

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD
THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018**

**City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, March 1, 2018.

Chairperson Vionna Adams convened the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Vionna Adams; Board Members Lara Edwards, Amy Folberg, Daniel Isaksen Johanna Slanga, Vice-Chairperson Andy Lawson, Daniel Rontal

Also

Present: Alternate Board Member Katie Schafer

Absent: Board Member Michael Surnow

Administration: Lauren Chapman, Asst. Planner
Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer
Scott Grewe, Police Dept. Commander
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

Also Present: Julie Kroll from Fleis & Vandenbrink ("F&V"), Transportation Engineering Consultants
Brad Strader from MKSK

2. INTRODUCTIONS (none)

3. REVIEW AGENDA (no change)

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MMTB MEETING OF FEBRUARY 8, 2018

Motion by Ms. Slanga

Seconded by Ms. Edwards to accept the MMTB Minutes of February 8, 2018.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Slanga, Edwards, Adams, Folberg, Isaksen, Lawson, Rontal

Nays: None

Absent: Surnow

5. RESIDENTIAL STREET WIDTHS

Mr. O'Meara recalled that recently the MMTB reviewed conceptual designs for three local streets planned for reconstruction in 2018. A public hearing was held, and a final recommendation for the streets was passed on to the City Commission on a vote of 4-3. At the public hearing, several residents appeared before the board asking that Bennaville Ave. not be reduced in width (as proposed). A smaller number of residents appeared asking that the block of Chapin Ave. east of Cummings St. also not be reduced in width.

When the City Commission reviewed the issue at their meeting of January 22, 2018, several residents again appeared on behalf of Bennaville Ave., and additional residents appeared on behalf of the one block of Chapin Ave. After much discussion, the City Commission endorsed the recommendations of the MMTB, also on a vote of 4-3. As a result, the Commission asked the MMTB to study the City's policy of street widths in detail, and to send information and policy direction back to the Commission.

Staff summarized some of the paving history. Going back to 1977, streets were typically paved at 28 ft. between the two curb faces. When Andres Duany came to town in 1996 he advocated going down to 26 ft. and after extensive discussion the City Commission agreed to adopt 26 ft. as the standard road width with parking on both sides. That policy has been working well.

Unimproved Streets

From Staff's perspective, the current standards for unimproved streets have worked well. The current street width policy has been followed and very few if any complaints have been received from residents. Residential sections have been built at 26 ft. and commercial sections have been built at 36 ft.

Improved Streets

Historically, streets were rebuilt to match the conditions the width constructed previously. Reconstruction offers the opportunity to review the current conditions in light of current standards and consider if there is a potential need for change. Issues to consider include the following:

- Multi-Modal Improvements - If there are no specific recommendations in the Master Plan, the board will discuss improvements that can be included that would bring multi-modal improvements.
- Neighborhood Density - The board also considers the extent to which the land uses and density of uses on the street impact parking demand.

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- Owner Preference - While the City may have established guidelines and attempted to follow current best practices in the industry, the property owners living on the street often have preferences that are counter to the direction that best practice standards would dictate.
- Right-of Way - If the right-of-way is less than 50 ft., the board may consider a narrower street in order to provide the required space for City sidewalks and street trees.
- Traffic Issues - The board will conduct a review of the history of traffic issues on a street, which typically includes a review of speeding and cut-through traffic complaints.
- Trees - If a street has mature trees that can be damaged or require removal during a street reconstruction project, these factors need to be considered.

Brad Strader from MKSK summarized their research on national standards and best practices for residential street design and provided it for the board's consideration.

Mr. Strader said they looked at publications by the Transportation Research Board, Institute of Transportation Engineers, Urban Land Institute, National Association of City Transportation Officials ("NACTO"), and AASHTO. The 26 ft. pavement width used in Birmingham since 1996 seems to be the most common. An additional standard to be considered along with those named by Mr. O'Meara is that if the road is a transit route with busses, another foot of width is required.

Mr. Strader explained that NACTO is a more progressive city-oriented guide that is used by engineers and generally preferred by urban planners. They recommend a travel lane width of 9.5 to 10 ft. for urban areas. AASHTO covers all the roads in the country and recommends that travel lanes be at least 10 ft. wide and where feasible, 11 ft. or wider. They describe a 26 ft. wide pavement as a typical curb-to-curb dimension for residential streets. However, on a collector route such as Eton Rd., NACTO and AASHTO both recommend a wider lane.

The general findings are:

- Presence of on-street parking lowers speeds. If there is no on-street parking, speeds are higher;
- Block length, density, setbacks, street trees, traffic calming measures or how the road is designed influence both speed, safety, and also the volumes.

Ms. Ecker stated that the Fire Dept.'s widest tower truck is 10 ft. in width.

Ms. Edwards thought that the board might want to consider calling one of the current conditions "Parking Density" rather than "Neighborhood Density."

Dr. Rontal felt it would be instructive to look at the effective curb distance in the wintertime. Also, to consider the option of having alternating one side only parking.

Mr. Isaksen suggested that if a street isn't on the neighborhood connector route, maybe it deserves different treatment. Ms. Ecker added that the average residential street probably won't have a lot of bike improvements.

Ms. Slanga noted that the average life span of the streets is 60-90 years. She wondered if there has been futuring on what happens when different modes of transportation are adopted. The future is dynamic and the City should recognize that.

Mr. Strader responded the general feeling is that the transition of the fleet will occur over 20 years but it is unknown what the vehicles will be or how they will change our streets. Most of the current feeling is that autonomous vehicles will mean the amount of vehicles moving around will go up instead of down, but there will be less demand on parking. Also, there will be more curbside activity with vehicles hovering or people waiting. Over time, that might sacrifice some on-street parking.

Mr. Isaksen said it seems the low traffic residential streets that are the topic of today's discussion are least sensitive to changes in transportation modes. Whereas, the big arterial roads will be the ones most impacted by such a change when it occurs. Mr. Strader did not think it would change the curb-to-curb, but it might change the management of the parking along the street edge.

It was discussed that an additional criterion to consider when deciding whether or not to change a residential road width would be a unique land use, such as a school, historical neighborhood, etc. Mr. O'Meara noted there is currently a policy of 26 ft. for newly built roads. However, there never has been a specific policy on rebuilding existing roads. Ms. Ecker added there might be different standards for unimproved roads to go to improved, versus roads that are already improved. So that everyone doesn't have their own different idea of what should be done, standards will help the City, along with having criteria to make it clear when to vary from the standard.

Mr. Strader suggested the consultants work with staff to put together a packet of what a general standard might look like, how it might be modified, along with the factors to consider and what qualifications are needed to meet those factors. He did not think continuing research would be that valuable. All were in agreement.

6. BICYCLE RACK STANDARD IN TRIANGLE DISTRICT

Ms. Chapman informed the board that on July 14, 2008 the City Commission approved the streetscape furnishings for the Triangle District from Landscape Forms as the standard. The Commission wanted options that were more contemporary and metallic than the streetscape elements that are Downtown. The Planning Board came up with elements for the Triangle District that would frame and shape the District.

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The Commission decided to choose "Pi" style bike racks with a silver metallic finish provided by Landscape Forms. Several Pi racks were installed in the Triangle District; six racks are at Walgreens on Woodward Ave., two are at 700 S Adams, and three are at 735 Forest on Elm St. Landscape Forms no longer manufactures the "Pi" style bike rack. Ms. Ecker did not see a reason to take out the Pi racks because they match all of the other furnishings in the Triangle District. In most cases the need is to have as many racks for one or two bikes as possible and in as many different locations as possible.

Ms. Chapman described the Loop bike rack is a simple, sweeping circle with a twist. It belongs to the 35 Collection of integrated site elements created to encourage social activity in outdoor space. The "Sit" style bench and the "Pitch" style litter receptacle that the City Commission chose for the Triangle District are part of the 35 collection as well. Also, the street light has that same silver finish. The Loop rack is \$345.

The City Commission has allocated \$15,000 for bicycle parking. City staff identified thirty-six locations for new bike racks, ten of the locations are within the Triangle District. City Staff recommends bike racks be embedded into the surface rather than mounted onto the surface. Embedded racks tend to be more secure and more stable than surface mounted racks.

Several board members agreed that the Loop is nice looking; it matches the current aesthetic, and it is the right price.

Ms. Chapman noted that lower priced models such as the U rack and Circle rack that are lower in height make it easy to secure children's bikes. Dr. Rontal suggested the plastic molding over the top of the Key rack prevents the metal from scratching a bike frame.

Ms. Slanga said the Loop rack seems expensive. The U rack is cheapest at \$153. Ms. Chapman stated the U rack can have different finishes.

Ms. Edwards liked the Key rack because of its bright yellow color. Further a jazzy U rack might be low cost and high visibility. However she decided that maybe they want to pick the Loop rack which is the closest match to the Pi.

Motion by Dr. Rontal

Seconded by Mr. Lawson to recommend that the City Commission look at the Loop model bike rack because it fits the aesthetic, it is not breaking the bank, and it is embedded with a metallic silver finish. The Loop is produced by Landscape Forms and it is suggested as the new standard bike rack for the Triangle District.

Motion carried, 6-1.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Rontal, Lawson, Adams, Edwards, Folberg, Isaksen

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Nays: Slanga

Absent: Surnow

7. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA
(no public left)

8. MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Training Survey to be filled out MMTB members and turned in.

9. NEXT MEETING APRIL 5, 2018 at 6 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the board members adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Jana Ecker, Planning Director

Paul O'Meara, City Engineer