

## **SAPCC Transportation Committee**

November 27, 2018

Held at Lori's Coffeehouse

Present: Pat Thompson, John Mark Lucas, Karen Nelson, Gordon Murdock

Guests: Cleveland Avenue project team — Jenna Fabrish (Ramsey County, project manager), Bill Klingbeil and Wole Johnson (Kimley-Horn, project consultants).

The basic goals of the project are pedestrian accessibility, access for all mobility modes, and replace out-of-date infrastructure as needed (sanitary sewer, utilities, water main).

In addition to the formal info session in September, a popup input session was held during parent conferences at SAP elementary a few weeks ago. Four priorities were given (bike lanes, parking, wider sidewalks, boulevard trees) with people asked to pick just two. Bike lanes, wider sidewalks, boulevard trees were the top priorities, parking was last.

Input and information gathering will continue through April 2019, with design from May–Dec 2019. Construction will be in two phases 2020 and 2021 with a 3-4 week shutdown during State Fair time. Plans on staging of the work (which sections when) will be available by October 2019.

This is a good time to feed into the planning process, since by April/May 2019 they will be done with looking at alternatives. The process currently includes a monthly stakeholders meeting with the U + municipalities (St. Paul, Falcon Heights) + watershed district.

### **Studies the project team has done so far:**

- Retaining-wall status. The one by Bailey is sound, while the one at the corner of Larpenteur is not, plus needs ADA work on the sidewalk adjacent. Will be removed.
- Utility analysis shows need to replace the iron water main, in addition to the lead service lines to houses. The water main pipe is on the west side of the street.
- Tree analysis. Because the water main is close to the west side of the street, that means it's likely many trees' roots will be damaged when the main is replaced. October 2019 is when they will have a tree removal plan. (Need to remove varies depending the tree species; wide root spread vs. taprooted.)
- Parking analysis is in process, which includes Raymond and the side streets, plus info from the U on their lots. Data was gathered in October 2019.
- Storm water: The project is required to add underground water retention, possibly located on the U's property, or under Cleveland – not known yet where it will be located.
- Sanitary sewer: So far they believe the sewer lines were relined in 2008, but need to confirm – if they were (or some sections were) lined, those don't need to be replaced.
- Traffic counts were done in May 2017 using video capture, then counted from the video. Video was taken at Larpenteur, Buford, and Commonwealth. Does the traffic count include traffic speed? No, probably not.
- Speed study will be done. MNDOT sets the speed on the road. The planners warned that this sometimes results in a higher speed limit. [The Transportation Committee will pursue this question.]

### **Answers to specific questions that were asked:**

The right-of-way from sidewalk to sidewalk is 70' for most of the project length. Along the Lawn (from Buford to Carter) it may be narrower, with the U owning more of the land on the east side. This width does exist in the area north of Hoyt.

Adding bumpouts at intersections is generally part of the planning approach, because they shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians, but if the bike lanes are in the street, the crossing distance will be similar width to what it is currently. An off-street bike facility makes it possible for the street crossings to be narrower.

The traffic signal at Buford is out of date and doesn't meet the side-street traffic/pedestrian count requirement to replace it. But it can remain in place. (This implies that adding a signal at another crossing, such as Commonwealth or Carter, is not an option, since Buford probably has the highest crossing numbers.)

The idea of closing Buford on the west side was raised as a solution to the complicated nature of that intersection. People in the room generally looked askance at that, since Buford is the one intersection where you know you can cross safely from the west. Later, the idea was raised of closing Buford on the east side of Cleveland, with U of M buses using Buford Circle to turn around and then reaching the Transitway without using Cleveland at all.

Bike facilities along Cleveland are part of the St. Paul Bike Plan — it's currently a missing link between the Grand Round to the south on Cleveland and Raymond and good infrastructure to the north in Falcon Heights. When a major connecting street is updated, the general set of goals includes adding some type of bike facility.

#### **The cross sections that are currently under consideration:**

- On-street bike lanes on each side with no parking.
- On-street bike lanes on each side, keep parking, but lose some of the boulevard on both sides.
- On-street bike lanes on each side with pocket parking in some areas
- Off-street bike facility (two-way) on east side of street.

Sidewalk width is currently 5' on the west side – Saint Paul prefers 6', the U wants 7' (the sidewalk along the Lawn is currently much wider than that). Space of 1.5' required from curb to sidewalk, 2' space between curb and bike facility. 8-10' width required for off-street bike facilities.

If the final design includes a two-way bike facility on the east side of the street, the crossing point for bike traffic needs to be carefully determined from the existing one-way bike lanes on Raymond and the shoulders on Cleveland north of Larpenteur.

#### **Areas of concern raised by neighbors:**

##### *Bike-related*

Could there be an off-street 8' mixed use pedestrian/bike facility on the U's side of the street on the U's land, with 6' sidewalk on the west side? (Such a bike facility would require at least 2' of space to the curb.)

Is it possible to add bike access on Raymond instead of Cleveland? Others identified the problems with that idea (it doesn't directly connect with the campus, it's hard to make a left to go north on Raymond at the south end, Raymond ends at Dudley, and wherever a rider leaves Raymond it will require crossing Cleveland to the U or to go further north on Cleveland at Dudley).

Safe bike access on Cleveland from Como to at least Commonwealth (through the big curve) is especially crucial, because at Commonwealth you can go onto the campus. The large curve at the south end of Cleveland is particularly dangerous for bicyclists. Anything other than safe access on Cleveland to that point on Commonwealth requires a forced crossing of Cleveland to reach the U.

*Pedestrian-related, which intermixes with traffic and traffic speed-related concerns*

Speed of the street is a big concern for these attendees. Southbound traffic, if the driver made the light at Buford, sometimes tops 40 or into the 40s, then the drivers brake hard when they come to the curve.

Crossing as pedestrians or bikers, or pulling out in a car, you are unable to see because of parked cars too close to the intersections. One person at the meeting and one who sent an email said they don't let their children cross Cleveland.

Is it possible to include a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at Commonwealth or Carter and at Dudley?

Don't remove marked crosswalks where they already exist.

There has been an increase in large truck traffic because of GPS redirection if Highway 280 is busy – can trucks be banned from Cleveland?

### **Parking-related**

Parking is quantifiable. How many spots are there, how many are needed?

Houses need parking spots in front of them, need to get deliveries, have visitors. The block south of Commonwealth has a dead end alley, particularly needs parking on street for access.

Parking setbacks (maintained with bumpouts) at intersections would improve visibility for people pulling out across/onto Cleveland, and make pedestrians more visible to drivers.

Parking acts as traffic calming, and some neighbors are sympathetic to students needing free parking.

### **Other concerns:**

Remember the residential nature of the west side of the street! It's an edge, but still part of the neighborhood to the west.

Northbound Cleveland left turn onto Raymond is too close to Como, seems like there would be more crashes from rear-ending there. Kimley-Horn will look at crash data. Also an intimidating place to turn on a bicycle because you can't see to the north (because of the curve).

The east-side curb/boulevard edge is much too high compared to the street height. Is grading possible? The planners are aware of this. Sidewalk elevation will be constant, intersections need to be ADA compliant – road height is what will likely change (upward).

Lighting will be "elevated" beyond where it is now. The U has a brighter standard than St. Paul does.

Trees: It seems not many people will miss the Ginkgos because of the smelly fruit.

### **Recommendations:**

University participation: the whole east side of the project is the U. They have room! Pedestrian and bike traffic, parking is all because of the U. They are the magnet – can the committee invite U to a public discussion.

It was suggested that SAPCC contact U of M community relations staff to ask the U to think of this beyond the technical level. Also consult our council member (and our county commissioner) if community needs are not rising to the fore in this complex process with many stakeholders.

People were urged to visit the Ramsey County website to sign up for updates:

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transit/future-road-construction-projects/cleveland-avenue-reconstruction>

SAPCC Transportation Committee will post key updates to the SAP list serve, and some info may be included in the SAPCC newsletter.