



MEETING MINUTES

Golden Valley Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Task Force

Meeting #4 – March 8, 2017

Present:

Council Member: Steve Schmidgall

Staff: Jason Zimmerman, Emily Goellner, Marc Nevinski, Jeff Oliver, and consultants Mike Kotila and Heather Kienitz

Task Force Members: Billy Binder, Kelly Grissman, Dawn Hill, Hubert Humphrey III, Paul Klaas, Paula Pentel, Dawn Peterson, Laura Pugh, Wendy Rubinyi

Absent: Robert Mattison

1. Call to Order

Schmidgall called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Task Force reviewed the meeting minutes from January 11, 2017. Pugh noted that the spelling of Vail Crest Road should be changed to Vale Crest Road.

MOTION: Moved by Binder, seconded by Grissman, and motion carried unanimously to approve the January 11, 2017 minutes with spelling correction.

Continuation of Task Force or Committee

Zimmerman noted that there have been requests from Task Force members to continue meeting as implementation of this plan takes place. He noted that City Council must decide whether to form a new committee since the Task Force is disbanding after reviewing the plan presented this evening. Hill asked if there is a way to reinstate the Sidewalk Committee and invite Task Force members to join. Oliver and Zimmerman noted that the Sidewalk Committee last met five years ago and has since disbanded. Pentel made a motion to recommend that the City Council reinvigorate the Sidewalk Committee as a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee that meets on an ad-hoc basis to review specific projects. The motion was seconded by Binder and he noted that the Task Force can be proud of this plan and the next step is implementation. The Task Force members would be the appropriate individuals to contribute to a committee in some form. This would provide a more formalized mechanism for public input, rather than individual emails to elected officials as each project occurs. Schmidgall noted that he is supportive of a committee if it meets on an ad-hoc rather than a regularly scheduled basis. Nevinski noted that the plan that is being reviewed tonight will be used frequently as a guiding document by City Council, staff, and Commissions as budgets are formed and projects are planned each year.

MOTION: Moved by Pentel, seconded by Binder, and motion carried 8 to 2 to recommend the City Council consider the establishment of a committee to monitor implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian network improvements. Members Grissman and Pugh voted no.

3. Bike and Pedestrian Plan

Goellner presented information on the timeline for this planning process and reminded the Task Force that the final deliverable will be a set of recommendations that will be incorporated into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan upon approval by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2017. Goellner asked the Task Force members to attend the meeting on July 10 when the proposed Transportation Chapter is presented to Planning Commission.

Goellner summarized the work that has been completed by staff since the last Task Force meeting, which included:

- Adding more details to the Policy Plan
- Adding bicycle routes on Winnetka Avenue (south of Western), Canadian-Pacific Regional Trail, Zane Avenue, Lindsey Street, Lilac Drive, 26th Avenue with connection over Light Rail/BNSF railroad
- Removing bicycle routes 23rd Avenue, Wisconsin Avenue, Duluth Street near Mendelssohn Avenue, and Decatur Avenue
- Adding sidewalk recommendations to the map as well as sidewalks and bicycle routes that are under construction in 2017-2018 to the map
- Adding Pedestrian Bridges to the list in the intersection treatment toolkit document
- Creating a list of the recommended improvements and adding potential funding sources and partnerships as well as general cost estimates

There was discussion about the difference in project costs when a road is resurfaced/repaved or when it is reconstructed. Oliver clarified that the City no longer uses sealcoat. Mill and overlay is the standard technique, but the City continues to explore other materials and techniques as technologies evolve. Binder noted that it is important that the City regularly communicate with the public about road resurfacing or road reconstruction projects. Schmidgall reminded the group that the City website provides timely information on these types of projects.

Grissman asked for two additions to the map of recommended bicycle and pedestrian improvements. First, she requested that a multi-use trail be shown on Duluth Street between Lilac Drive and Regent Avenue. The map currently shows that the existing sidewalks and trails will be utilized, but they will need improvements in order to provide the same facility as planned for the segment east of this location along Golden Valley Road. She also requested that the multi-use trail on Hidden Lakes Parkway extend through Theodore Wirth Regional Park until it reaches the Luce Line Regional Trail.

Klaas asked for clarification on the cost estimate document that was handed out at the beginning of the meeting, particularly as it pertains to recommendations on Glenwood Avenue. He and Binder noted that staff at Hennepin County have suggested that buffered bicycle lanes may be the appropriate treatment for Glenwood Avenue since protected bicycle lanes were not feasible. Oliver and Goellner stated that standard on-street bicycle lanes are being recommended in the planning document, as a minimum, and that the City and County staff will consider buffered bicycle lanes as they proceed with the design process. It was not clear whether there would be sufficient right-of-way width for the entire length of the roadway, which can be investigated in further detail and precision during the design process rather than during the Comprehensive Planning process. Binder asked about the plan for Glenwood Avenue or other roadways when the road is

being reconstructed in the future. Grissman pointed to the policies listed under Goal 2, Objective 4, stating that the City will “utilize existing road width when roads are scheduled for pavement replacement to implement bicycle facilities and reevaluate facility options when roads are scheduled for reconstruction and build multi-use trails or buffered/protected bikeways as well as sidewalks when feasible.” Nevinski added that the cost estimate document will help staff as budgets are formulated for implementation of this plan. It was clarified by staff that Hennepin County will pay for the capital cost of installing on-street bicycle lanes, but more conversation about financial responsibilities is required with Hennepin County if the City requests a design that is above and beyond the facility that Hennepin County has planned for its own roadway.

Grissman requested that the following changes be incorporated into the policy plan:

- Include other agencies such as Three Rivers Park District and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board as well as language that emphasizes opportunities for partnerships in Goal 1, Objective 2
- Include prioritization of north-south connections across Highway 55 and Interstate 394 in Goal 1, Objective 3
- Include language in Goal 2, Objective 3 that encourages or requires facilities with as consistent of a design as possible for the entire length of the route in order to maximize usability

Hill questioned whether the City should require property owners to install sidewalks, as it is worded in Goal 1, Objective 2. Schmidgall clarified that this is standard practice in certain areas of the city, such as the area near Culver’s restaurant on 7th Avenue North and Decatur Avenue. Oliver noted that some remaining gaps in the sidewalk network in that area will be filled in this summer.

Pugh provided the following notes for the policy plan:

- Consider whether to continue using the word “facility” to describe bicycle lanes and other improvements because it might be considered jargon by some. If it continues to be included, it would be helpful to provide a definition for it and include a glossary of terms in the Comprehensive Plan
- Questioned why some roadways show a recommendation for a multi-use trail, but other roadways show a recommendation of bicycle lanes and sidewalks. Oliver noted that this coincides with the bicycle facility guidance document attached with the plans and that this decision was affected by the presence of existing sidewalk segments or the ability to reconstruct the road in the near future.
- Shared concern that even though a few signed bicycle routes were removed from the recommendations since the last meeting, the plan may still have a few too many signed bicycle routes that may not add a lot of value to the system or encourage a lot of new bicyclists or pedestrians to use the system since it’s primarily established for wayfinding. Wayfinding signs will be the most important component to the signage on these routes. Kienitz confirmed that wayfinding signage will be present on these routes and was incorporated into the cost estimate document. Oliver noted that prominent bicycle trails in nature areas such as those located in the General Mills Research Nature Area will be listed as a destination on nearby wayfinding signage.

Pentel asked if this plan addresses whether the City will continue to allow biking on sidewalks. There is concern that this creates confusion for users and can lead to accidents with pedestrians. The policy is also inconsistent with neighboring communities. Oliver stated that staff recommends that the policy remain in place as it is today, which allows biking on sidewalks. There are still enough safety concerns and a lack of

comfortable bicycle routes at this time. Pugh noted that users will have to continue making a safety judgment with each route they encounter, at least for the time being. Kienitz added that the bicycle network will become robust enough in the future to allow the City to feel comfortable changing this policy to better align with policies in neighboring communities. Grissman questioned whether signs could be installed that alert users to the policy, but Pugh added that the newsletter and other educational campaigns would likely be more effective and additional signs have the potential to add a lot of visual clutter. Humphrey stated that it would be best to prioritize the construction of sidewalks in areas with heavy traffic, such as the area where Golden Valley Road, Duluth Street, Regent Avenue, and Noble Avenue intersect. Oliver added that staff agrees with this priority and that the City continues to work with Hennepin County and Three Rivers Park District to obtain funding for improvements to this area. Grissman noted that this could be reflected in the policy plan by adding language to Goal 2, Objective 1. Humphrey agreed that the City should work to educate the public about the rules as well as etiquette, particularly when bicyclists use the sidewalk and encounter pedestrians.

Rubinyi requested that grade-separated crossings be included in Goal 2, Objective 1. Pugh agreed that this could be appropriate on Highway 55 as well as other principle arterial roadways.

Grissman asked whether there was an opportunity to improve the convenience of accessing the new Brookview Community Center by bicycle for those traveling from the northwestern part of the city. Pugh noted that it is likely too problematic to provide a facility through the golf course, but Goellner would ask the Open Space and Recreation Commission for their input.

Peterson requested that wayfinding signage include routes in neighboring communities with Boone Avenue north of Medicine Lake Road as an example route. Goellner noted that this could be added to Goal 2, Objective 3 in the policy plan.

Binder questioned whether the signed bicycle route recommended on the south frontage road of Highway 55 should be planned as a multi-use trail. Oliver clarified that the City can utilize the existing frontage road in the short-term to provide a signed bicycle route and that a multi-use trail could be considered in the long-term future when the road is reconstructed.

Hill questioned whether bicycle lanes were recommended for Winnetka Avenue and Grissman clarified that bicycle lanes were installed last year. Binder requested that the policy plan include language requiring the installation of thermal plastic stencils denoting a bicycle symbol on Winnetka Avenue and other county roadways. Oliver noted that the City should not commit to a particular type of stencil material like thermal plastic due to the constant evolution in these technologies. Kotila stated that language could be added about durable pavement markings instead.

MOTION: Moved by Grissman and seconded by Pentel to recommend approval of the Golden Valley Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (with changes made at this meeting) for incorporation into the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Adjournment

Moved by Schmidgall, seconded by Pentel, to adjourn at 7:25 pm. Motion carried unanimously.