

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD
THURSDAY, MAY 7, 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, May 7, 2014. Chairperson Johanna Slanga convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Johanna Slanga; Board Members Stuart Bordman, Lara Edwards, Michael Surnow, Amanda Warner (left at 8 p.m.); Student Representative Daniel Evans

Absent: Board Members Vionna Adams, Andy Lawson; Student Representative Rebecca Mendel

Administration: Lauren Chapman, Asst. City Planner
Mark Clemence, Deputy Chief of Police
Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

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

B. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. O'Meara introduced Austin Fletcher, the new Asst. City Engineer. Ms. Ecker introduced Michael Surnow who is the new Bicyclist Representative board member.

C. REVIEW AGENDA (no change)

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MEETING OF APRIL 9, 2015

Moved and seconded to approve the Minutes of April 9, 2015 as presented.

Motion carried, 5-0.

E. W. MAPLE RD. RESURFACING PROJECT

1. W. Maple Rd. Steering Committee Recommendation

Ms. Ecker took everyone through the process leading to this meeting. The W. Maple Rd. Steering Committee was formed in January by this board and asked to come to a conclusion relative to how the W. Maple Rd. resurfacing project should be completed with respect to the goals of the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan. One of the recommendations that the Multi-Modal Plan suggested for further study was to look at a four-to-three lane conversion along W. Maple Rd.; one traffic lane in each direction and a left-hand turn lane running throughout the middle. After setting their objectives, the Steering Committee reviewed all of the different options and passed a final recommendation at their meeting of April 16, 2015.

Mr. Labadie presented a power point that went through an inventory and analysis of existing conditions. The following points were covered:

- The analysis procedure that was followed is accepted practice;
- Daily traffic and peak hour turning movement counts;
- Existing level of service at intersections (a depiction of how well an intersection is processing the traffic - average stop delay per vehicle);
- Crash data from the last three years (typically more crashes at traffic signals or in places where the geometry is a little different);
- Vehicular speed data that has been collected by the City (he noted the 85th percentile speed which is that speed at which 85% of the cars are going at or less. This is higher than the 35 mph limit. The top 15% is the number that enforcement believes they can enforce);
- Gap analysis and queuing (how long the gaps are and whether or not a vehicle can enter from side streets or driveways);
- Sight distance analysis (important when trying to get out of side streets or driveways);
- Daily traffic and peak hour turning movement counts (average daily traffic is about ten times the p.m. peak hour number which is higher than the a.m. peak hour number that has no problems related to delay).

The chairperson took comments from the audience at 6:28 p.m.

Ms. Judith Keefer, 505 E. Lincoln, asked why the Chester and Bates intersections were studied. She received confirmation that traffic flows outside the study section were incorporated in order to ensure the influence would be typical. The worst congestion is at the Southfield to Chester, area and it backs up into the study corridor which is why it is relevant.

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Mr. Jim Mirro, 737 Arlington, said he represents the neighborhood organization. He noted the numbers show peak level of service and that is not what he just experienced in driving over tonight. Squeezing down from four lanes to two will decrease the level of service even more. Mr. O'Meara answered that right now traffic has gotten worse because Quarton Rd. is closed for repairs. Chairperson Slanga added they don't design for every exception.

Mr. Labadie presented more data.

The chairperson opened public comment at 6:35 p.m.

Mr. Jim Mirro said with respect to the crash data there will always be accidents. Taking the road down from four lanes to three lanes will back up traffic when an accident occurs.

Mr. Stuart Lockman, 315 Fairfax, received confirmation that the numbers for the three most recent years are cumulative.

Mr. Bill Dow, 1347 Yorkshire, asked Mr. Labadie whether he feels there is a serious accident problem in this stretch of road that has had 140 accidents in three years with 21,000,000 cars traversing it with no fatalities and no pedestrian injuries. Mr. Labadie responded that accidents happening at Southfield are a re-occurring problem that should be addressed. Accidents at Glenhurst and Larchlea are a pattern that should not be happening but it is a function of the geometry. A lot of accidents happen because the road is four lanes. With the three lane road the turns are separated from the through traffic, not causing the through traffic to have to stop.

Mr. William Spencer, 400 Yarmouth, questioned the data because the condition of the curb lane is deplorable and people don't drive on that road the way it was intended.

Mr. Jim Mirro asked Mr. Labadie why it is more important to incur all of the problems associated with going from a four to a two-plus-one lane road than to just solve the particular problems on Southfield. Mr. Labadie responded that Mr. Mirro is assuming they are going to create big problems to solve a few small ones. That is not the case.

Mr. Labadie continued with more information based on the existing road:

- Simulation model of existing conditions;
- Comparison of level of service between existing and future conditions which would be if the road went from four to three lanes (for the most part, there is no difference).

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- Proper length transition is needed when going from four lanes to three (in this case about 1,000 ft. is adequate distance to merge);

Chairperson Slanga invited questions from the public at 7:17 p.m.

Mr. Stuart Lockman noticed there is no level of service improvement in any of the areas they looked at. Mr. Labadie said for the most part there is no level of service change. Mr. Lockman inquired what the expectation is for the 85th percentile with three lanes; and what is the expectation in terms of back-up for the amount of time it will take to traverse from Southfield to Cranbrook as a result. Mr. Labadie replied that with the three lane conversion everything is set up for the 35 mph speed limit. If vehicles drive 35 mph they make the lights and create platoons that allow people to get out of the side streets. The time going through to Cranbrook will be basically the same during peak hours and non-peak hours.

Mr. Lockman then asked if this measures whether people will be able to make a left turn or go straight through the intersection from the side streets. Mr. Labadie replied there will be significant improvement over what exists today because of the better platooning that will be created with just one lane controlling the traffic. With the four lane road the cars are side-by-side and one car can go faster.

Mr. John Ryan, 505 E. Lincoln, said E. Lincoln is a disaster and he does not want to see that repeated with W. Maple Rd. Accidents will increase because people will tailgate, go too fast, and not pay attention.

Ms. Melissa Mark, 635 Puritan, received clarification the light at Lake Park will not be taken out.

Mr. Ed Genheimer, 706 Westchester, said the study totally ignores the impact on the surrounding area. The reduced number of lanes will force traffic through the neighborhoods. People who break the speed limit on W. Maple Rd. are now going to break the speed limit in the quiet neighborhoods.

Mr. William Spencer asked about how the gaps are mathematically calculated. His eye didn't see a lot of gaps developing. Mr. Labadie explained what the program does. Mr. Spencer thought the method of calculation was subjective rather than objective.

Ms. Loretta Mirro, 737 Arlington, asked how effective the flashing speed signs are in terms of slowing people down. Deputy Chief Clemence answered they don't have any effect on some people, but on others they do. Ms. Mirro asked if timing the traffic lights would have the same effect on a four lane road as it does on a three lane road. Mr. Labadie replied the speed is controlled and gaps are better on a three lane road where cars are driving along in single file.

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Ms. Nancy Thompson, 286 Puritan, said even if cars are platooned drivers turn right on red at the intersection and people can't get out of the side streets. She wondered if any studies have been made on how the four lane system could be improved rather than taking the road down to three lanes. With the left turn lane people may jockey into it several blocks ahead of their turn and use it as a driving lane.

Mr. Jim Mirro commented the averages shown on the simulation are not reality. They do not reflect such things as road repairs, churches being let out, etc.

Mr. Labadie noted that four lanes to three lanes is not uncommon across the country. It cuts the number of traffic conflict points in half.

Mr. O'Meara reported on the W. Maple Rd. Steering Committee recommendation. Staff and the consultant have discussed the recommendation, and propose modifying a few parts while still maintaining the spirit and the intent.

SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATION:

The Multi-Modal Transportation Board recommends to the City Commission that W. Maple Rd. between Cranbrook Rd. and Southfield Rd. be reconfigured as a three lane road containing two 12 ft. wide through traffic lanes, one 12 ft. continuous left turn lane, and two 4 ft. wide shoulder areas without bike lanes.

Further, to add the following additional conditions:

1. A six-month trial period to commence after the road is repaved with a formal study by the City to consider the effects of the reconfiguration. The W. Maple Rd. Steering Committee will reconvene in April 2017 to study the following measures, compared to the conditions that existed prior to the project, including:
 - a. Average speeds
 - b. Average daily traffic
 - c. Crash rates
 - d. Cut through traffic during the p.m. peak hour on the following roads: S. Glenhurst Ave., Larchlea Dr., Chesterfield Ave., Pleasant Ave., Pilgrim Ave., Arlington Rd., Shirley Rd., and Lakepark Dr.
 - e. Level of Service at the Southfield Rd. and Chester St. intersections

The Steering Committee will also actively solicit public input from all interested stakeholders as a part of the process, and make a recommendation for the future of the corridor to the Multi-Modal Transportation Board.

2. Installation of ADA ramps at all corners and crossings;
3. Crosswalk marking improvements to be made at the signalized intersections;

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4. Congestion relief improvements between Southfield Rd. and Chester St. including a right turn lane for eastbound traffic at Southfield Rd. and dual left turn lanes between Southfield Rd. and Chester St.;
5. Installation of marked crosswalks at the Chesterfield Ave. and Lakepark Dr. traffic signals;
6. The removal of low use bus stops;
7. The enhancement of higher use bus stops (concrete pad, benches, shelters etc.); and
8. The addition of enhanced technology in the existing signals to control and optimize signal cycle lengths and timing.

The board discussed the recommendations.

Mr. Bordman, who was a member of the Steering Committee, said he voted against the proposal because he is in favor of having bike lanes. Bikers will use the 4 ft. lanes even if they are not striped for bikes. Mr. Surnow noted that as a cyclist he does not agree with the concept of having bike lanes on W. Maple Rd.. However, the 4 ft. may become a defacto bike lane. Mr. O'Meara did not believe there would be a big rush of bikes out there.

Ms. Edwards, also a member of the Steering Committee, thought the road could accommodate bikers if there is that much extra room. Chairperson Slanga did not like the idea of having a six-month trial period with paint. This board needs to make a solid recommendation to the City Commission without wavering. Mr. Surnow said what he likes about the trial period is it provides a chance to test the three lanes for six months, because what he hears tonight is almost an overwhelming disapproval of the idea. Chairperson Slanga noted the feeling she got from some of the e-mails is that people like the idea of a calmer road.

Ms. Edwards said she pushed for a trial in order to give residents a chance to see how cut-through traffic impacts the neighborhoods. The chairperson noted the City can take measures within the neighborhoods to reduce the number of cut-throughs.

Mr. Evans noted the trial period offers a chance to get it right. He thought getting it right is more important than not appearing wishy-washy in front of the City Commission.

The chairperson opened up comments from the public at 8:16 p.m.

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Mr. Stuart Lockman observed that the 21,000 vehicles that go through this area every day to get from east to west are not going to disappear. He shares the view that has been expressed by others that there will be a significant deterioration in the way that cars can travel through that area. If a proper study is done for six months he asked that some specific things be changed:

- Measure the average speed today;
- Measure the gaps at different intersections today;
- Measure the amount of time for people to cross W. Maple Rd. today and what it is during the study period;
- The issue that people can't see each other in the jockeying lane wasn't shown;
- Show the effect on traffic on Oak and Lincoln which will be used as alternatives because of the backups that will be on W. Maple Rd.;
- Take a look at what traffic signal calibration will do to the traffic control today.

Ms. Nancy Thompson asked if they haven't done a study to see if four lanes could be improved, how can they automatically say three lanes would be better. A lot of issues could be solved by doing the changes that have been suggested between Chesterfield and Southfield Rd. With bike lanes it is difficult to know if there is a biker coming up from behind when turning right. That creates danger for both the driver of the car and the person on a bike.

Mr. Dave Weir, 3752 Arlington S., asked what happens when busses and emergency vehicles need to get through. Mr. Labadie confirmed there is only one bus that goes through during the peaks. As far as emergency vehicles, everybody goes to the right and vehicles to by.

Ms. Michelle McDermott, 892 W. Southlawn, spoke to say she is totally against changing the four lanes to three lanes. She bikes along W. Maple Rd. If there is that much room, cars will pass on the right. Further, she is worried about the snow removal and where it will go.

Mr. Mike Clawson, 139 Pilgrim, another member of the Steering Committee, noted that when the road is resurfaced the speed will only go up because currently two lanes are pretty much unusable. He spoke in favor of the proposal because there are all kinds of concerns with the road as it is currently configured.

Mr. Bill Dow disagreed. He does not think this proposal is a reaction to any serious accident problems. There is an agenda to implement the Multi-Modal Complete Streets Plan in the City. The surrounding communities and other stake holders such as the Smart Bus System have to be considered. There has been no public demand for this modification. Bloomfield Village passed a resolution opposing this idea. When garbage trucks stop to pick up trash everybody stops. With all of the funneling down and congestion, people will head elsewhere to

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shop and dine. He hopes the City will retain the four lanes and look at other ways to slow down traffic such as flashing signs and timed lights.

Ms. Carolyn Avril, 185 Tilberry, Bloomfield Village, did not think the simulation seemed accurate on the side streets. Mr. Labadie replied the counts were taken when traffic was the greatest.

Ms. Catherine Hayes, 560 Southfield, said with respect to the bike lane that her husband and brother would never bike on W. Maple Rd. It seems counter productive to put in a bike lane for a small minority of bikers. Changing to two lanes on Southfield has not done a whole lot to calm traffic there. Another concern is the cut-through traffic on Southfield. Something to think about when changing the configuration to one lane in each direction on W. Maple Rd. is that all of the big trucks heading east are forced to slow down going uphill because of their load. People will get impatient and cut through the neighborhoods.

Ms. Patricia Sonais, 2532 Covington Place, Bloomfield Village, asked if consideration was given to using the easement to increase the width of the road so that a left hand turn lane could be put in. Mr. O'Meara answered that would probably double the cost of the project. Ms. Sonais added that true cyclists do not put their lives in jeopardy and cycle on W. Maple Rd.

Mr. William Spencer said he doesn't see enough technical data to support changing to three lanes.

Ms. Loretta Mirro said she strongly opposes the three lane recommendation. She suggested if the test has to be done, do it now rather than waiting until the road is resurfaced.

Mr. Jim Mirro noted two people in tonight's audience out of 24 people are in favor of the bike lanes. That is 8%, which is the same as the results of a petition that was circulated in four neighborhoods, representing about six hundred people, that asked whether they were in favor of three lanes or opposed. Additionally Mr. Mirro felt that if they put any kind of space on this road near the curb it will encourage an occasional recreational biker. Those are exactly the kind of people who will cause a fatality and that is what the neighborhood organization does not want to happen. He concluded every path that is taken creates more problems than it solves. Therefore, he asked the board members to recommend to the City Commission that W. Maple Rd. be considered for all the other kinds of improvements and see what happens. The next time it has to be resurfaced everything can be looked at again.

Chairperson Slanga noted bikers have the right to bike on any road. It was discussed that with 12 ft. lanes and a 4 ft. lane on the right, people would have

enough room to go through if a bus pulled in temporarily, given the width of the road.

Motion by Mr. Bordman

Seconded by Mr. Surnow to adopt the recommendation as written originally by the Steering Committee that has been modified to include two 12 ft. wide through traffic lanes, one 12 ft. continuous left turn lane, and two 4 ft. wide shoulder areas without bike lanes. Further, to add the following additional conditions:

- 1. A 6 month trial period to commence after the road is repaved with a formal study by the City to consider the effects of the reconfiguration. The W. Maple Rd. Steering Committee will reconvene in April, 2017, to study the following measures, compared to the conditions that existed prior to the project, including:
 - a. Average speeds;**
 - b. Average daily traffic;**
 - c. Crash rates;**
 - d. Cut through traffic during the PM Peak Hour on the following roads: S. Glenhurst Ave., Larchlea Dr., Chesterfield Ave., Pleasant Ave., Pilgrim Ave., Arlington Rd., Shirley Rd., and Lakepark Dr.; and**
 - e. Level of Service at the Southfield Road and Chester St. intersections.****

The Steering Committee will also actively solicit public input from all interested stakeholders as a part of the process, and make a recommendation for the future of the corridor to the Multi-Modal Transportation Board.

- 2. Installation of ADA ramps at all corners and crossings;**
- 3. Crosswalk marking improvements to be made at the signalized intersections;**
- 4. Congestion relief improvements between Southfield Rd. and Chester St. including a right turn lane for eastbound traffic at Southfield Rd. and dual left turn lanes between Southfield Rd. and Chester St.,**
- 5. Installation of marked crosswalks at the Chesterfield Ave. and Lakepark Dr. traffic signals;**

6. **The removal of low use bus stops;**
7. **The enhancement of higher use bus stops (concrete pad, benches, shelters etc.);**
8. **The addition of enhanced technology in the existing signals to control and optimize signal cycle lengths and timing; and**

Ms. Edwards thought if people are going to bike on W. Maple Rd. anyway, she would like to make it safer for them. Mr. Bordman did not think with three lanes people would cut through the neighborhoods. Cars cut through now when they can't get through because they are behind cars turning left.

Amended by Mr. Bordman

And agreed to by the board:

- **Include that the painting will take place after the road has been re-paved.**
- **Number 1 (e) shall read "Level of Service at signalized intersections."**
- **Add as part of Number 1 that during the test period the Multi-Modal Board will evaluate pedestrian crossing island locations and if the test is successful they will be put in.**

Chairperson Slanga took comments on the motion from members of the public at 9:20 p.m.

Ms. Loretta Mirro wanted to know why the test could not be done now, before the road is re-paved. Mr. Bordman explained they cannot get an accurate test now, with the poor condition of the right lanes.

Mr. Bill Dow said the complete streets policy is about setting up a policy to involve all owners of the public road system. Therefore adjoining communities should be consulted. Every street does not have to account for every type of travel in a community. For that reason they don't have to put in a bike lane. The test should be done in the Fall and Winter.

Ms. Michelle McDermitt commented if they want to stop cut-throughs during peak hours put up signs saying right turns are not allowed from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and enforce it with tickets. That is her suggestion for Number 1 (d) of the motion.

Ms. Catherine Hayes suggested Hawthorne and Aspen be added to Number 1 (d) of the motion.

Mr. Jim Mirro wanted each person on the board to comment on running a test of three lanes with striping from September to February prior to the re-paving.

Board members were given the opportunity to comment if they chose.

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Mr. Labadie advised that Number 4 (the dual left turn lanes between Southfield Rd. and Chester St.) cannot happen with a four lane road.

Motion carried, 4-0.

ROLLCALL VOTE:

Yeas: Bordman, Surnow, Edwards, Slanga

Nays: None

Absent: Adams, Lawson, Warner

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

H. MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS (none)

I. ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the chairperson adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Jana Ecker, Planning Director

Paul O'Meara, City Engineer