



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Public Works

Date: April 7, 2015

To: Honorable Kevin Reich, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: **East Downtown Pedestrian Realm Augmentation Study and the Preferred Long-Term Vision**

Recommendation:

- A. Receive and file the Pedestrian Realm Augmentation Study.
- B. Receive and file the DRAFT Preferred Long-Term Vision for these seven streets and return to Council for proper approvals.

Previous Directives: None

Department Information

Prepared by: Jon Wertjes, Director, Traffic & Parking Services, 673-2614

Approved by: _____
Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee: Jon Wertjes, Director, Traffic & Parking Services, 673-2614

Reviews

- Permanent Review Committee (PRC): Approval _N/A_ Date _____
- Civil Rights Approval Approval _N/A_ Date _____
- Policy Review Group (PRG): Approval _N/A_ Date _____

Financial Impact

Action is within the approved budget.

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not applicable

City Goals

- Living Well: Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life
- A Hub of Economic Activity and Innovation: Businesses – big and small – start, move, stay and grow here
- Great Places: Natural and built spaces work together and our environment is protected.

Background and Supporting Information

The City of Minneapolis through its “Comprehensive Plan” and “Access Minneapolis” has defined goals, strategies and ways to improve our urban street infrastructure for all users, specifically for pedestrians and bicyclists. Major improvements to public infrastructure usually occur with street reconstruction projects.

Private developments can impact the public street right-of-way in significant ways. Because major private developments frequently rebuild the right-of-way especially from the building to the curb which includes new boulevards, sidewalks and curbs, it is important to ensure that public infrastructure elements are rebuilt according to, and also foster, our long-term goals and visions. Thus, the Pedestrian Realm Augmentation Study sets direction to leverage these private investments to our public infrastructure and public realm that ensure a better Minneapolis. An overview of the goal, purpose and benefits are provided below.

Goal

An overall goal is to make the City more livable, walkable, and beautiful. This goal enables coordination and partnership of public and private entities toward the enhancement of the public realm and the public right of way.

Purpose

The purpose is to create an urban environment that supports positive place making through purposeful and focused public realm, streetscapes, and amenities. These efforts enable private stakeholders to use their private resources to design, fund and maintain the public right of way and enhancements, allowing businesses, associations and other groups with a stake in enhancing city streets the opportunities to achieve local place making in an “open source” and creative way. The private resource provides an innovative way to allow for individual creative expressions while advancing the City’s livability goals.

Benefits

- Enhance the pedestrian experience of the public realm
- Transform underutilized street space into dynamic and usable public space
- Support properties/developments by activating corridors and create place making
- Improve safety for all users
- Improve the public infrastructure

East Downtown area

City Council is aware of the numerous changes occurring in the east downtown area. A quick list of changes includes the Downtown East/Wells Fargo/Ryan development, the new stadium, Commons, proposed new residential and mixed use developments, proposed changes to HCMC, and several others.

Many of these developments will impact the public right-of-way. Therefore, Public Works has embarked on a study to define a preferred long-term vision that improves the public right-of-way.

East Downtown Pedestrian Realm Augmentation Study

Public Works identified a study area bounded by Washington Avenue to 6th Street, and 5th Avenue to Chicago Avenue. Within that 12 block area there are a number of development changes under construction and more being planned and proposed. As such, the movement by all transportation modes in this area will also change. Given these development changes, a key question posed was:

Where in this study area do we not need travel lanes or parking lanes that could instead be used for pedestrian space that could create a better public realm?

First, Public Works used the information from the Stadium EIS, Downtown East AUAR and the City's recent downtown traffic signal retiming efforts to analyze and gauge the existing and future needs for traffic operations. Based on that effort, Public Works has determined that some streets can be narrowed, some modified/enhanced, and other streets stay basically the same. Two general assumptions were identified early in this effort:

- The existing bikeways (on or off-street, striped or protected) are assumed to continue in their same locations unless noted otherwise; and
- Each intersection corner should be assumed to provide curb extensions (aka bump outs) and proper geometric radii due to multilane one-way streets which can accommodate wide bus/truck turning maneuvers unless needed for a turn lane.

To assist with this effort, Minneapolis Public Works hired consultant, Stantec, to develop and illustrate the *East Downtown Pedestrian Realm Augmentation Study*. This study presents concepts to help engage others who will develop and design the public realm and street improvements.

The study dated 1/28/2015 is a very large file and can be located here:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-138489.pdf>:

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This study has been shared and discussed with several stakeholders including:

- Hennepin County
- Metro Transit
- Private entities such as Ryan Companies and Sherman Associates
- Commons consultant team
- Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)
- Public Realm Enhancement working group -- a cross-divisional city staff group that formed to explore how the City could increase efforts to support more comprehensive improvements to the public realm.

The comments received to date have been positive and Public Works has taken the second step to move these concepts to a draft preferred vision.

DRAFT Preferred Long-Term Vision

For the seven streets in this study area, a draft preferred long-term vision has been developed. The purpose and intent of this vision is to guide all stakeholders in the same common direction in how we rebuild infrastructure in this study area.

Currently, there are no eminent City or County street projects or 5-year programmed plans to rebuild any of these seven streets. Thus, the short term changes may be made by proposed new developments through private investments. Coordination and consistency are important given the multiple public and private entities involved.

The preferred visions are presented on 11x17 sheets one for each of the seven streets (see attachments). The top half of the sheet shows the Augmentation Study concepts and the lower half shows the preferred vision. A brief summary of the preferred vision for each street is as follows:

North-South streets

5th Avenue – from 6th Street to Washington Avenue

- Retain three northbound travel lanes from 6th Street to Washington Avenue
- Retain east side midblock parking with curb extensions/bump outs to serve the Commons users and other area properties.
- Add pedestrian area next to Haaf and Gateway parking ramps from 4th Street to Washington Avenue where no parking exists today and continue to provide the left turn lanes at 3rd Street and Washington Avenue.
- Retain west side parking lane next to the jail and Government Center ramp from 6th Street to 4th Street.
- Add a buffer to the existing bike lane.

Portland Avenue – from Washington Avenue to 6th Street

- Retain two southbound through lanes
- Remove the third (westerly/right-hand most) through lane between 3rd and 6th Streets
- Add a protected bikeway facility behind the curb where feasible
- Remove parking for the one block adjacent to the Commons between 4th and 5th Streets
- Add curb extensions/bump outs and retain midblock parking on other blocks where appropriate to serve the area properties and Commons users.
- Provide southbound left turn lanes instead of parking and bumpouts at both 4th and 6th Street intersections.

Park Avenue – from 6th Street to Washington Avenue

- Retain three northbound travel lanes from 6th to 4th Streets that can accommodate peak periods.
- Allow parking in the right hand lane during off-peak periods.
- Add a protected bikeway facility behind the curb where feasible.
- Retain two through lanes from 4th Street to Washington Avenue and accommodate northbound turn lane(s) prior to both the 3rd Street and Washington Avenue intersections.
- Remove parking for the one block adjacent to the Commons and LRT station between 4th and 5th Streets, except off-peak parking in the right hand travel lane.
- Add curb extensions/bump outs and retain midblock parking on other blocks where appropriate to serve the Commons users and other area properties.

Chicago Avenue – between Washington Avenue and 6th Street

- Between Washington Avenue to 4th Street
 - Retain one travel lane and one parking lane each direction with parking restrictions needed for some stadium events

- Add a southbound left turn lane at 4th Street – (This critical pedestrian intersection will be re-examined with the stadium Transportation Management Plan which includes the new pedestrian bridge, other area developments, the new I-35W 4th Street entrance ramp and event activities.)
- Plan for future east side pedestrian promenade/plaza between River/Guthrie and stadium with alignment matching the built segments north of Washington Avenue.
- Between 4th to 6th Streets
 - Retain 1 travel lane each direction and the east side parking bay consistent with planned stadium changes.
 - Plan for a new bike/pedestrian crossing and signal approximately at former 5th Street intersection.
 - Modify north lag to align with added southbound left turn lane at 4th Street.

East-West streets

3rd Street – from Chicago Avenue to 5th Avenue

- Retain existing cross-section with on-street bike lane.
- Add curb extensions/bump outs and retain midblock parking to serve the area properties.

4th Street– from 5th Avenue to Chicago Avenue

- Metro Transit has agreed to the removal of the reverse flow bus lane from Norm McGrew Place west to 5th Avenue due to changes for the Green Line related bus operations.
- Replace reverse flow bus lane with midblock on-street parking and add curb extensions/bump outs to serve the area properties.
- Add a buffer to the existing bike lane.
- Retain three eastbound through lanes.
- Add midblock parking and curb extensions/bump outs on the south side to serve the Commons users and other area properties.

5th Street – – from Chicago Avenue to 5th Avenue

- Retain the left hand through lane (southerly side, left of LRT).
- Convert the right hand through lane (northerly side, right of LRT) to a two-way bikeway and/or pedestrian space.

Recommendation

Public Works requests City Council action to receive and file the attached East Downtown Pedestrian Realm Augmentation Study. Also, Public Works requests receive and file action for the attached DRAFT East Downtown Preferred Long-Term Vision for these seven streets and return to City Council for proper approvals.

Next Steps

Public Works will conduct further public input and outreach regarding these draft preferred visions. In addition, Public Works will consider other implementation next steps (preliminary designs, funding, etc.) that maximize these goals, visions, and opportunities.

Attachments:

East Downtown Pedestrian Realm Augmentation Study dated 1/28/2015

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-138489.pdf>

DRAFT East Downtown Preferred Long-Term Vision dated 4/13/2015

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-139701.pdf>