Penn Avenue S Reconstruction

2nd Public Meeting Notes

March 6, 2012

Armatage Recreation Center Multipurpose Room

Attendees: 50 signed in, included mostly residents, a few business proprietors and several bike advocates

City Staff: Jeff Handeland, Shaun Murphy and Council Aide Ben Hecker

- Jeff Handeland started the meeting at 6:05 p.m.
- Purpose of meeting
 - Inform attendees of basic project information such as schedule, funding and assessments
 - Gain timely input from attendees pertinent to geometric layout design such that one of two layouts being presented will be proposed for City Council approval in early April, 2012.
- Basic scope of reconstruction project and reason for reconstruction rather than mill & overlay.
- Schedule
- Construction Phasing
 - o South of 54th will be reconstructed in 2013
 - o North of 54th will be reconstructed in 2014
 - Decision was based on minimizing impact to businesses, staging needs for gas main replacement, and coordination with MnDOT's redecking of the bridge over MN-62 which is scheduled for 2013.
- Explanation of funding and assessments
- Updates
 - Ash trees will be replaced in coordination with the project (trees from MN-62 to 54th St are almost all Ash)
 - o MnDOT to redeck bridge over MN-62 in 2013
- Highlights of existing geometry on Penn Avenue
 - Narrow pavement width north of 54th Street not to MSA standards for current configuration with parking on both sides
 - Narrow boulevards south of 54th Street
 - o Wider width available south of 60th Street
- Explanation of some of the factors Public Works considers in designing a street reconstruction
- Summary of public input to date and subsequent/relevant design solutions
- Important bicycling considerations for the corridor
- Presentation of typical cross sections for each of two layouts
 - Layout A or Layout 1 (bike lanes south of 60th, keeps parking on 5500, 5400 and 5500 blocks)

o Layout B or Layout 2 (full-distance separated bike path, keeps parking near 50th)

• Discussion Included:

- Further explanation that a reconstruction is the appropriate scope of work due to the deteriorating underlying concrete near the joints in that concrete. A mill and overlay will not suffice.
- Question and answer about duration which is expected to be approximately April to
 October or November for each phase
- Observation that north-bound traffic backs-up at 50th. Request to improve traffic flow such as by retiming, but not at the cost of reducing parking. Timing study for south Minneapolis is currently underway.
- Concerns about removing parking from one side:
 - reduction in overall parking is a concern near business nodes
 - visitors to residences need to park across the street and therefore walk across
 Penn
 - vehicles backing-out of driveways will not have parking lane to back into
- o Concerns voiced about bike path:
 - Pedestrian –bike conflicts/accidents
 - Vehicle-bike conflicts/accidents where driveways cross bike path
 - Limited space to store snow removed from path
 - Leaving the west boulevard north of 54th Street without trees (one attendee voiced concern about losing noise buffering benefit of the trees)
 - Cost of bike path/use of tax money
 - Question and answer about bike volumes. Jeff Handeland pointed-out that part of the idea of constructing better bike facilities is to promote cycling. Shaun Murphy gave bike count of 100 bikes per day. Shaun explained that many cyclists do not want to ride on Penn as it currently is. The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee requested a bike path be considered with reconstruction of Penn. Shaun suggested that a bike path would be more compatible with children and recreational riders including some residents of Penn.
- One attendee commented that the new design with some tapers and bumpouts might slow traffic down
- Another attendee voiced observations that bumpouts:
 - Do not slow traffic once motorists get used to them
 - Decrease the effectiveness of snow plowing
- Jeff Handeland concurred that he is not counting on bumpouts to slow traffic, but rather to shorten pedestrian crossing distance and allow pedestrians and motorists to better see one another before pedestrians leave the curb ramp.
- One attendee called for a show of hands by all who would like the curb lines to stay where they are. About ten people raised their hands. Jeff reminded people that is actually not an option, but remarked that it was an interesting poll.
- Question and answer about depths of range of options at this point in the project process. Jeff Handeland explained that he gather input on January 10th and the

following weeks which helped shape the two layouts being presented. In order to design the project in time for a 2013 construction start, one of these two layouts needs to go forward, perhaps with minor changes, so that a layout can be approved on April 3, 2012. Otherwise, the project could be delayed and Penn reconstruction could not be coordinated with the overpass redecking and/or could be disrupted with construction activities for three years instead of two years.

- Concerns about how the decision between the two layouts will be made and if attendees input is really considered or if the meeting is only to placate the attendees. Another resident provided some assurance that Public Works is definitely considering attendee input as evidenced by some of the layout features and other design solutions currently being presented. Jeff Handeland explained that he will take the input from the meeting and from emails and phone calls, communicate the consensus items to appropriate staff and elected officials, consider their input, and recommend a layout for approval by the City Council. His letter is due March 23 for the April 3, 2012 Council committee meeting.
- o Jeff Handeland stated that he is hearing a fairly significant consensus for Layout 1 (no bike path north of 60th). No one disagreed.
- Shaun Murphy suggested that Public works could discuss an alternate route north of 60th.
- A few attendees commented that wider lanes might better accommodate buses and cyclists on the street – Shaun Murphy explained that Public Works would probably concentrate bike facility improvements on one route (rather than widening lanes on Penn and designating an alternate route on side streets)
- Jeff Handeland thanked everyone for attending and encouraged people to stay afterward to take a closer look at the layouts and also to email or call him with any input they were not able to voice at the meeting or to reinforce concerns which they did state at the meeting.