

Present: Scott Jensen, Ray Bryan, Pat Thompson, Bailey Waters, Kim Frair, Betty Wheeler, Abdirahman Ali (SAPCC intern), Joe Kendrick (Westgate resident), Kathryn Murray

Minutes of July 27, 2021 were approved (Wheeler/Bryan)

Rethinking I-94 letter sign-on request

SAPCC is asked to sign on to a new letter to MnDOT, drafted by the community leaders group, now that a preliminary draft of the Rethinking I-94 Purpose & Need Statement (and Goals, Evaluation Criteria, and Logical Termini) have been released for comment. The letter is 48 pages, with a 3-page executive summary. The three key points the letter makes about the draft P&N are:

1. Do not separate the Purpose & Needs into primary and secondary sections, with the primary needs emphasizing the roadway condition and vehicle mobility over the secondary needs about livability (noise, air quality) and community connections (over, under, along the highway).
2. Comply with state and city climate plans and goals to reduce vehicle miles traveled.
3. Rewrite the Purpose & Need to be more specific and establish better evaluation criteria, including climate effects and reducing vehicle miles traveled. The letter suggests this Purpose & Need statement as an alternative to what MnDOT has drafted:

To improve multimodal access while reducing vehicle miles traveled in the program area with infrastructure and facilities in good condition, and to reduce transportation-related fatalities and injuries, in a manner that reduces air and noise pollution in the surrounding communities, supports state, regional, and local climate goals and facilitates community cohesion and local economic prosperity without displacement.

The overall sense of the community response letter is that MnDOT’s narrative must change from “which of the alternatives has the least bad impact” to creating alternatives that support and benefit our communities.

Discussion: The letter raises the same issues our committee and the community expressed about Highway 280. Makes sense for us to endorse it. One question: Is there a way to allow for vision of flexibility for new transportation options? In this type of high-level document, combining primary and secondary needs and talking about multimodality is a way of allowing for that flexibility. Motion to approve signing onto the letter: Bryan/Waters was pass unanimously.

If individuals want to review the virtual open house that MnDOT has posted and provide individual comments, here are the links: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/I-94minneapolis-stpaul/openhouse/index.html>
<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/I-94minneapolis-stpaul/openhouse/feedback.html>

Is there interest among committee members in doing community outreach in SSAP about Rethinking I-94? Some upcoming events are Dual Citizen’s Blocktoberfest (on 9/11), our own events on Territorial, Chroma Zone 9/23 and 9/25. Karen suggested outreach at bus stops, light rail stations. Karen, Joseph are interested. Kathryn suggested Jessica could be involved. We should follow up on this if it is going to happen during the still-warm months.

Territorial (and Seal and Carleton) project

- After a brief overview of the project to bring everyone back up to speed (and its location)...
- The new sidewalk: the old well is now filled, so we are waiting for SPPW to finish the last couple of panels. They will also lay the bench pad at Carleton. They have done measurements there.

- Kathryn was taped for the AARP publicity/video. It went well. We will send photos to use in the video.
- Crosswalk on Territorial at Carleton: SPPW approved having a crosswalk, after we got a count of how many people crossed on a weekday between 4 and 6 p.m. and how many folks at Seal are over 65 or have a physical mobility limitation and at the HOA are over 65. We are lining up an artist to do a MUTCD-compliant crosswalk painting and Kathryn is working to get the permits to close Territorial to make that happen. The Right of Way office is not being responsive, unfortunately.
- Benches: the artist call has not gone out yet, but will soon. It will probably have a 9/24 return date. Will have an installation deadline of December 31. Bench specs will fit use by folks with physical limits (such as requiring arms on the bench), and should include being able to support heavier people.
- Seal Street painting – the artist call has gone out with a return date by Sept. 10. Will be selected as soon as possible after that through the subcommittee, then start work almost immediately.
- Community outreach on the Seal painting is needed for input gathering and the main painting event. The St. Anthony Green annual meeting is September 9, so that's an opportunity. Need outreach at Seal, but also The Ray, Union Flats, Hampden Square.
- Pre-event / input gatherings (when?). Jessica can help promote. Could be virtual or outside with Sunday Table pickup at Seal. Maybe one virtual, one outside?
- Painting event: October 2 (Oct 3, 9, 10 rain dates). Committee volunteers: **save those dates!** Timing outline, idea of how it will go:
 - the night before, close the street, set up popup tents (welcome tent, paint/brush station, cleanup)
 - very early morning, final setup and artist and small crew transfer design to street with chalk
 - artist and small crew outline design with 1" rollers
 - main event start time 10 a.m., more people come and start painting/filling in outline
 - painting through the day, end by 5 p.m.

Extend the Greenway economic impact report

Given the general sense at the federal DOT and Rethinking I-94, this seems like the best possible time to push for action and funding on extending the bike Greenway from Minneapolis to Saint Paul. The Midtown Greenway Coalition did an economic impact study and held an event to promote it on 8/21 at Lake Monster. Showed how much tax base has been built within half a mile of the Minneapolis Greenway since it was opened, essentially arguing building out more Greenway connection would pay back the investment. SAPCC is a partner organization in Extend the Greenway, which would run along the south edge of SSAP, connecting also to the U of M East Bank Campus, Merriam Park (and Ayd Mill), the Grand Round, and now the new park in Westgate as well, connecting across Wabash.

We should have more formal liaison with Extend the Greenway organization... It needs more St. Paul/Ramsey County leadership. The current Minneapolis mayor doesn't seem to have enough interest. Carter/Stark do. The Towerside spur to Stadium Village could be opened from Saint Paul even without the bridge connection. And the connection to the new park at Westgate on Wabash (St. Paul Parks has gotten a DNR grant for the part west of the bridge). They don't even remember to mention the Pelham/Grand Round connection. Joe may be interested in taking on that role. Karen will meet with him to go over background (maybe Bailey also) some time fairly soon (next couple of weeks, probably on a weekend).

Good background information on the study and Extend the Greenway generally (with links to the study) in this MinnPost article by Bill Lindeke:

<https://www.minnpost.com/cityscape/2021/08/now-is-the-time-for-a-revolutionary-midtown-greenway-expansion>

A couple of closing thoughts:

- Bailey was selected to be in the Met Council's Travel Behavior Inventory Survey. Reuben Collins, the bike coordinator from SPPW, was also.

- Future: Advocacy around TDM at the U, SPPS (and school streets idea at SAP Elementary)

Next meeting September 28, 7 p.m.