

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Present: Philip Ailiff, Neal Baxter, Kathleen Mayell, Jennifer Edwards, Scott Engel, Jason Lord, Diane Hansen, Donna Hemp, Dan Herber, Stefanie Toftey, Peter Janelle, Michael Jischke, Don Ostrom, Julia Tabbut; Mackenzie Turner, Rose Ryan, Mike Mechtenberg, Joe Bernard, Sarah Stewart, Julie Danzl, Leslie Foreman, Shaun Murphy; Robin Garwood of the BAC.

Chairman Don called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM. He invited Stefanie Toftey (ward 6) to introduce herself, then asked the rest of us to follow suit.

Approval of Minutes for February

Dan moved to approved. Approved.

Announcements from Committee Members

Shaun: Ethics training for members needs to be finished. Trivia night has been cancelled.

Sarah: the Health Dept. applied for a Road Map to Health grant, and won. These are unrestricted funds, and much thought will precede their use.

Programs & Policies Subcommittee—Dan Herber

Dan presented a lengthy resolution on snow clearance (which find at the end of these notes).

Discussion ensued.

Donna: can the plows dump away from the corners?

Kathleen: Does this get specific enough? Will it work?

Don: we, the subcommittee, thought we struck a good balance here.

Kathleen: has the PAC ever before sent a resolution like this to the Council?

Dan: we sent a letter recommending action. This plays into the City's own idea of setting priorities for snow removal.

Leslie: the Pilot Program was expanded to 3 neighborhoods this year. On the first complaint, the property owner is sent a letter and given a deadline for clearing the sidewalk. If a re-inspection shows the sidewalk was not cleared, the address is given to a subcontractor. The subcontractor has 48 hours to clear the walk. If a second complaint is received in the same winter no letter is issued to the property owner, the address is given directly to a subcontractor. The contractor has 48 hours to clear the walk. Staff would be willing to issue a full report on the program to the PAC.

Shaun: Pedestrian Master Plan advocates setting priorities. The Pedestrian Priority Corridors are in green on the attached map.

Leslie: foreclosed properties pose another problem.

Don: several missing bus routes should be added. But getting started is the priority.

Michael: schools aren't located on the map either.

Julie: we're working with Public Works to incorporate schools into their priority routes.

Scott: "The perfect is the enemy of the good." I think this resolution and the map are splendid!

Robin Garwood: getting this in sooner rather than later is critical. And the City can build better enforcement of clearance into bus shelter contracts.

Approved.

Overview of Pedestrian Overlay Districts—Joe Bernard

The goal of these is to work toward an enhanced pedestrian experience. In Whittier, locals wanted improvements along Nicollet. Minimum parking requirements were removed, and surface lots will gradually be removed. The Planning Commission approved these changes, the Council will vote later.

Scott: do these Districts overlap the Pedestrian Priority Corridors?

Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee Report

Minnehaha Avenue ACTION item:

The Minneapolis PAC recommends the following for the Minnehaha Avenue reconstruction project:

- A "2-way cycle track" design option, which improves the pedestrian environment better than the "on-street bike lanes" option by reducing crosswalk distances;
- Cycle track design which leads bicyclists to yield to transit users who are boarding and alighting near the "2-way cycle track";
- Tighter corners than currently proposed, in order to reduce crosswalk distances further;
- Wider sidewalks than currently proposed, between Lake Street and 31st Street;
- High visibility continental style crosswalk markings, in permanent material;
- A refuge island and marked crosswalk for pedestrians at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue & 27th Avenue;
- Further pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Minnehaha Avenue and 46th Street, where a pedestrian was fatally struck in 2009. **Unanimously approved.**

7 Corners Action item

The Minneapolis PAC supports the Minneapolis Public Works Department's proposed pedestrian improvements at the intersection of Washington and Cedar Avenues, including zebra stripe markings at all the crosswalks, and countdown timers and ramps on all four corners. **Unanimously approved**

Scott: Is happy to see the PAC's influence on this project and pleased with the outcome.

Shaun: They're narrowing the roadways and widening the sidewalks significantly.

Robin: There will be no refuge islands or medians in the final version of the plan, but crossing distances have been shortened.

Michael: We didn't reference bumpouts in the action item, and those are great too.

W 46th Street ACTION item

The Minneapolis PAC supports the addition of bump outs at Colfax, Bryant and Aldrich Avenues, as well as zebra crosswalk markings at Bryant Avenue, on the 46th Street West reconstruction project.

Unanimously approved

Scott and Don: Everybody should come to the subcommittee meetings. That's where things get done!

Update on Capital Improvement Program

- Shaun: Hasn't heard back from the relevant city staff person to learn whether our proposed list of projects was taken into account. He'll still work on getting an update.
- Scott: Is concerned that it wasn't and is frustrated.
- Stefanie: We should be sure to coordinate with other plans (Met Council's, etc.)
- Shaun: The goal of this is pedestrian-only improvement projects.
- Scott: 7 Corners is a good example of that.

Update on Currie Park Development

- Julia: The developers of this project came to this week's Planning Commission hearing prepared to allow pedestrian access in the pedestrian-preferred location. That is also what city staff recommended and what the Commission voted to approve. Staff referenced the PAC in their reasoning.
- Robin: This is a huge win for the PAC.
- Shaun: At a recent community meeting about 46th Street a council member also referenced the PAC in response to business owners' objections to bumpouts.

City Council Processes & Procedures

- Leslie: There are public hearings and committee meetings that the public (including PAC members) can attend. Click the City Council tab on the city's website to access the calendars and agendas.

www.minneapolismn.gov The TWP (Transportation and Public Works) and the Ways and Means committees may be especially relevant to us. There is a list serve you can join to get agendas and outcomes. You can also contact your council members directly, especially those on the TWP committee. The PAC's "clout is really jelling", so go make the most of it.

- Diane: Should we get PAC approval, or just go?

- Julia, Leslie, Shaun: Just be sure to clearly differentiate between the PAC's opinion and your own. It's ok to present a resolution we passed, or to reference past resolutions on similar issues. It's also ok to say you're a member while sharing your own opinions so long as you state that that's what you're doing.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00

***The following resolution from the Programs & Policies Subcommittee was approved:

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan was developed by city staff and citizens over the course of 2007-09 and approved by the City Council on October 16, 2009, http://www.minneapolismn.gov/pedestrian/pedestrian_pedestrian-masterplan

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan provides:

"Walking is an essential mode of transportation for everyone who lives, works, plays in or visits Minneapolis."

"Walking and walking in conjunction with transit and bicycling provides equitable access to jobs, recreation, community, goods and services for all citizens. Walking is also a critical component of the public transportation system. In order to make public transit a viable choice for more people, the walking environment to/from and at transit stops must be safe, comfortable and convenient."

"Incomplete snow clearance discourages people from walking and using transit, poses significant accessibility barriers for many pedestrians, and can pose safety hazards for pedestrians who find it easier to walk in the street. Poor snow and ice clearance on pedestrian facilities is one of the biggest concerns raised through the Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan process.";

WHEREAS, the Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan's findings include:

"Enforcement of private property owner responsibilities is complaint-based and can be slow."

"There is no designated time frame for the snow clearance responsibilities of the City."

"Transit stops without shelters are often not adequately cleared of snow."

"Curb ramps and corners are often difficult to clear of snow.";

WHEREAS, the PAC finds that the above findings of the Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan remain as true today as they did in 2009 when the Plan was approved by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, when safe pedestrian accessibility is not adequately maintained, even for short durations, many of our residents are denied basic access, safety, and dignity in meeting daily travel needs;

NOW THEREFORE, the PAC recommends the City Council allocate funds and take the necessary steps to:

1. Enforce sidewalk snow and ice clearance ordinances for all property owners.

Problem: In the Minneapolis Pedestrian Master Plan, the City Council has appropriately recognized snow and ice clearance as a public safety and health issue, but the enforcement system and process continues to address this problem merely as a nuisance.

Solution: A new enforcement approach is needed that results in measurable compliance. New tools such as an administrative civil fine mechanism, additional sidewalk inspectors, [use of private contractors to speed clearance of noncompliant sidewalks](#), and inclusion of maintenance requirements in city permits should be given strong consideration.

2. Clear intersection corners, crossings, and ~~priority~~ pedestrian priority corridors of snow and ice and do so in a timely manner.

Problem: Snow clearance is inconsistent from one property to the next, and plows create large mounds of snow at corners that are often very difficult to remove. These mounds of snow and which block walking access at intersections and prevent proper drainage of water to the storm sewers resulting in pools of ice at corners.

Solution: At a minimum, enhanced sidewalk and corner snow clearance is needed along ~~priority~~ pedestrian priority corridors to ensure safe pedestrian travel. Pedestrian priority corridors include those used for commercial, community, or transit activity and are identified in the Minneapolis Street Lighting Plan,

http://www.minneapolismn.gov/publicworks/transplan/comp/streetlighting_docs_mpls-street-lighting-policy,

which was approved by the City Council on January 9, 2009. See the attached map. Additional funding is needed to effect this solution.

3. Enforce snow clearance requirements at transit stops in the public right of way.

Problem: Transit stops often remain impassable or dangerous due to snow and ice accumulation. Vendors that contract with the City to sell advertising at bus shelters do a poor job of snow clearance. Clearance duties involve multiple governmental jurisdictions and snow and ice clearance efforts at transit boarding and alighting areas are not always coordinated.

Solution: ~~Clear Better~~ snow and ice ~~removal~~ at transit shelters and other transit stops (boarding and alighting areas) maintained by Metro Transit. Clarify who is responsible for snow and ice clearance at transit stops. Where private parties benefit from the use of transit shelters for advertising, a portion of the revenue generated from such contracts should be dedicated to snow and ice removal at transit stops.

(Plus attached map of the pedestrian priority corridors)