

Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee Recommendations on Minnehaha Avenue Reconstruction

Adopted 6/26/2013 by the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee commends Hennepin County Public Works for taking more time to design a better layout for a protected bicycle facility on Minnehaha Avenue, and requests that Hennepin County Public Works return to the BAC Engineering Subcommittee to further discuss details of a protected bicycle facility design for Minnehaha Avenue, including:

- Designs for bus stops that will give bus riders adequate space to board and exit buses, and define the conflict zone between bus riders and bicyclists in the protected bikeway, without an unnecessary loss of boulevard trees. Options include:
 - o Stopping buses in the travel lane, rather than in bus pull-out areas. With service once every half hour, this should not have a significant impact on congestion or travel times for vehicular traffic, and in-lane stops will be better for transit riders, bicyclists, pedestrians (especially those crossing Minnehaha at bus stops) and boulevard trees.
 - o Reducing the width of the bus pull-out areas. Currently, the travel lane and bus pull-out areas together are 20.5 feet wide. It would be possible for virtually all vehicles to pass stopped buses in a much narrower space; interactions with wider vehicles will be rare enough to cause very little delay.
 - o Reducing the width of both the protected bikeway and the bus loading and unloading zone. Ten feet for both the trail and the loading/unloading zone, for a total of twenty feet of width, is much more space than is necessary to facilitate safe loading and unloading and crossings of the protected bikeway.
- Designs for intersections that will address the County's legitimate safety concerns, including such options as:
 - o Colorized conflict zones, possibly using the thermoplastic product that the City has used on 15th Avenue Southeast for increased durability.
 - o Bike phases at signalized intersections. These likely do not need to be entirely separate from vehicular phases, but to lead those phases that will allow vehicles to turn across the protected bike facility.
 - o Speed tables on non-signalized intersections. There is a question as to whether MSA will allow speed tables on MSA streets, and that question should be answered. If a variance is required for this treatment, it should be considered.
 - o Bike boxes or other options to facilitate turns by bicyclists across Minnehaha.
 - o Innovative motion-activated warning signs, similar to what has been installed on the University of Minnesota Transitway.
- Rethinking of parking restrictions near intersections, to bring them into line with the recommendations in the NACTO protected bikeway guide.
- Design of the connection from a two-way cycletrack on the west side of the roadway to the two existing one-way bike lanes to the north.
- Design of a protected bikeway connection north to the Midtown Greenway.

The BAC further recommends that the County revise both the protected bikeway and standard bike lane concepts to:

- Improve the safety of the intersection of Lake Street and Minnehaha Avenue.
- Reduce the turning radii at intersections to (a) shorten pedestrian crossings and (b) discourage high-speed turns, thus improving pedestrian safety.
- Wrap the curb bump outs around the corners, so that the pedestrian crossing distances across E-W streets are shortened, similar to the way the curb bump outs are intended to shorten the crossings of Minnehaha.
- Responding to the community priorities presented in the Hennepin County Community Works & Transit outreach, maximize green space in the corridor, including prioritizing trees over lane expansions and the addition of left-turn lanes, adding left turn lanes only where strictly necessary.
- Reduce the southbound roadway to a single lane north of Lake Street, in order to (a) minimize the pedestrian crossing distance of Minnehaha at Lake Street, (b) avoid the merging of traffic lanes along the block south of Lake Street, which has frequent mid-block pedestrian crossing activity.
- Use current or reduced volumes of traffic when projecting future motorized vehicle volumes, so that the project remains compliant with the policies adopted in the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan. Analysis of the need for left-turn lanes should be based on current traffic volumes.

Because Hennepin County has not designed and implemented cycle tracks, the Minneapolis BAC recommends that Hennepin County hire a traffic engineering firm that has experience with designing and implementing cycle tracks to help with the design of Minnehaha Avenue.