

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2014  
City Commission Room  
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, April 9, 2014. Chairperson Johanna Slanga convened the meeting at 6 p.m.

**A. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairperson Johanna Slanga; Board Members Vionna Adams, Stuart Bordman, Lara Edwards, Andy Lawson (arrived at 6:13 p.m.), Amanda Warner (left at 7:30 p.m.)

**Absent:** Student Representatives Daniel Evans, Rebecca Mendel

**Administration:** Lauren Chapman, Asst. City Planner  
Jana Ecker, Planning Director  
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer  
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary  
Don Studt, Police Chief

**Also Present:** Mike Labadie & Steve Russo from Fleis & Vandenbrink ("F&V"), Transportation Engineering Consultants

**B. INTRODUCTIONS** (none)

**C. REVIEW AGENDA** (no change)

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MEETING OF MARCH 5, 2015**

**Moved and seconded to approve the Minutes of March 5, 2015 as presented.**

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

**E. S. ETON RD. MULTI-MODAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Mr. O'Meara reported that the Griffin Claw Brewery at 575 S. Eton Rd. has applied for a permit to make modifications to the property which required a review by the City Commission.

The City Commission ultimately approved the brewery expansion but asked that this board study the S. Eton Corridor to see if there are ways to consider the multi-modal goals of the future as well as the need for more parking in that area. They specifically asked that the board consider angled parking on the north bound side (commercial side) and clearing all parking on the other side which is residential.

As was mentioned last month, S. Eton Rd. was resurfaced in 2009. Therefore, it should be assumed that the pavement will remain as it is for several more years. That said, modifying the pavement markings is an option that can be considered at this time.

Staff feels there are three viable alternatives for how the street could be organized: 1) existing; 2) modified as suggested in the Multi-Modal Master Plan; and 3) angled parking as requested by the City Commission.

Given the current demand for parking, and the interest in providing more if possible, it appears that both of the alternative options fall short. The Master Plan option would reduce total parking by almost 50%, clearly introducing a parking shortage that would impact the adjacent neighborhood streets. The angled parking option would resolve the sight distance issue for the six residential street intersections, but it would make the sight distance problem worse for four streets that are a combination of residential and commercial uses. Also, it would reduce the number of parking spaces available in the area where current demand is strongest (Hazel to Holland) by 43%, or 16 parking spaces. Further, S. Eton Rd. is part of a marked regional bike path system that has existed for several decades.

The angled parking option makes bicycling for northbound traffic more dangerous than it is currently. It appears that the angled parking option introduces as many problems as it solves. It is anticipated that the Multi-Modal Transportation Board will not have enough support to suggest any change from the current plan. However, since the Master Plan suggests that this segment of S. Eton Rd. be part of a neighborhood connector route, it is recommended that sharrows be painted this year as part of the City's routine pavement marking maintenance program. Also, yellow curb lines could be added to the busiest areas so that people would not park quite so close to the intersection, and that would help site distance.

Board members determined that parking should not be the only factor to consider along Eton Rd. Discussion contemplated what could be done low cost, beyond paint, that would make it safer for pedestrians to cross the road. They thought that bulb-outs could be added in some areas that would increase safety. The group wanted some recommendations that would leave the parking as it is, but

make it safer for pedestrians. Staff agreed to come back with revised drawings that depict the addition of sharrows, yellow curbs at the corners, and a white line that delineates the parking lane for the whole stretch from Villa to Lincoln. Also, staff will provide some crossing improvement options at key areas, such as at Lincoln, Bowers, and Cole.

There were no comments from members of the public at 6:35 p.m.

## **F. W. MAPLE RD. STEERING COMMITTEE**

### **1. Update on activities**

Ms. Ecker reported that on March 19, 2015, the Steering Committee met for the third time. Several members of the public attended this meeting. Mr. Labadie conducted a presentation to review his analysis of existing conditions in the corridor, and numerous complete street improvement options that he recommends for the corridor.

The Steering Committee asked Mr. Labadie and his team to gather additional information and return to the Steering Committee at their next meeting. He was directed to conduct a detailed crash analysis comparison between the existing four lane configuration and a potential three lane configuration on the corridor to attempt to quantify the safety improvements from an accident perspective, and to provide a speed comparison between known speeds with the existing four lane configuration and expected speeds with a future three lane configuration based on examples around the country. Additional information was also requested to back up the opinion that cut through traffic would not increase. Finally, staff directed Mr. Labadie to come back with line drawings at key locations illustrating the proposed layout of bike lanes and pedestrian crossings that could be added if a four to three lane conversion was constructed. That information will come before the Steering Committee next week, April 16.

In response to Chairperson Slanga, Mr. Labadie recommended that right hand turn-offs are not needed. His recommendation for a level of service for a road of this caliber is no worse than D. E is considered capacity, while F is beyond capacity. Board members went on to consider that perhaps the sidewalks are too narrow. However, Mr. O'Meara noted there is not money in the budget at this time to replace sidewalks. Chief Studt commented he doesn't know any bicyclist that would ride on Maple Rd. against the curb; however, a wide sidewalk might encourage bicyclists.

Mr. Labadie presented a computerized traffic model simulation along Maple Rd. during peak hours, showing the start of the proposed four to three lane conversion of traffic east of Cranbrook. He noted the delay is not changing very

much. The improvement is there is no speed differential between lanes as there is with four lanes. The vehicle in front dictates the speed. Traffic would be slower, but no increase in congestion. With the three lanes It will take roughly the same amount of time to get from Cranbrook to Southfield Rd. as with four lanes. With four lanes there is excess capacity, which may cause drivers to do the wrong thing. The signals have to be coordinated. They are looking at adding more signals and upgrading those that are existing.

It was discussed that garbage trucks would not be allowed to operate during peak hours. It would be tough to consolidate the bus stops and make them closer; however, buses are not frequent. Mr. Labadie summed up by saying there would be nothing but benefit and all it is is paint.

At this time Chairperson Slanga took public comments.

Ms. Alice Silver, 345 Shirley, explained she is an alternate on the W. Maple Rd. Steering Committee. She spoke in favor of exploring safety paths for bicycles on Maple Rd.

Mr. Jim Mirro, 737 Arlington, said he is a representative of the subdivisions, churches, and businesses in the neighborhood. He recommended that the City construct 5 ft. bike paths in the grass area between the road and the sidewalk rather than in-road bike lanes. If the City doesn't have the money for that, donations could be collected. His key points for the Multi-Modal Plan are as follows:

- A grass area bike path rather than a deadly in-road bike lane;
- More radar speed signs to reduce speeding over 35 mph;
- Flashing zebra stripes for crossings;
- Retention of four traffic lanes to maintain current traffic flow;
- Retention of traffic lights at Lakepark and Chesterfield Sts.

Mr. Mirro noted that his plan meets all government requirements for considering multi-modal changes and still keeping four lanes. He would like this position to be considered in parallel with the Multi-Modal Greenway Collaborative proposal. Further, he asked to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of this board.

Dr. Lionel Finkelstein, 577 Arlington, said that most of the people he knows have no problem with Maple Rd. as it is. He doesn't understand why the City would spend millions of dollars studying it when there is not that much wrong.

Ms. Michelle McDermitt, 892 Southlawn, spoke in opposition to the three lane conversion. She wondered how the Fire Dept. will assist people off of Maple Rd. As far as people traveling over the speed limit, there should be police ticketing them.

Mr. James Ryan, 822 Shirley, noticed that bike lanes are not shown on the graphic presented tonight. Secondly, the graphic shows traffic flowing in a very slow and controlled way. It doesn't happen that way. Also not revealed on the graphic is that during peak periods traffic goes up and down Shirley to take the shortcut from Maple Rd. through to Southfield. Narrowing the pipe from four lanes to three will slow traffic, and even more people will take the side streets. If safety is an issue, why is budget an issue. Safety should be the number one concern. The bus problem needs to be solved. Ninety-four percent of the residents are against the four to three lane conversion. Additionally Mr. Ryan advocated putting the bike path in the green zone area.

Ms. Florence Finkelstein, 577 Arlington, received confirmation that people, businesses, churches and the Fire Dept. were contacted for their input. A web survey was taken and charettes were held. Additionally, the Steering Committee has been set up to try to represent all of the different stake holders in the area.

Mr. Freemont Scott, 776 Arlington, commented that the Multi-Modal Plan makes the City of Birmingham look inhospitable to people who are traveling through. He doesn't think the plan was well thought out in terms of alternatives. Signs are needed to inform bikers of alternative routes through Birmingham.

Mr. Howard Christy, 225 Hawthorne, noted that bike lanes in the road are dangerous unless there is a barricade between the road and the lanes. Good bikers don't ride on Maple Rd., they will find another way. Going down to three lanes will initiate a lot more cut-through onto the side streets. There is a lot more cars cutting through now than was shown on the traffic model. Also, more bike racks are needed in town. Lastly, something should be done to limit large trucks from rolling through the neighborhoods.

Ms. Lynn Tree, 7905 Shirley, did not believe the simulation was accurate on the number of cut-throughs and trucks traveling up and down the neighborhood streets. She was concerned with EMS getting through. Further, she thought that cutting down the road to three lanes would encourage people to go through on the side streets.

Ms. Loretta Mirro, 737 Arlington, said she has a problem with the third turn lane when cars coming from opposite directions are in the lane at the same time. Also, she was concerned with the amount of cut-through traffic on Arlington. The depiction is not true; there is tons of traffic through there. With three lanes, traffic will cut through more and more.

Ms. Lois Ryan, 822 Shirley, thought three lanes will make things worse.

Mr. Alex King, 17301 Buckingham, Beverly Hills, noted that at times people on bicycles will take up the whole road, rather than staying in single file. Chief Studt

commented that you cannot legislate courtesy, either from a motor vehicle standpoint or from a bicycle standpoint. The road needs to be shared.

**G. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**  
(no one spoke)

**H. MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the chairperson adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

---

Jana Ecker, Planning Director

---

Paul O'Meara, City Engineer