

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017  
City Commission Room  
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, October 19, 2017.

Chairperson Vionna Adams convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairperson Vionna Adams; Board Members Amy Folberg, Andy Lawson, Daniel Rontal, Michael Surnow; Alternate Members Daniel Isaksen, Katie Schafer

**Absent:** Board Members Lara Edwards, Vice-Chairperson Johanna Slanga

**Administration:** Mike Albrecht, Police Dept.  
Lauren Chapman, Asst. Planner  
Mark Clemence, Police Chief  
Jana Ecker, Planning Director  
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer  
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer

**Also Present:** Julie Kroll and Mike Labadie from Fleis & Vandenbrink ("F&V"), Transportation Engineering Consultants  
**Brad Strader, MKSK Design, Planning & Urban Design Consultant**

**2. INTRODUCTIONS** (none)

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

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, Multi-Modal Transportation Board ("MMTB") MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2017**

Dr. Rontal made the following revision:

Page 6 - Vote should reflect that Vicechairperson Slanga was a nay.

**Motion by Dr. Rontal**

**Seconded by Mr. Isaksen to accept the MMTB Minutes of September 7, 2017 with the one change.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Rontal, Isaksen, Adams, Folberg, Lawson, Surnow, Schafer

Nays: None

Absent: Edwards, Slanga

**5. PUBLIC HEARING  
Oakland Ave. and Lawndale Ave. Stop Sign Study**

The public hearing opened at 6:09 p.m.

Mr. O'Meara recalled the MMTB has been studying the section of Oakland Ave. from Woodward Ave. to Lawndale Ave. due to recent improvements made, as well as improvements planned next year for the area. As a part of these efforts, F&V was asked to conduct a STOP sign study for the intersection with Lawndale Ave. F&V has recommended that the existing STOP sign for westbound Oakland Ave. be relocated to northbound Lawndale Ave. While northbound Lawndale Ave. is the busiest leg of the intersection, sight distance is lacking for those turning right at this location. Sight distance for westbound Oakland Ave. vehicles, contrarily, is good, and the need to stop in that direction is diminished, given the low traffic counts in general.

At the meeting of September 7, 2017, the MMTB passed a resolution supporting both the STOP sign relocation, as well as street and sidewalk improvements as depicted in the plan labeled "Option 3." (Other improvements in the area include the relocation of the northbound Woodward Ave. crosswalk (planned by MDOT in the summer of 2018); the installation of a combination sidewalk/bike path on the south side of Oakland Ave.; and the narrowing of Oakland Ave. for this block.) The latter two improvements would be completed by the City following the MDOT work.

Before this recommendation is moved further, it is appropriate that the adjacent property owners be notified, and given an opportunity to comment. To that end, a public hearing invitation was mailed to all property owners located on Oakland Ave. from Woodward Ave. to Worth St. Mr. O'Meara indicated that he along with other staff members have received only one phone call on this matter and it was in favor of the change.

The Chairperson invited members of the public to speak about the proposed change.

Mr. J.R. Hissano, 568 Oakland, said he likes the idea of the STOP sign. The only issue is that traffic heading westbound currently has a STOP sign and it would be relocated. He suggested that the stop sign be retained and a secondary sign added. If traffic moving westbound doesn't stop there could be potential for an ugly accident.

Ms. Ecker indicated the proposal is the same intent as the Multi-Modal Plan envisioned.

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Mr. Labadie, in response to Mr. Hissano's suggestion, said their proposal is what engineering studies say is warranted in the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The traffic counts for the different streets indicate a two-way stop as opposed to a four-way stop. He added that STOP signs don't necessarily control speed; most of the time they make it worse because people try to catch up for the time they lost when they stopped. The proposal improves the site distance. The downside of having two STOP signs is more delays for people and higher speeds.

There was discussion about putting in a hash line for the turn, but it was considered to be somewhat confusing because of all the other proposed pavement markings.

Ms. Folberg did not see a need to remove the existing STOP sign, as it is not creating a problem and it is solving a certain situation by preventing accidents. She suggested to leave that sign and add another one. Mr. Lawson agreed..

Mr. Isaksen observed that STOP signs are an annoyance for bikers and this would remove a stop sign from the neighborhood connector route.

Chief Clemence noted the City has made a concerted effort in the last seven years to follow the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. When an engineering study says a stop sign should come out, it is purely a scientific way of doing what is best and what is safest for everyone. The standards of the warrant for STOP signs are the sight distance, accidents, or speeds, all of which don't call for a STOP sign in this case. Again, we are trying to make things uniform and scientifically based. If a problem should arise, we can always go through the process of putting the sign back up. Also, Chief Clemence agreed that studies have proven that adding a STOP sign increases traffic speed if the STOP sign is not warranted. In response to Dr. Rontal, the Chief agreed they can do a crash study in a year after they have relocated the stop sign rather than adding an extra sign.

### **Motion by Ms. Folberg**

**Seconded by Mr. Lawson that the MMTB recommends the following improvements to Oakland Ave., from Woodward Ave. to Lawndale Ave., in consideration of the upcoming relocation of the northbound Woodward Ave. crosswalk to be completed by the Michigan Dept. of Transportation in 2018:**

- 1. The relocation of the STOP sign from westbound Oakland Ave. to northbound Lawndale Ave.**
- 2. The narrowing of Oakland Ave. from Woodward Ave. to Lawndale Ave.**
- 3. The installation of a 10 ft. wide combination sidewalk and bike path on the south side of Oakland Ave. from Woodward Ave. to Lawndale Ave.**

**Further, it is recommended that the STOP sign be relocated as soon as possible, while the other improvements are being scheduled for completion in conjunction with the work proposed by MDOT.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Folberg, Lawson, Adams, Isaksen, Rontal, Schafer, Surnow

Nays: None

Absent: Edwards, Slanga

The public hearing closed at 6:32 p.m.

6. **S. ETON RD. CORRIDOR**  
**Multi-Modal Options**  
**Yosemite Blvd. to 14 Mile Rd.**

*S. Eton – Maple Rd. to Lincoln*

Mr. O'Meara recalled the MMTB has reviewed this on several occasions and solicited public comment before making various recommendations for the S. Eton Rd. corridor from Maple Rd. to Lincoln.

At the July 20, 2017 meeting the MMTB voted to recommend a plan that included the addition of a pedestrian island at Maple Rd., widened sidewalks on S. Eton at Maple Rd., sharrows on S. Eton Rd. from Maple Rd. south to Villa, the installation of bidirectional bike lanes from Villa to Lincoln Ave., curb bump outs at several intersections, ADA ramps at all crossings, and road narrowing from Yosemite to Villa to accommodate wider sidewalks and a landscape area between the curb and sidewalks to add street trees.

At the August 14, 2017 City Commission meeting, the Commission reviewed the recommended plan for S. Eton from Maple Rd. to Lincoln Ave. The Commission focused on the recommendations at the Maple Rd. intersection in particular, given the impending completion of the Whole Foods Market just east of this intersection. It was noted that changes to the traffic signal timing and traffic patterns (with the Whole Foods store opening) will be coming to the intersection in the near future. Therefore, it was decided to allow these changes to occur, and then study the area further before finalizing a decision. No action was taken to approve the proposed plan for the S. Eton corridor from Maple Rd. to Lincoln.

Mr. O'Meara handed out one e-mail from a resident who lives on the northern section indicating that he would like the board to stay true to the recommendations they made in the past.

*S. Eton - Lincoln to 14 Mile Rd.*

Mr. O'Meara noted that at the September 7, 2017 MMTB meeting, staff introduced options for the S. Eton Corridor from Lincoln Ave. south to 14 Mile Rd., and incorporated some options south of Lincoln into a full plan for the entire mile-long corridor from Maple Rd. to 14 Mile Rd. to see how each section related to the others. MMTB members indicated a desire for additional options to consider. Thus, the board requested staff to come up with additional options for S. Eton from Lincoln to 14 Mile Rd. that were not limited to keeping the street width at 28 ft. as it currently exists. Board members felt

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that this section of S. Eton is different as it is residential on both sides, and the paved roadway is wide.

Several suggestions were discussed and board members did indicate there was consensus to add bumpouts and crosswalks in as many locations as possible based on the Ad Hoc Rail District Committee's Report. The MMTB also asked for traffic counts and an on-street parking study to provide additional information to assist in the review of options for the S. Eton corridor. Accordingly, as requested, a total of 12 different conceptual options was prepared by F&V for the MMTB to consider for the S. Eton corridor between Lincoln and 14 Mile Road

Four options include keeping the existing 28 ft. road width; four additional options consist of keeping the existing 28 ft. road width for cars, but adding paved area in the landscaped portion of the right-of-way to accommodate bicycles; three options include widening the existing 28 ft. road width; and one option proposes narrowing the existing road width as well as adding paved area in the landscaped portion of the right-of-way to accommodate bicycles. Cross sections to illustrate each of the conceptual options have been provided, and a scoring system was applied to evaluate the benefits for bicyclists and pedestrians of each option, resulting in a score for each option.

The cost implications of each option were not factored into the scoring, but are noted for comparison purposes to assist in the evaluation of each option. Finally, traffic counts, speed counts, accident data and the results of an on-street parking study have also been provided to assist in a full analysis of corridor options. Also provided is a parking survey and speed data collected in the past for S. Eton Rd., Lincoln Ave., and N. Eton Rd. The following summarizes this data:

Parking Survey – Parking currently is legal only on the southbound side of this road segment of S. Eton Rd. Surveys were conducted on several weeknights during a week in September, at 8 p.m. and 3 a.m. These times were suggested by F&V as times that the highest demand should be encountered in front of residential uses. As a through collector street, residents could be ticketed for parking overnight (2 a.m. to 6 a.m.), although this is not generally an enforcement priority. Should the MMTB prefer an option that encourages the use of on-street parking as a traffic calming measure, they could also recommend that this current ban on overnight parking be removed.

Speed Data - While Lincoln and N. Eton Rd. have been redesigned to accommodate traffic calming or multi-modal improvements, their speeds are quite similar to those being seen currently on S. Eton Rd., both north and south of Lincoln Ave. Once the MMTB has selected an option or options to move forward, a full technical engineering review will be conducted on the selected option(s).

Ms. Krill came to the podium. She described the 12 options and explained the scoring system. Cost was not included as part of the scoring, however it was shown in the description.

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There are four different roadway width options and underneath each of those options are sub-options:

- Option A - Existing Roadway Width Only (28 ft.)
- Option B - Existing Roadway Width (28 ft.) and Using Easement Between the Road and the Sidewalk
- Option C - Widen Road
- Option D - Narrow Road

Mr. Isaksen warned there are places in the scoring system where the numbers may be arbitrary. Ms. Ecker explained this scoring system was selected as it has been used in other cities, and it is one of the few scoring systems that takes into consideration bicyclists as well as pedestrians. The approach was to balance the needs of all users.

Ms. Kroll said the difficulty they had was how to weight the various categories:

- Pedestrians
- Bicycles
- Traffic Calming
- Connectivity
- Cost

Each individual may have a different weighting scale, so they just made them all the same. Now this board can evaluate the priorities and what they would rather see.

Ms. Kroll explained for Dr. Rontal that the only difference between B-2 and B-3 is the side where parking is located. Mr. Labadie pointed out that almost 11,000 vehicles a day travel this road, which is high.

The board members went through the process of eliminating plans where there were aspects they were not comfortable with:

- Options with only a 14 ft. drive lane;
- Options with only sharrows in the road;
- Options where bikers are unprotected;
- Option where bike lanes are not on the same side, which isn't consistent north of Lincoln and more expensive than other options;
- Option that narrows the road and removes all on-street parking.

Less expensive options were preferred. The decision came down to whether there should be moving cars next to the bikes or parked car doors opening onto the bike lane. Consensus was it would be safer for bikes to be next to parked cars and traveling along an 8 ft. wide double lane with a 2 ft. wide buffer from vehicles - Option B-2.

Chief Clemence stated that on Lincoln, the narrowing of the road and the addition of bumpouts resulted in lower speeds and fewer accidents. The traffic volume there is comparable to the S. Eton Rd. corridor.

Mr. Romel Llarena, a resident of the Torry Community Assoc. at 1808 Cole, said Association members found the way the data was collected and some of the findings to be disagreeable. He believes there is a perception gap between the residents that live

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off of Eton St. and what the City is using as a basis for their decision making. Another issue he brought up is that on-street parking is absolutely maximized. Customers on the commercial side park in the neighborhoods and block driveways. Lastly, he voiced support of using parked vehicles as a barrier between moving traffic and pedestrians.

Ms. Ecker commented that north of Lincoln there is now residential permit parking only in the neighborhoods. However, it is very different north of Lincoln compared to south of Lincoln, because south of Lincoln it is all residential and there isn't that much parking.

Board members still preferred parked cars next to the bikes as opposed to moving vehicles.

### **Motion by Ms. Folberg**

**Seconded by Mr. Lawson to recommend conceptual Option B-2 for S. Eton Rd. from Lincoln Ave. to 14 Mile Rd. to proceed to a public hearing at the Multi-Modal Transportation Board on November 2, 2017.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Folberg, Lawson, Adams, Isaksen, Rontal, Schafer, Surnow

Nays: None

Absent: Edwards, Slanga

## **7. MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION CONSULTING SERVICES Review of RFP Responses Submitted**

Ms. Ecker advised that on July 24, 2017, the City Commission directed staff to issue an RFP to seek qualified consulting firms, and extended the previous contract with F&V for six months (through January 23, 2018) to allow staff time to go through the RFP process. One of the things the Commission stressed was not to include just traffic engineering, but to also have more of an urban designer/planner perspective on the team as a whole. Accordingly, an RFP was issued to solicit multi-modal transportation consulting services to assist the MMTB, the Planning Board and the City Commission in reviewing all transportation-related projects.

One response was submitted under the RFP by the deadline. The proposal received was from MKSK, in partnership with F&V. The MKSK team proposes a team of urban designers, urban planners, multi-modal transportation specialists, landscape architects and transportation professionals to provide a comprehensive review of all transportation related projects in the City of Birmingham.

The MKSK team proposes a 90-day period of startup activities, including training and education for the MMTB, an audit of the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, an assessment of the MMTB's current process and protocol, and the preparation of an annual work plan for the MMTB along with suggestions for improvements. The MKSK proposal also

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includes an hourly fee schedule for each of the professionals that are available to assist the City of Birmingham.

Mr. Brad Strader from MKSK, along with Mike Labadie and Julie Kroll from F&V were present. Mr. Strader indicated the other key person from MKSK is Joe Nickol who is an urban designer. His rate is \$190/hour. Mr. Strader's rate is \$190/hour also. Matt Lesure is a landscape architect whose rate is \$140/hour. Lauren Cardoni, a transportation planner, has a rate of \$102/hour.

Mr. Surnow asked if it is possible to set a cap on the amount to be expended. Ms. Ecker explained that it is hard to set a cap for this type of service which is ongoing consultation rather than a particular project to be brought to completion.

Mr. Strader stated those are their standard public sector rates that have been used all across the Great Lakes district for every project in Michigan. Their private sector rates are higher.

Mr. Labadie noted that he and Mr. Strader have worked on a lot of projects over the years, so it is a good fit. It was discussed that Mr. Strader has worked with the City many times in the past.

### **Motion by Mr. Surnow**

**Seconded by Mr. Lawson to recommend that the City Commission enter into an agreement with the MKSK team to provide professional multi-modal transportation consulting services to the City of Birmingham for a three- year term.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

### VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Surnow, Lawson, Adams, Folberg, Isaksen, Rontal, Schafer

Nays:

Absent: Edwards, Slanga

**8. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**  
(no one from the public wished to speak)

### **9. MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

Dr. Rontal reported to the group that there are some old crosswalks at Grant and Bird that just have side stripes and no cross hatching. The side stripes are wearing off. This location is two blocks from an elementary school in a neighborhood of small children. Cars coming off of 14 Mile Rd. or coming towards 14 Mile Rd. heading southbound on Grant do not have a STOP sign at that corner and do not respect the crosswalk because



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it doesn't look like a crosswalk. He suggested that this should be looked at to see if it needs to get repainted with the official 24 in. crossbars.

**10. NEXT MEETING NOVEMBER 2, 2017 at 6 p.m.**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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Jana Ecker, Planning Director

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Paul O'Meara, City Engineer

APPROVED