

Questions/Comments

January 12, 2022

Community Development Committee meeting

Yellow highlights are questions answered in the discussion. *Responses are provided in blue italicized text.*

From Peter Schmitt to Me (Direct Message) 06:43 PM

Stormwater question that I heard from Chipotle employees: Lake Chipotle is kind of a running joke in the neighborhood. With this redesign, will there be opportunities to improve that drainage and water management?

The City enacted a new stormwater ordinance in 2021 that requires more aggressive treatment of stormwater in terms of both water quality and water volume. The Hennepin Ave project will include sustainable stormwater (green infrastructure) features, including both surface and underground treatments, to improve water quality and reduce runoff. As part of the overall stormwater analysis, the design team is working with city staff to identify and address existing drainage issues.

From Peter Schmitt to Me (Direct Message) 06:48 PM

Question that came from Kowalski's employees: Good to see the Fremont connection switched to two-way traffic to allow for better access the Kowalski's parking lot (since the median changes some access opportunities). Can staff speak to other, similar improvements that are being made outside of the direct corridor with business success and access in mind?

Changes to other streets such as one-way/two-way or street closures were considered during the development of the recommended design. At this time, the need for operational changes to other streets have not been identified.

From Katie Jones she/her to Me (Direct Message) 06:51 PM

Question - when Becca said that "volumes" meant that the bike infrastructure needed to be protected, which volumes - bike or car - drove the need for protection?

The need for a protected bikeway was driven by city policy and the volume of vehicle traffic on Hennepin Ave. The Transportation Action Plan shows Hennepin Avenue on the All Ages and Abilities bicycle network, which means the bike facility is physically separated from vehicle traffic on busier streets. A striped bike lane or bollard-separated bike lane would not be considered for this street.

From Katie Jones she/her to Me (Direct Message) 06:54 PM

Also - how will other "regular" bus routes (i.e. 17) work along the corridor? Will they also only stop at the BRT stations?

No. In addition to using the BRT stations, the other bus routes will also stop at the local bus stops at 24th St, 27th St, and Lagoon Ave.

From Peter Schmitt to Me (Direct Message) 06:55 PM

With BRT maintaining high ridership and travel times significantly improved, is there consideration for continuing the bus lane south of the Uptown Transit Center through Lake Street to maintain that efficiency?

A number of design options were evaluated between Uptown Transit Station and Lake St. The recommended design best balances the mobility needs for both transit and vehicle traffic. In addition, the METRO B Line arterial BRT will operate on Lagoon Ave and Lake St. The recommended design on Hennepin Ave provided the best opportunities to provide efficient transit service on both corridors.

Similarly

From Ethan Cherin (he/him) to Me (Direct Message) 07:16 PM

How can the dedicated bus lanes be continued through both Franklin and Lake??

A number of design options were evaluated on the north and south ends of the corridor. A dedicated bus lane is included for southbound buses north of Franklin Ave. The Hennepin South project doesn't extend north of Franklin Ave for northbound traffic. South of Uptown Transit Station, the recommended design best balances the mobility needs for both transit and vehicle traffic and also recognizes the need for efficient transit movements on Lagoon Ave/Lake St for the METRO B Line arterial BRT.

From Peter Schmitt to Me (Direct Message) 07:00 PM

Will the left turn lanes also feature left turn lights?

Left turn phasing (arrows) at intersections with left turn lanes will be further evaluated in final design.

From Mary Hartnett to Me (Direct Message) 07:02 PM

Could you explain more about the district parking?

District parking means that curb space in the bays along Hennepin Ave and along the nearby side streets will be managed to support the need for deliveries, pick-up/drop-off, and customer parking. This could include short term parking/loading zones, parking meters and other strategies. Typically, the city would evaluate these types of zones based on a request from an individual property owner; the intent of the district parking approach is to take a more holistic approach to managing the parking resources and this is a new process for the city. The city will also be developing a Curbside Management Policy in 2022 that will help define the strategies to manage the on-street parking resources on and near Hennepin Ave.

From Katie Jones she/her to Me (Direct Message) 07:02 PM

Can Allan speak to the dead-ending/disappearance of the dedicated bus lane south of the transit center? How does this affect the flow of buses?

Both transit and traffic travel times were evaluated in developing the recommended design between Uptown Transit Station and Lake St. The recommended design best balances the mobility needs for both transit and vehicle traffic and also recognizes the need for efficient transit movements on Lagoon Ave/Lake St for the METRO B Line arterial BRT.

From Nick Bonestroo to Me (Direct Message) 07:02 PM

Q: Can you elaborate more on what the proposed on-street managed parking for adjacent blocks means? Shaded in yellow on one of the graphics.

District parking strategies could include short term parking/loading zones, parking meters and other strategies. Typically, the city would evaluate these types of zones based on a request from an individual property owner; the intent of the district parking approach is to take a more holistic approach to managing the parking resources and this is a new process for the city. The city also wants to work with property owners to creatively use and manage their existing parking resources, which the city does not control.

From Doug S to Me (Direct Message) 07:03 PM

I'm curious to hear more about the traffic needs at lagoon and lake that ultimately mean the bus lane ends at those choke points. Wouldn't that reduce throughput of the BRT?

Traffic volumes between Lagoon Ave and Lake St are not as high as other parts of the corridor, but Lagoon Ave and Lake St have the highest traffic volumes crossing Hennepin Ave, the block lengths on Hennepin Ave are very short, and there are much higher volumes of turning traffic between Hennepin Ave and Lagoon Ave/Lake St. The combination of these factors meant that more vehicular lanes were needed so that traffic would not back up through multiple intersections on Hennepin Ave. In addition, the METRO B Line arterial BRT will operate on Lagoon Ave and Lake St, so more lanes on Hennepin Ave provided the best opportunities to provide for efficient transit service on both corridors.

From Peter Schmitt to Me (Direct Message) 07:04 PM

With the green line LRT construction, businesses were provided with financial assistance to help cover some of the lost revenue that tends to happen during construction. Will similar support systems be available during this construction?

After a layout is approved and the project moves into final design, the City will continue to work with businesses specifically on efforts to support them during the two-year construction timeframe. Construction staging plans will be developed with input from businesses and will ensure continued access during construction.

From Katie Jones she/her to Me (Direct Message) 07:05 PM

Please share that I LOVE the new downtown Hennepin bike lane design. Its a bicycle facility that I can rely on being free of snow.

Thank you for the comment.

David Cook

What conditions were there on the federal funding that the city received? In what ways could changes or delays to the project jeopardize that federal funding?

The federal funding does not have requirements in terms of specific design elements included in the recommended design. However, the federal funding does have a specific timeline when the funds need to be used. Further delays to the project could jeopardize the \$7.5 million of federal funds for the project.

From Ethan Cherin (he/him) to Me (Direct Message) 07:07 PM

Can you identify any examples either locally or nationally of situations where improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure resulted in a decrease in business viability along corridors where on-street parking spaces are reduced?

There have been a number of studies conducted on the economic effects of improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities. One of the studies did include some corridors in Minneapolis. The results have been mixed, with some corridors showing positive benefits and others being neutral.

Sam Penders

I am worried that the bus lanes will be blocked by cars. How will we keep cars out of the bus lanes? For example, a small curb between the bus and travel lanes, or on-board traffic enforcement cameras like NYC uses?

The project team did evaluate a number of transit design options, including center-running transit lanes and curb-separated outside transit lanes. Ultimately, these options took up more space and were not feasible while also fitting in all the other desired elements in the corridor. Enforcement of the transit lanes with cameras is currently not allowed under Minnesota law. The city acknowledges that monitoring and enforcement of vehicles in the transit lanes may be needed.

Sam Penders

I noticed that the new crossings of Hennepin at cross streets like Girard do not have marked crosswalks on both sides in the proposed layout. Will these be marked to make the crosswalks safer?

The city has specific criteria for marking crosswalks, which include crossings at traffic signals and flashers, school crossings, and crossings to parks. Unsignalized crossings on Hennepin Ave would not have marked crosswalks.

From Regina Burstein (she/her) to Me (Direct Message) 07:10 PM

Are there any design elements in addition to some curb cuts at intersections to make sure drivers making right turns can see people walking and biking across the street?

Other design elements at intersections that will improve safety include: curb extensions to narrow the crossing distance; smaller curb radii which result in slower turning speeds; "bend out" bikeway design which provides about 6 ft of buffer between the Hennepin curb line and the crossings, which improves sight lines between the driver and the person walking or biking; raised crossings will also be evaluated at locations without traffic signals to prioritize the crossing and slow vehicle speeds.

From Jason Garcia they/them to Me (Direct Message) 07:10 PM

Are there any plans for parking permits, district parking, or something like that for residents in the provisional parking areas?

There are not currently plans for new critical parking areas near Hennepin Ave, but the city is committed to collecting data and monitoring the need for parking management in the neighborhoods.

From Regina Burstein (she/her) to Me (Direct Message) 07:13 PM

There are dozens of surface parking lots and ramps within half a block of Hennepin that drivers don't seem to know about. Any consideration for additional signage to direct drivers to those parking lots?

The city wants to work with property owners to creatively use and manage their existing parking resources to maximize the opportunities for these facilities to benefit customers and visitors to the corridor. There may be opportunities for wayfinding/signage to allow these resources to be better used.

Pete (he/they)

Perhaps a good comparison is the district parking adjacent to the Victoria & Grand Avenue shopping and business area in Saint Paul?

Yes, this is one example of district parking. The Victoria & Grand area in Saint Paul has some differences from Hennepin Ave, and Minneapolis may not use the same parking strategies or tools.

Sam Penders

Shouldn't the transit lanes continue all the way to Lake, instead of ending at the Greenway? Congestion will be highest approaching Lake due to turning vehicles, and transit lanes are for bypassing congestion

Both transit and traffic travel times were evaluated in developing the recommended design between Uptown Transit Station and Lake St. The recommended design best balances the mobility needs for both transit and vehicle traffic.

David Czaia

I joined late so I'm sorry if this has already been asked, but has the city considered converting the bike lanes on Hennepin south of Lake Street into a two-way bike path? The current transition seems very difficult and confusing.

Operational changes could be considered south of Lake Street, which means how the existing street and sidewalk spaces are used. However, the city isn't planning to change the locations of curbs in this section of Hennepin Ave and a two-way bike path is unlikely to be feasible.

From Katie Jones she/her to Me (Direct Message) 07:14 PM

Can you point to studies/examples of similar street reconstructions here or in other cities and the economic impacts of them? (if not, no need to answer the question)

There have been a number of studies conducted on the economic effects of improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The results have been mixed, with some corridors showing positive benefits and others being neutral. We do know that infrastructure investments in a corridor often lead to increased private investments.

From Leslie Modrack to Me (Direct Message) 07:15 PM

Help me understand why the two way bike lanes are such a major part of this project. Yet only 5% of people ride bikes?

Street reconstruction is an opportunity to transform a corridor and work towards the city's goals on climate change, safety, and equity. The Transportation Action Plan shows Hennepin Avenue on the All Ages and Abilities bicycle network, which means the bike facility is physically separated from vehicle traffic on busier streets. The recommended design for the Hennepin Ave project is highly policy based and reflects the city's adopted policies and goals.

From Leslie Modrack to Me (Direct Message) 07:25 PM

Please give detail --- you mentioned you will be making more attempts to listen to the local businesses. Its critical that you do so. When will you be reaching out to these businesses - give specifics.

The city has held multiple meetings with individual businesses, property owners, the Uptown Business Association, Uptown Special Service District, and Lowry Hill Special Service District. The city is committed to continuing to work with businesses on the corridor.

Kevin

city policy on tree retention/replacement to ensure we can maximize benefits of existing/new street trees?

The design aimed to preserve existing trees and provide enough boulevard width for new trees wherever that was possible. This included narrowing the medians to provide more boulevard space. Where the medians are wider for a crossing refuge, greening in the median is also a consideration and the city will need to work through the maintenance of those spaces.

Chelsea Rabb

I understand the policy focus on bicycles, but from a user experience perspective, do we know what proportion of residents in this area bike in winter months vs. summer months?

A bicycle facility is needed year-round, as reflected in the city's Complete Streets policy and Transportation Action Plan, to safely support all modes integrated into street designs. A connected network of protected bike lanes makes it feasible for people to bike year-round.

From Nick Bonestroo to Me (Direct Message) 07:30 PM

Q: What happens / what is Plan B if this plan is not approved? Does the project die or go back to the drawing board for revisions?

Public Works intends to bring forward the recommended design to the city council, who can approve the design or provide direction to city staff on how the project will proceed.