

Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee
Encouragement, Enforcement, and Education Subcommittee

Agenda -- DRAFT

May 17, 2012

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Commuter Connection Conference Room

(US Bank Plaza Building, 220 S 6th St, STE 230)

1. Member introductions/Approve agenda (4:00 - 4:05)
2. Bike Walk Move Evaluation (Sara Kretman Stewart and Hillary Reeves 4:05 -4:35)
3. Bicycle-friendly business districts (Nick Mason. 4:35-5:05)
4. Electric-assist pedicab update (5:05-5:15)
5. Open Streets Permitting Process Proposal (5:15-5:30)
6. Other items/Announcements (5:15 --5:30)

Other/For information/For future:

7. Economic impact of bicycling (currently postponed...pending confirmation from CPED)

Proposal to pilot new Open Streets permitting process on Lowry Avenue Event, September 2012

Background

Open Streets or “Ciclovía” events have been held in major cities in the United States and around the world. They typically occur on Sundays, and open major thoroughfares to comfortable walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized transportation and physical activity. Open Streets events are organized for public benefit, and have a number of public purposes:

- Promoting physical activity, especially through biking and walking
- Increasing community cohesion
- Demonstrating an alternative vision of how public space can be organized and utilized

The first Minneapolis Open Street event was held in June of 2011, on Lyndale Avenue South between 22nd Street and 42nd Street. It was organized by the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition and funded by Blue Cross and Blue Shield. All organizing and event-day activities have been on a volunteer basis.

The June 2011 event was extremely successful: approximately [x] people attended, small businesses along the avenue saw an increase in revenue, and the event garnered significant media attention. Several other Minnesota cities have planned city-run Open Streets events using the Lyndale event as a model. A second Open Streets event on Lyndale will be held on June 10, 2012.

There is significant interest in North Minneapolis to have an Open Streets event on Lowry Avenue, from approximately 2nd Street N to the Theodore Wirth Parkway. This event has been tentatively planned for September of 2012. The Bicycle Coalition has sought and received a \$10,000 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield for this event.

However, it is unclear that a second event in 2012 is possible without improvements to the City’s permitting processes for Open Streets events.

Permitting Process Problems

The City of Minneapolis currently requires Open Streets events to go through the standard block event permit process. This is problematic in several ways. Block events are typically organized for a private purpose. They often charge an entrance fee for participants and offer a set of structured activities (musical performances, etc). They typically close streets in a limited geographic area.

In contrast, Open Streets events are for a public purpose, free for participants, offer few structured activities, and take place over a long stretch of roadway – the Lyndale event was about two miles long, and the proposed event on Lowry will be a similar length.

The City’s permit requirements added significant costs and difficulty to the Lyndale Open Streets events:

- The block event permit requires petition signatures from 75% of the properties along the Open Streets route. On Lyndale, this amounted to [x] required signatures. On Lowry, it will mean [y] signatures.
- The costs for police services and barricades accounted for [\$x] of the total [\$y] event budget, or [z%]. The 2011 event was supported by a \$20,000 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield. The 2012 event has received only \$10,000 from Blue Cross and Blue Shield.
- The cost for police services reflects the City's decision to require two uniformed police officers at each signalized intersection, which in practice appears to have been more than was necessary.

Best Practices from Other Cities

Many US cities provide direct and indirect support to Open Streets or Ciclovía events. Some cities directly fund the events through their transportation or health departments, while some offer in-kind support in the form of barricades and police services.

Cities that provide funding for Open Streets events, in whole or part, include New York City; San Francisco; Los Angeles; Portland, OR; Cambridge, MA; Roanoke, VA; and Tucson, AZ.

No other US city appears to require Open Streets events to gather formal signatures of support from any percentage of property owners along the event's route.

Proposal:

The City of Minneapolis will co-sponsor the September Open Streets event on Lowry Avenue with the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition, through a formal resolution by the Minneapolis City Council. The September event will be a pilot for a new Open Streets event permitting process. The event will be evaluated and the lessons learned will help craft an ordinance and/or policy change related to Open Street event permitting.

The City's co-sponsorship will allow the following:

- The event will be publicized through City communications channels.
- Rather than use the 75% petition threshold required for block events, the City and Open Streets organizers will gain the support of appropriate neighborhood and business associations: [list].
- Permit fees for the event will be waived.
- The number of police officers present for the event will be the minimum necessary. The City will empower trained volunteers to meet some of the traffic direction needs in conjunction with MPD staff.
- The City will establish a traffic volume minimum (for example, 5,000 ADT) for signalized intersections that require police presence. Signalized intersections with traffic volumes below that established minimum will be barricaded.
- 50% of police time costs will be covered by the City of Minneapolis.
- The City will cover 50% of the costs of barricades for the event. Barricades will be set up in a way that does not impede pedestrian and bicycle travel along Lowry Avenue.