

Transportation Committee

August 27, 2019

Present

Members Betty Wheeler, Pat Thompson, Scott Jensen, Kim Frair, Karen Nelson, Liam Stewart, Gordon Murdock, guests Tara Smith and Cecelia Ruesga

Minutes

The minutes from May 2019 were approved unanimously without amendment (Wheeler moved, Nelson seconded). The minutes from June 2019 were approved unanimously without amendment (Nelson moved, Wheeler seconded). The notes from July were distributed. Lacking a quorum that meeting, we did not approve them as minutes.

Gordon Ave. crossing on Raymond and traffic calming generally

Committee members thanked Cecilia Ruesga for writing with her concerns about drivers not stopping for pedestrians who have activated the rectangular rapid flashing beacon on Raymond at Gordon. She reported that drivers *do* stop when the school crossing guards are there, but not many stop at other times. There may have been some issue with the light remaining on for extended periods after the pedestrian has crossed, which would have the effect of training drivers to ignore the signal, but that appears to be fixed now.

We reviewed the history of Raymond Phase 3 for Cecilia, particularly that there used to be a median/pedestrian refuge in that spot but it was removed to allow room for bike lanes, and the RRFB was put in as a replacement of sorts to make the crossing safer. Also that a full traffic signal costs about \$250,000, a HAWK \$100,000 and an RRFB \$10,000. Stop signs, while cheap, are not recommended by traffic engineers partly because the crossing is so close to Como and the gas station, partly because of the nature of Raymond as an arterial.

We noted that we did a Stop for Me pedestrian crossing event at the Gordon intersection (before the RRFB was put in), and we could do another one in the future, possibly with SAP Elementary School participation. This raised the issue of Safe Routes to Schools and whether there is still interest within the school parent community on that idea?

We decided we should add a mid-street pedestrian crossing bollard at Gordon to the 10-year plan map to make the intersection that much more visible to drivers, given the effectiveness research Kimley Horn cited on the mid-street signage. These mid-street signs are removed in winter for plowing, and Public Works moves them around to different crossings because they say (maybe supported by research?) that drivers stop seeing them after a while. We don't think the issue is a shortage of signs (funding), but we aren't sure, since the signs do get destroyed at some rate. We should prioritize getting them installed at our specified locations from April–November at least.

How many people cross at the corner of Gordon? We don't really have data, though there may be been a count back before the Phase 3 rebuild. We could do our own count, possibly. Students participate? Maybe try to generate more letters from students, especially if there's a problem getting the mid-street sign installed.

We touched on the idea of getting video at crossings. Can we somehow install a camera to record, maybe post videos showing bad driver behavior? Pat mentioned the semi traffic on Raymond between Hampden and Energy Park at night also. This would be a fairly major undertaking, but if someone was interested...

Other issues with the Gordon/Raymond crossing: Two of the trees partially block visibility of the RRFB, especially northbound. Maybe the tree(s) can be limbed up at this point in their growth to decrease that problem. Betty will bring this up at the Environment Committee.

The mayor just noted that a new state law will make it possible to change the speed limit to 25mph citywide (on city streets... so basically on side streets + most of Como in D12). We should work to support that. Pat will update our Drive 25 handout from 2016 (final paragraph to reflect new state law allowing limit change). We should make a PDF of it available to people who are organizing to support the 25mph change.

Immediate things from this conversation: Cecelia and her mom are invited to the Stop for Me we have on Wednesday, September 4 (see below). They are encouraged to email the mayor, pedestrian coordinator, and our city council member about the 25mph speed limit change. Pat will send a letter to Fay Simer, the pedestrian coordinator, also supporting 25mph and mentioning the mid-street bollards as well, and cc our guests.

Betty moved that St. Anthony Park Community Council and its Transportation Committee commend and thank Cecelia Ruesga for writing to express her concerns about the crossing at Raymond and Gordon Avenues. Her on-the-street knowledge is very valuable to us. Karen seconded. Passed unanimously.

Stop for Me

Everyone who can is invited to this crosswalk awareness action. We'll meet up on Wednesday September 4, 4:30–5:30 p.m. at Cleveland at Dudley (next to the St. Paul Gym parking lot).

Kasota trailer parking lot

Pat informed the committee of a proposed trailer parking lot on Kasota across from the 280 south-bound ramps. Our committee's concern with this would be about adding northbound movements to that intersection, which is already overburdened, at least in rush hour and times like the State Fair. (Possibly the owners could have restricted hours on moving trailers in and out?) But the larger issues are environmental, because there is toxic waste on the site, currently contained, and its location adjacent to one of the Kasota Ponds.

Cleveland Ave. North rebuild

Councilmember Jalali Nelson has been working to represent SAPCC's point of view to the Ramsey County planners, Reuben Collins from Public Works as well. But it's looking like the planners will come forward with a design based on Option E. CM Jalali Nelson is working to minimize the parking to as few as two blocks, so that in effect it might be mostly like Option B (unprotected lanes, no parking) + the multi-use path on the east side. But the outcome is not sure yet. The planners are insistent that their public input process supports the conclusion they came to supporting Option E, plus the St. Paul Bike Coalition supported the in-street lanes. There will be a public information session some time in September where the planners will present the design, but the date is not known yet.

Karen Nelson moved (Liam Stewart seconded) that SAPCC write a letter expressing its displeasure that the Ramsey County planning team is disregarding our community council board's unanimous vote against unprotected, in-street bike lanes. These lanes will widen a narrow street, increasing crossing distances for pedestrians, cuing car drivers to increase speed, and creating double-parking opportunities and a dangerous door zone for bicyclists — all of which are the opposite of the city's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable users of the street. The motion passed unanimously.

Karen will draft the letter to include with this motion for the SAPCC board meeting (which is on 9/12). She will include reference to the experience of street conditions after the Raymond rebuild. She will circulate to committee members in time for that board packet.

Territorial Road

Xcel is currently doing work on the north side of the street on either side of the Raymond intersection, repairing the gas line. The road is on schedule for a mill and overlay in 2020 from Berry (the Minneapolis line) to Raymond. CM Jalali Nelson's aide Matt Privratsky says Public Works will restripe the rest of Territorial at the same time, even though the surface east of Raymond will not be improved. That means there will be bike lanes all along Territorial after the mill and overlay.

The Creative Enterprise Zone is applying for a grant to do public realm visioning and changes at Seal HiRise, and they asked if they should include within it a budget to do in-street traffic calming infrastructure at Seal and Territorial, possibly similar to the protected bumpouts that were done by Public Works and Public Housing through grant funding at Marion and Ravoux a few years ago. If they get the grant, expect to hear more about that. It will take buy-in from not just Seal residents, but Public Works and St. Paul Public Housing Authority.

We have been unsuccessful at getting the midstreet pedestrian crossing bollard at Seal installed this season, let alone getting the ped crossing signs installed that SAPCC purchased. We are still trying to get someone in Public Works to respond about that and the question on sidewalk cost on the north side of Territorial. Public Works did, however, put a pedestrian bollard on the north side of the east-west crossing of Cromwell and Territorial (just west of Joy of the People).

Franklin Ave. traffic calming

Karen has been in communication with the Prospect Park neighbors concerned with Franklin Ave. They have a different emphasis than we do, since they see Bedford as the key crossing and we tend to see Berry as key – while Emerald is where the existing stop sign is, in between the two. She will keep working on it.

Metro Transit Network NEXT grant proposal

Kathryn completed the grant proposal to Metro Transit, which would cover SAPCC doing two public input sessions on the future of how Metro Transit can better serve our area. We should know in September if that's happening or not; the sessions would be in October, with transcripts of the sessions and summary report filed in November.

Announcements

- The mayor announced proposed changes to Ayd Mill Road at his budget address. This four-lane city street (which is below grade, looks more like a highway, and is in very bad condition, requiring expensive maintenance) would become a two-lane street on the current southbound lanes, with a two-way bike facility and pedestrian path on the current northbound lanes. It would require about \$1.2m more to do this change than is currently budgeted for a mill and overlay. There is a budget input process at the City Council meeting tomorrow, 6 p.m. Anyone who wants to support this multimodal change is urged to attend. Pat plans to attend.
- SAPCC is a partner in the Extend the Greenway project that would modify an existing rail road bridge across the Mississippi to connect to the Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis. Everyone is invited to a bike ride on Sunday, Sept. 15 at 12:30 starting at Lake Monster Brewing to follow the train tracks west to the St. Paul end of the bridge to see what the bike path from the bridge through District 12 and in Prospect Park would be like. Note that this bike path, if built, could connect to the east to the off-road Ayd Mill Road path.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.