

Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting Wednesday, August 2, 2017

Present: Phillip Ailiff, Neal Baxter, Shaina Brassard, Julia Curran, Olivia Hovland, Barbara Olson, Christopher Hoffer, Peter Vader, Rachel Bell, Donna Hemp, Dan Herber, Julia Tabbut; Matthew Dyrdaahl, Julie Danzl, Sarah Stewart, Rattana Sengsoulichanh, Mackenzie Turner Bargaen, Millicent Flowers; guest: Council Member Lisa Bender

Resolutions approved in August, 2017:

Resolution #1--Water Works Park Project

The PAC overall supports the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Waterworks Park Project. The PAC appreciates the reactivation of this significant space at the terminus of the Stone Arch Bridge, a major pedestrian thoroughfare and connection. In particular, the PAC supports:

1. The year-round activation of space and provision of public restrooms;
2. The ADA- and Complete-Streets- compliant walking connection between 5th and 3rd Aves S;
3. The decision to bury electric lines in order to free up additional sidewalk space along 1st St S;
4. The exploration of the feasibility of narrowing the traffic lanes and tightening the curve of the road where 5th Ave S becomes 1st St S;
5. Traffic calming measures on West River Parkway, not solely at designated pedestrian crossings;
6. The stairs planned to provide a pedestrian connection between the 3rd Ave S Bridge and West River Parkway;

The PAC urges the design team to prioritize walkability by retaining all existing pedestrian routes and crossings, including the ADA-accessible Whitney ramp at 1st St S and 5th Ave S, even as more routes and connections are added. Instead of removing options for walking, we request that the MPRB explore design solutions, with the help of the City where needed, to reduce potential walk/bike and walk/drive conflicts.

The MPRB parks, including the Stone Arch Bridge, serve as year-round destinations, as well as year-round transportation connections, for those who walk and bike. We appreciate the design team's attention to walking and biking paths within this park, and urge the team to maintain this level of attention to the parks' functions within the broader walk/bike transportation networks. We strongly support the year-round maintenance, including snow clearance, of all walking and biking paths in this park.

Additionally, the PAC requests that the design team work with the City to explore the possibility of establishing 1st St S as a shared street.

Resolution #2--CLIC and BP004

The PAC urges the Mayor and City Council to fund BP004 for pedestrian improvements to intersections and crossings at the full amount requested, despite CLIC's recommendation to reduce its funding. Budget items like this are one of the few tools we have to improve safety at locations that are problematic specifically for people on foot, including people with disabilities.

Chair Julia Tabbut called the meeting to order at 4:06 PM, and asked all present to introduce themselves.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the July meeting were approved by all present without demur.

Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee Meeting—Julia Curran & Peter Vader

Let's begin with the Water Works resolution. The Park Board wants to add concessions and rest rooms in this undeveloped area at the west end of the Stone Arch Bridge. They also want to strengthen what's left of historic walls and add an elevator at the west end. Signs discussing the life of the aboriginal inhabitants here are also under discussion.

Julia read the resolution (#1 above), and Phil seconded. Approved.

Comprehensive Plan Update—Council Member Lisa Bender

Our esteemed guest came to discuss how the PAC can engage in the drafting of a new Comp Plan. The Met Council requires the City to update this document, which will influence policy for the next 30 years.

Work has focused on sustainability, racial equity and health issues for this revision of the Comp Plan. Community engagement has been very robust, and the next meetings, in the fall, will focus on the direction each of the Plan's 14 goals will take. The draft of the Plan will be available early in 2018.

Bender next asked how the PAC can be involved in writing parts of the Plan unrelated to transportation.

Julia C—density of development along corridors competes with the health concerns of those living along those corridors.

Chris—how will small-area plans be used?

LB—newer plans will be more useful, as they fit the new goals better. All of these plans will have to agree with the Plan.

Chris—by all means let the neighborhood organizations know which small-area plans are no longer up to speed.

SB—how will staff receive PAC input?

LB—any way that you can send over your suggestions, they will be heard.

Barbara—how does the community engagement rope in more than the usual people who go to meetings?

Rattana described and explained how CPED involved residents in its “deep cultural organization” meetings.

Infrastructure & Engineering Subcommittee Meeting—Julia Curran & Peter Vader (resumed)

We also heard about the North Loop re-pavement project. A dozen of the area's intersections will be affected. In addition to other improvements, Public Works will install auditory pedestrian signals at the intersections chosen.

Peter: A public meeting about this project is scheduled for August 29 at the downtown public library.

Programs & Policies Subcommittee—Shaina Brassard

We heard from Erin Feehily about the greenway study. A good deal of confusion exists about what distinguishes a greenway from similar ped/bike routes. The study, due at the end of 2017, will define what makes a greenway unique. When the City can explain what distinguishes a greenway, then citizens will be able to determine whether they want one.

Next, Matthew showed us the websites that he will make available to PAC members for informing our understanding of PAC's work. We also came up with a list of topics to discuss in committee.

Shaina read a resolution (#2 above); Neal seconded. Approved.

Shaina reported back from the Upper Harbor Terminal workshop, which she and Peter attended on July 27. The all-day affair seemed too focused on the agenda of the developer, Smart Growth America. Shaina suggested the design include 2 more pedestrian bridges over I-94, to allow local access to the Terminal Park.

New Member Orientation—Matthew Dyrdaahl

Matthew's tip for finding information about pedestrian infrastructure quickly: try searching the internet with the term you want to find, and adding NACTO. Works like a charm!

Next, Matthew explained the structure of the City's Public Works Department. The PAC, he said, exists to pass resolutions on to staff and the City Council. We are expected to encourage walking in the city. Here's what the Public Works staff works on:

Transportation Engineering and Design finishes street plans and sees the plans to completion on the ground.

Other divisions are Transportation Planning and Programming, which prepares the CIPs; Transportation Maintenance and Repair; and Traffic and Parking.

All projects should come before the PAC. Staff presents projects at the beginning of design (0%), and then returns when the design is 30% complete. The plan next goes before the City Council whose approval is required before the plan goes forward.

PAC's advice and suggestions are valued and looked for throughout City government. Project managers are expected to incorporate PAC's suggestions into the finished design.

Dan: The City Council could better evaluate the plans if staff pointed out where a plan strays from the requirements of the Complete Streets policy. PAC should point these exceptions out in resolutions, too.

Announcements

Rattana: This Sunday's Open Streets event takes place in Northeast, along Hennepin and Central, 5th Street and 22nd Avenue.

Neal moved to adjourn; Donna seconded. Approved, and adjourned at 5:55 PM.