

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 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, December 7, 2017.

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

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Board Members Lara Edwards, Johanna Slanga, Michael Surnow;
Alternate Board Members Daniel Isaksen, Katie Schafer, Vionna Adams

Absent: Board Members Amy Folberg, Vice-Chairperson Andy Lawson, Daniel Rontal

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

Also Present: Julie Kroll from Fleis & Vandenbrink "F&V"), Transportation Engineering Consultants and Joe Nichol from MKSK, Urban Design and Strategy

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Kroll introduced Joe Nichol of MKSK, who said he is looking forward to helping the board accomplish its goals.

3. REVIEW AGENDA

Ms. Ecker announced that the Crosswalk Materials Study is postponed to the January meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, Multi-Modal Transportation Board ("MMTB") MEETING OF NOVEMBER 2, 2017

Motion by Ms. Edwards

Seconded by Ms. Slanga to approve the MMTB Minutes of November 2, 2017 as presented.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Edwards, Slanga, Adams, Surnow, Isaksen, Schafer

Nays: None

Absent: Folberg, Lawson, Rontal

5. **PUBLIC HEARING**
W. Maple Rd. Pedestrian Crossing Islands

The public hearing opened at 6:07 p.m.

Mr. O'Meara provided background and brought up views of the locations. The most recent plans for the installation of pedestrian islands on W. Maple Rd. were reviewed by the MMTB at their meeting of November 2, 2017. The following locations were recommended:

- Lakepark Ave., at the existing marked crosswalk located at the traffic signal.
- East of Hawthorne Ave. Since there is no traffic signal, the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon is proposed at the Hawthorne Ave. site only. This location is also endorsed by Parks and Recreation because it provides a nice connection from the path to the north, crossing and then linking up to the south down to the trail system.

Although not reflected in the MMTB resolution on November 2, 2017, discussion was also held about the Master Plan suggestion for the installation of a pedestrian island between Suffield Ave. and Pilgrim Ave. The question is whether or not it would really draw that much use by pedestrians.

The Chairperson called for public comments.

Ms. Pat Hayes, who lives on the corner of Pilgrim and Pine, was concerned about how the Fire Dept. would get through with the islands there and cars bumper to bumper. Ms. Ecker replied the Fire and Police Depts. had no concerns with the three proposed islands. These are small islands which will afford the opportunity for vehicles to move into the middle lane if a fire truck has to get through.

Mr. Surnow said he hasn't seen enough pedestrian traffic along Maple Rd. to justify doing anything. Ms. Ecker noted that the islands will also assist in calming traffic.

Ms. Gail Widdy, 165 Baldwin, said she sees people trying to cross Maple Rd. with dogs or kids and it is scary because the cars come by fast. So she can definitely see the value of the islands. Her experience is at the Rouge River crossing.

Mr. Don Byerlein, 316 Pilgrim, didn't think any crossing islands should be constructed. He thought they would cause a lot of accidents.

Mr. Joe Lieberman, who lives on the corner of Glenhurst and Brookwood, thought this is a horrible idea for all the reasons stated.

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Mr. Michael Clawson, 139 Pilgrim, supported the islands because drivers have been using the left hand turn lane to merge. However he was not sure how many people would use the island between Suffield and Pilgrim.

Ms. Pat Hayes spoke again to say it is very difficult for drivers to get across Maple Rd. from Arlington to go south because the traffic lights are not synchronized to turn red at the same time. Mr. O'Meara noted if the lights were red at the same time the existing 35 mph timing would not work.

Ms. Slanga asked for the Police Dept. to gather some general observations about 1) people using the left hand turn lane for merging; and 2) whether enough gaps are being created. Commander Grewe said they have been targeting people who are using the turn lane to merge. Also, it is always safer to make a right turn rather than a left.

Ms. Judy Dielman, 1060 N. Glenhurst, says she sees backups along Maple Rd. going east or west and it is very difficult if vehicles want to get across. Further, making a left turn is impossible because there is never a break.

Mr. Isaksen noted the needs of emergency vehicles have been considered and the Fire Dept. has given the green light on this project. He thought the board should trust their judgment on that. He has not seen a connection between how the islands make the problem of making a left turn worse. Those problems will continue to be there after the islands are installed.

Ms. Edwards thought they need to balance cost with traffic calming measures. She was definitely in favor of the crossing island that connects the park trails.

Ms. Schafer was in favor of the island between Suffield Ave. and Pilgrim Ave.

Chairperson Adams favored placing an island between Hawthorne Rd. and Baldwin Ave. connecting the trail system following the Rouge River corridor. She had no strong feelings on the other islands.

Mr. Surnow was fine with the Lakepark crossing island. Also he thought the island that connects the trails makes logical sense. However, he didn't see the need for an island between Suffield Ave. and Pilgrim Ave. because he isn't convinced there is enough pedestrian traffic to justify it. Maybe visit it at a later date if there is a demonstrated need for it.

Mr. Isaksen echoed Mr. Surnow's thoughts on this.

Motion by Ms. Slanga

Seconded by Ms. Schafer to recommend the installation of pedestrian islands on the W. Maple Rd. corridor at Hawthorne Ave. and Lakepark Ave. in accordance with the attached plans.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Slanga, Schafer, Adams, Edward, Surnow, Isaksen

Nays: None

Absent: Folberg, Lawson, Rontal

Mr. O'Meara noted that based on the recommendation, staff will put together a cost estimate, and forward it to the City Commission for their final decision.

The public hearing closed at 6:40 p.m.

6. 2018 PAVING PROJECTS

Mr. O'Meara recalled that at the meeting of November 2, 2017, staff reviewed the potential for Multi-Modal improvements on the three streets planned for reconstruction in 2018. The following briefly reviews the discussion from that meeting for each street, and what has been prepared in the meantime.

BENNAVILLE AVE – EDGEWOOD AVE. TO GRANT ST.

At the last meeting, it was noted that the existing street is 32 ft. wide, and that the City's standard today for a new local street of this nature is 26 ft. Reconstructing the road at the narrower width would reduce the length of the crosswalks at each end of the block, which would be an improvement for pedestrians.

Potential benefits include crosswalk lengths being reduced approximately 6 ft., wider parkways, and slower vehicle speeds.

Should the Multi-Modal Transportation Board favor a change to 26 ft., it is recommended that a public hearing be held to gain input from the residents.

RUFFNER AVE. – GRANT ST. TO WOODWARD AVE.

Ruffner Ave. was originally constructed at 28 ft. wide in the residential section, and 32 ft. wide in the commercial section. Staff is recommending reducing the width a small amount to 26 ft. for the residential section to help reduce the need for tree removals. The commercial section can be reconstructed at its current width, but 3 ft. bumpouts are recommended at the Woodward Ave. intersection.

A WB-40 vehicle was used for this analysis. The right turn onto Ruffner Ave. can be completed as shown with the proposed bumpout, even when a vehicle is parked on the south side of the street. On the north side, a bumpout of any larger size would cause a conflict. Since right turns are easier on the south corner, a larger bumpout could fit. Such a design would not be symmetrical, and it is unclear that such a proposal would be approved by the Michigan Dept. of Transportation ("MDOT").

Ms. Edwards suggested placing 3 ft. bumpouts at the beginning of the residential section to signal drivers that they have entered a neighborhood and they should slow down. Mr. O'Meara noted there is definitely a cut-through problem on this block. He thought they could go down to a 20 ft. wide road for just a short distance. Ms. Kroll indicated this is called a "gateway treatment."

Since changes are recommended on both streets, and since bumpouts may impact deliveries to the businesses, it is suggested that a public hearing be held. Notices would be sent to both the residents on Ruffner Ave., and the businesses on both blocks north and south of the street.

CHAPIN AVE – GRANT ST. TO WOODWARD AVE.

Chapin Ave. was originally constructed at 26 ft. wide on its westerly block, and 28 ft. at its two easterly blocks (both residential and commercial). Staff recommends building both residential blocks at 26 ft., in accordance with current standards, and in order to work with existing large trees. Since the commercial block of Chapin Ave. is already relatively narrow, it would remain at the current width, with no bumpouts proposed.

Right turns from a WB-40 are already in conflict with parked cars, given the space provided with this street width. No changes are recommended. As indicated by the truck turning diagram, a small bumpout could be installed on the south side. Similar to Ruffner Ave. above, such a design would not be symmetrical, and could be difficult to get approved by MDOT.

It is acknowledged that the changes suggested for Chapin Ave. are minor. However, since it is being discussed in conjunction with other nearby streets, it is suggested that all property owners in the area of this project be invited to the hearing as well, so that their input can be received.

Motion by Ms. Slanga

Seconded by Ms. Edwards to schedule a public hearing at the regularly scheduled meeting of the MMTB of January 4, 2018 at 6 p.m. to consider the following multi-modal improvements as a part of the City's planned 2018

Local Street Paving Program:

- A. Reconstructing Bennaville Ave. at 26 ft. wide section from Edgewood Ave. to Grant St.**
- B. Reconstructing the residential section of Ruffner Ave. at 26 ft. wide from Grant St. to the Woodward Ave. alley, maintaining the 32 ft. wide existing width on the commercial section adjacent to Woodward Ave., and adding a 3 ft. wide bumpout gateway treatment from residential to commercial with no 3 ft. wide bumpout changes at Woodward Ave.**
- C. Reconstructing the residential section of Chapin Ave. at 26 ft. wide, from Grant St. to the Woodward Ave. alley, with the addition of a 3 ft. wide bumpout gateway treatment as an option, and maintaining the 28 ft. wide street width on the commercial section adjacent to Woodward Ave.**

Also to notify the adjacent impacted property owners accordingly, especially the options on Ruffner Ave. and Chapin Ave.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Slanga, Edwards, Adams, Surnow, Isaksen, Schafer

Nays: None

Absent: Folberg, Lawson, Rontal

7. **CROSSWALK MATERIALS STUDY**

Postponed to the MMTB meeting of January 4, 2018.

8. **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

(no public was present)

9. **MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. O'Meara reported that at their last meeting the City Commission reviewed the S. Eton issue. A cost estimate has been received from F&V which is over \$1.6 million. So it is suggested that there would be an opportunity to try and get a Transportation Alternatives Program ("TAP") grant and the Commission liked that idea. Therefore the City will try to get a grant in March. Not knowing whether or not that would happen, the Commission asked Staff to look at whether there is a cheaper way to just do pavement markings to achieve some of the benefits of the redesign as possible at a reduced cost. They can be tried out for a while to see how the plan is working. Staff will bring that information to the Board next month.

10. **NEXT MEETING JANUARY 4, 2017 at 6 p.m.**

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the board members adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Jana Ecker, Planning Director

Paul O'Meara, City Engineer