee with reinstatement to come when he can attend again.

### **1. Presentation by guests Dr. John Hourdos and Peter Dirks from the Minnesota Traffic Observatory (MTO) at the University of Minnesota:**

MTO started in 1994 and is now funded completely through research projects for clients, usually cities, counties, or MnDOT. They do observation-based research on traffic, safety, public transit, freight traffic, and transportation planning. Involves a lot of cameras, coding the footage. Based on four steps: observation > modeling > simulation > real world. (Understanding > Experimentation > Implementation.) Traffic engineers try to “guide the flock,” work with human inclinations, rather than force people to do things they will not do. Need proof (through simulation) that something will work before spending money to implement.

Projects they highlighted:

**A. Pedestrians and bicyclists crossing at roundabouts:** They studied the big Richfield roundabout at Portland and 66<sup>th</sup>, which is 2 lanes. As a signalized intersection, it had been the highest fatal crash corner. MTO installed many cameras, recorded 12,000 ped/bike crossings. They only saw 4 close calls (all bikes). 41% of vehicles yielded, but just 23% of the ones that were exiting. Pedestrians experienced a 10–11 second delay on average when there was a vehicle present (plus/minus 10 seconds, worst case 30 seconds), which sounds bad, but contrast that with an average wait of 30–45 seconds with a signalized intersection as previously with 45K ADT and a 90-second cycle. But we also have to consider the psychological stress of waiting for cars to stop when the pedestrian has the right of way, plus much worse use case for visually impaired people (who can't tell that cars have stopped).

**B. Impact of pedestrian-activated crossing systems:** Painted crosswalk costs \$1K every 2 years, RRFB costs \$5K + \$1K/year, HAWK costs \$150K + maintenance. Big difference in cost, effect on the road. HAWK is a legal signal, RRFB is same as a crosswalk, just enhances visibility. Studied (cameras, coding) 31 sites around the state. Who yielded, time required. Yield rates analyzed with and without activation, some it made not much difference, others it did. Most effective at sites without good sight lines or advance warning signage of the crosswalk.

**C. Bike facilities:** Found that when facilities clearly demarcate bike space (such as a solid white line) there is less likely to be crossover of the lanes or cars queuing behind bikes. Sharrows, share the road signs don't work. Peter Dirks' master's research is now studying the effects of more structured delineators (bollards, curbs, walls as on the Franklin Ave. bridge, parking protected lanes). We want to hear his results!

**D. Safety of stop lines:** Does putting a painted stop line before a stop sign add to stopping compliance and therefore safety? Costs \$1K to maintain a stop line. No research to support that the lines have an effect.

In general, MnDOT maintains an online library of MTO research it has funded. Their blog (Crossroads) highlights research. MTO has 2-page write-ups of each piece. Research project costs range from \$100–150K.

## 2. **Territorial Road at Seal and pedestrian safety:**

We were then joined by Elizabeth Stiffler from Traffic Engineering at St. Paul Public Works. We gave her the background that about 2 years ago the committee wrote a letter to Public Works saying there was no ADA-legal path from Seal Hi-Rise to Raymond Station. The city then installed a wheelchair ramp on the south side of the Seal/Territorial intersection, which improved things in the non-snow months. The crossing is an unmarked T intersection, however, and trucks use the street (though it is marked as NOT a truck route), with traffic coming from the light on Raymond up a hill. People using walkers and in wheelchairs or on scooters are not very visible from a height perspective when they cross. A Stop for Me event was held there in June 2018, and was very successful. The police officers present commented on how fast the traffic was moving for the scale of the street. There was an in-street pedestrian crossing sign placed in spring by Public Works, gone in summer, back in fall. We would like that back in place for 2019 spring/summer/fall.

### **What we would like from Public Works:**

In the shortest term, SAPCC has bought two reflective ped Xing signs with posts and we would like Public Works to install them in the boulevard at the crossing. In a slightly longer term, we and the residents of Seal and others nearby would like a stop sign, and/or a crosswalk with temporary bumpouts (similar to the treatment at the Ravoux Hi-Rise). We would also like to get a traffic count on Territorial; it doesn't look as though one has ever been done. If it could identify truck numbers as part of the overall count, that would be good.

In the medium term, it may make more sense to add a sidewalk on the north side of Territorial between Seal and Carleton, with a curb cut to cross Territorial at Carleton (ideally on the NE corner to the Ray, but if necessary on the NW corner to Dogwood/Studio on Fire). That would make more sense as a spot to put a crosswalk and even a stop sign, since it is a block farther from Raymond. This stretch of street-front is owned by the townhouse complex north of Territorial, which is not thrilled with the idea of paying for a sidewalk. Elizabeth will get a general idea of what the cost would be to build a sidewalk and put in a curb there; a few trees would have to come out, which would affect noise for the town house residents. As things are now, people who live at Seal have no good connection to go east. They have good connection to the west on Territorial and north/south on Raymond (when there's not snow), but that is a less direct route to Raymond Station.

A mill and overlay is on the schedule for Territorial from Berry to Raymond for 2020. How much improvement for that segment can be done for peds/bikes when that is done? That stretch of road includes the 280 crossover.

SSAP is identified as a high priority area in the Pedestrian Plan for sidewalk infill. Other topics in

SSAP that we identified with Elizabeth: winter conditions (people in wheelchairs in the middle of the streets), truck traffic given the high concentration of truck transfer/warehouse businesses.

Elizabeth asked what is/has PED been doing in a macro sense for this part of SSAP? The committee said it doesn't seem to be much, other than the Raymond Station Area Plan. Lots of attention to the Dominion/Franklin area, which was needed, but seems only site by site in the other/larger area. Half of SSAP is surface parking lots. The five-story self-storage being built at Transfer and University is a travesty (two jobs, no street presence, right at a major intersection).

**In summary:** Our committee's priority is ADA compliance and pedestrian safety around the Green Line stations. SSAP has private streets that have no sidewalks right by Raymond station and stairs in the way of the best path from Franklin development to Westgate. Our priorities may not completely match the Pedestrian Plan, which prioritized a few SSAP streets (Kasota, Pierce Butler) that are nowhere near transit. High numbers of new housing units are being built everywhere in SSAP, people are walking dogs, we have vulnerable populations, there are large number of semis moving through, and we have a high number of sidewalk gaps on both sides of streets.

**3. Luther Seminary working group:**

The committee approved Betty Wheeler as its representative to the Luther Seminary working group.

**4. Alley conditions and winter recycling pickup:**

Betty raised the idea of mapping the alleys that have not gotten recycling pickups with the continuous snow this year. Ray will contact Eureka to see if they already have mappable data on which alleys weren't picked up and how many times. Eureka did send a smaller truck after the second week of nonpickup, as per the contract. Karen noted this was a peak problem/edge case, not necessarily something to misshape the whole contract. Mitra's communication said it affected just 6% of households, citywide (seemed like a higher percent in NSAP at least). But another view is that climate change may make these kinds of disruptions something that happens more regularly in winter.

**5. Franklin Ave. traffic calming:**

Karen will draft a letter and send to the committee, hoping to have it at the board meeting for approval, coordinating with Prospect Park about traffic calming treatments on Franklin at Bedford and/or Curfew.

**6. 2019 committee goals:**

Pat distributed a draft of our goals, using the 2018 goals with the ones removed that we completed last year. (Also attached here.) Everyone should read it and we will discuss next meeting.

Next meeting: March 26, guests will be planners for the Cleveland rebuild (2020 and 2021).