



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

Date: January 13, 2009

To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Subject: **Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTP) Round 3 Solicitation for Bike Walk Twin Cities Projects**

Recommendation:

Direct Public Works to further discuss and develop with Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) the City of Minneapolis NTP high priority projects (Attachment E), with consideration for three medium priority pedestrian projects as noted by the PAC as additional and not as replacements projects, for their potential inclusion in the final Round 3 solicitation and return to City Council with update on discussions and any further actions.

Previous Directives:

- December 2, 2008 – Authorized acceptance of one Round 2 grant award, submittal of a bike sharing letter of intent, and framework for development of Round 3 projects
- July 15, 2008 – Bike Walk Ambassadors Update
- April 8, 2008 – Authorized submittal of eighteen applications for NTP Round 2
- September 25, 2007 – Authorized acceptance of twenty-four competitive NTP awards
- April 3, 2007 – Authorized submittal of forty-two applications for NTP Round 1
- April 3, 2007 – Authorized acceptance of two NTP direct grant awards
- February 27, 2007 – Approved the city's ranking criteria for NTP applications
- February 13, 2007 – Project Status Update
- January 16, 2007 – Authorized Amendment #1 to grant agreements
- July 25, 2006 – Authorized original grant agreements and appropriations
- April 18, 2006 – Project Status Update

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Approved by:

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Reviews

Permanent Review Committee (PRC):	NA
Civil Rights Approval	NA
Policy Review Group (PRG):	NA

Financial Impact

No Financial Impact

Community Impact

Neighborhood Notification: Not Applicable
City Goals: Satisfies multi-modal transportation goals
Comprehensive Plan: Not Applicable
Zoning Code: Not Applicable

Background/Supporting Information

Framework for Development of Round 3 Projects

On December 14th, 2008, the City Council passed the following action related to developing a framework for Round 3 NTP Projects:

"[Regarding] the subject matter of the Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTP) - Round 3 Solicitation and the submittal of "*Letter(s) of Intent for Capital Projects as Demonstration Innovations*" to Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) as part of the NTP Round 3 Solicitation, [the City Council] now [resolves]

- a) That Public Works staff continue to work with TLC to define the Round 1, Round 2, and Planning Study project lists, and return to the Transportation & Public Works Committee on January 13, 2009, and that City staff be directed as follows:
 - To begin their discussion with TLC with projects identified for modification in Attachment D of the staff report;
 - To prioritize the 'South Connection' to Richfield in their discussions with TLC;
 - To emphasize investment in pedestrian projects;
 - To emphasize geographic equity; and

- b) That Public Works staff be authorized to submit a "*Letter of Intent for Capital Projects as Demonstration Innovations*" to TLC for the Bike Share Program for an amount of \$1,750,000.
 - The City of Minneapolis will not be an owner of the bike share now or in the future;
 - The City of Minneapolis will not provide ongoing operating expenses for a bike share program. However, this provision would not prohibit the City from providing subscriptions for City Employees nor prohibit participation in wellness programs for City Employees;
 - The City of Minneapolis recommends that Transit for Livable Communities, in the event that NTP funds are directed to the bike share program, establish a threshold amount of operating funds to be secured for the program for start up, before releasing capital funds;
 - The City of Minneapolis recommends that Transit for Livable Communities establish a match structure if NTP funds are allocated to the bike share program and that the NTP funds will only be released if matching funds are secured. Match structure is defined as private sector contributions of at least 25% of capital dollars;
 - The City of Minneapolis recommends that the proposed bike share providers be required to plan and implement a comprehensive community outreach program to build community support and membership if NTP funds are allocated to the program."

Discussion Regarding Projects in Attachment A

Since December's Council Action, Public Works has met with TLC to better understand the list (Attachment A, previously referenced as Attachment D in the December 14 Council action) developed by TLC for the Round 3 solicitation. Public Works has also begun to research the feasibility of these projects. Below is an update on each project relevant to Minneapolis:

Cedar/17th/Bloomington Avenues S Corridor

In late November, Public Works, Hennepin County and Park Board staffs met to identify the potential alignments for a southern bicycle connection into Richfield. Near the Minneapolis/Richfield border, the alignment chosen was the Bloomington Avenue Bridge over Highway 62, north to Lake Nokomis Parkway at Cedar Avenue. Ultimately this connection will stretch further south to the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge over the Minnesota River in Bloomington, via frontage roads along Highway 77.

To the north in Minneapolis the alignment needs further refinement. Three options have been identified (see Attachment B). Option A uses Bloomington Avenue, 29th Street, and 11th/12th Avenues. Option B uses Bloomington Avenue. Option C uses Bloomington, 17th, and 18th Avenues. All 3 options use 24th Street to connect to existing north-south bikeways on 11th Avenue S and Hiawatha Avenue. Further discussion needs to take place with neighborhoods, TLC, and Public Works to determine the opportunities and trade-offs for each option.

11th/12th Avenues S (also known as Andersen School to Powderhorn Park connection)

TLC has suggested that this project could be considered in conjunction with the southern bicycle connection into Richfield. Public Works is pursuing further discussions about the Andersen School to Powderhorn Park project in relation to the aforementioned project, specifically under Option A as noted above.

Park/Portland Avenues

Hennepin County staff has determined that this project between 45th Street and Minnehaha Parkway would best be pursued with other funding. Public Works will work with Hennepin County on this project. NTP funding will not be sought.

18th Avenue NE

TLC has indicated support for an on-street bikeway instead of an off-street bikeway between Monroe and Johnson Avenues. While there has been some interest in pursuing an innovative hybrid option such as a cycle track, TLC has indicated support for low cost, high value options for this corridor. Thus continued support has been indicated for on-street bike lanes.

Broadway Corridor

Two projects have been discussed along the corridor, both originating from the West Broadway Alive plan. The first is pedestrian crossing improvements at the intersection of Penn and Broadway. Planning efforts have indicated strong interest in shortening crossings with the addition of curb extensions and median islands. Support for these improvements is likely from Hennepin County, as long as the improvements do not come at the expense of traffic lanes.

The second project consists of pedestrian corridor improvements between Emerson and Bryant Avenues (a 2-block stretch). The West Broadway Alive plan suggests the creation of a plaza in the strip mall parking lot on the north side of Broadway, as well as a slight realignment of Broadway Avenue, nudged slightly to the north mid-project, in order to create a wider sidewalk on the south side of Broadway. Hennepin County is also likely to support these changes if four lanes of traffic can be maintained.

Marshall Street NE

The addition of bicycle lanes in the Marshall/Main Street corridor is likely to be more easily accomplished south of 8th Avenue NE. North of 8th Avenue removal of parking on one side of the street is likely to be necessary.

Washington Avenue S

Two projects have been highlighted in this area. The first is pedestrian crossing improvements at the Seven Corners (Washington and Cedar) intersection. This area has a high incidence of pedestrian-vehicle crashes. Hennepin County is likely to be supportive of intersection improvements.

The second project is a bikeway between 11th and 19th Avenues. West of I-35W the addition of bicycle lanes is a possibility, but east of I-35W this is likely to be a challenge. Further study of this corridor is necessary to determine feasibility. The need and priority for this bike corridor has been debated, since it closely parallels 2nd Street South and the tunnel recently built under I-35W for a bicycle connection between Bridge 9 and Downtown Minneapolis.

Hennepin Avenue Bicycle Planning Study

A detailed design for bicycle lanes between Loring Park and 11th Street, as well as 2nd Street to 8th Street NE is currently being created. The plans should be finished by spring.

Central Avenue Bicycle Planning Study

A detailed design for bicycle lanes between 2nd Street S and 37th Avenue NE is also being created. MnDOT has recently notified Public Works staff that Central Avenue (Highway 65) from Washington to 27th Avenues will be repaved in 2011 or 2012. Implementation of any bike improvements should be included in this future MnDOT paving project.

Riverside Avenue

Public Works staff has expanded the discussion around this project to include pedestrian improvements along Cedar Avenue between Riverside Avenue and 6th Street, as well as an east-west connection between the Cedar Riverside LRT station and the intersection of Riverside and 20th Avenues. Any improvements along Riverside are likely to be smaller in scale, because of demands for right-of-way for motor vehicle lanes, bicycle lanes, and on-street parking. The Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan has suggested several improvements to all three corridors. Hennepin County is interested in further detailed discussions along Cedar Ave that may expand or enhance the pedestrian zones.

Franklin/27th Avenues SE

Public Works staff is participating in a planning project initiated by Hennepin County to evaluate the five-legged intersection of Franklin, 27th, and East River Parkway, to improve traffic flow. The study is expected to be completed in August of 2009. Because of this timing issue, the project was removed for consideration.

Emphasis on Pedestrian Projects

A detailed list of twenty-seven (27) improvement projects has emerged from the Pedestrian Master Plan as being potential NTP projects (see Attachment C table). Some of these pedestrian projects overlap with the Attachment A projects described above. From this Attachment C table, nine (9) projects have emerged as better candidates for further consideration for NTP funding which are denoted in the far right column.

Geographic Equity Evaluation

In order to emphasize geographic equity of bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, Public Works evaluated existing and funded infrastructure. In the bicycling realm, two maps were created (see Attachment D) which detail existing bikeways, as well as bikeways anticipated to be in place by 2010. A ½ mile buffer was created around bike paths and a ¼ mile buffer around bike lanes. This analysis revealed several areas of Minneapolis where the bikeway distribution falls short. Notably, this includes most of the southern border of Minneapolis, as well as a large portion of the western border, adjacent to Edina. Four pockets exist in South Minneapolis, as well as three in North Minneapolis, two in Northeast, and two in Southeast.

The above discussed Attachment C table of potential pedestrian improvements for NTP funding is distributed geographically as follows:

- ❖ There were 27 projects identified within five geographic sectors
- ❖ The 27 projects (some touching more than one sector) had the following distribution:
 - North = 7 projects

- East = 9 projects
- Downtown = 6 projects
- South = 7 projects
- Southwest = 4 projects

List of Projects for Consideration

Combining the Attachment A TLC identified projects and the 9 Attachment C Pedestrian Projects, City staff met, developed, and prioritized the projects as listed in Attachment E. Three prioritization categories were created: high, medium, and low. Each project was prioritized by considering factors such as project viability, location in a highly visible area, geographic sector, availability of matching funds, and overlap with current economic development efforts. A general idea of cost has also been included. \$5 million is the total amount available for NTP awards in Round 3.

BAC/PAC Feedback

On January 7th the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PAC) met and commented on the list of projects in Attachment E.

The BAC passed a motion concurring with the rankings on the project list, with a desire to use innovative Option C (a bicycle boulevard) on the Southern Connection to Richfield project.

The PAC passed a motion concurring with the rankings on the project list, with the exception that three projects be moved from the medium category to high category. Those projects are 1) 5 Pedestrian Projects on Existing NTP Bicycle Projects, 2) Franklin Avenue, and 3) Hennepin/Lyndale/15th/Vineland.

Recommendation

Based on the above efforts, Public Works is seeking City Council concurrence on this Attachment E list of projects, particularly in the high priority category, along with consideration for three medium priority category pedestrian projects as noted by the PAC. These medium projects would be additional and not replacements for the high priority projects.

This direction will allow Public Works to have further TLC discussions and develop projects working towards potential inclusion in the final Round 3 solicitation. After these discussions, Public Works will return to City Council with an update and any further actions (such as submitting more detailed proposals for project A, B, C, etc.). Public Works will keep the City Council abreast of any other projects in the medium priority category which fall into these discussions, as applicable.

Update on Bike Sharing Proposal

Transit for Livable Communities received 16 letters of intent for innovative demonstration projects, of which the bike sharing proposal was one. On January 7, 2009, a letter was received from TLC indicating that the Minneapolis bike sharing proposal had been selected for further development. See Attachment F for this letter. A full proposal is due on February 18, 2009. Staff will return to the T&PW Committee on January 27th with this proposal.

Attachments:

- A – TLC Developed List of Projects (previous Attachment D from 12/14/08 Council Action)
- B – Potential Alignments for a Southern Bicycle Connection (to Richfield)
- C – Potential NTP Projects from the Pedestrian Master Plan
- D – Existing & Funded Bikeways with ½ Mile and ¼ Mile Buffers
- E – Potential Projects for NTP Round 3 Funding
- F – TLC Invitation for Further Development of Bike Sharing Proposal