

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee Meeting Date: May 8, 2023

For the Metropolitan Council: May 24, 2023

Business Item: 2023-92

Hennepin Ave and 1st Ave NE Bus Lane Project

Proposed Action

Request authorization to execute agreement # 23I017 with Hennepin County for up to \$650,000 to paint bus lanes on portions of Hennepin Ave NE and 1st Ave NE in Northeast Minneapolis.

Summary of Transportation Committee Discussion/Questions

Michael Mechtenberg presented this item. Council Members had several questions:

CM Dolkar: Is this a pilot project, or permanently implemented?

Mechtenberg: This will be permanently implemented.

CM Dolkar: Is this a dedicated transit lane for all day use, or only specific times?

Mechtenberg: Current assumption is all day, pending city-lead traffic study to determine if the bus lane might not be needed during select off-peak or weekend hours.

CM Dolkar: Will traffic signal improvements also be made?

Mechtenberg: The METRO E Line will make signal improvements on the south end of the corridor, planning TBD on the north end.

CM Vento: Given our harsh weather in Minnesota, what is the lifespan of a paint like this?

Mechtenberg: Methyl methacrylate (MMA) has an expected lifespan of 4-10 years and has not shown significant damage or color degradation due to plowing, salting, or freeze/thaw. This combination of longevity and durability make it the preferred material for bus lanes. We are working on alternate designs that reduce the amount of red paint and/or apply it in areas of the road that experience less wear.

CM Vento: Are there any environmental factors that we need to be aware of with MMA?

Mechtenberg: This is a fairly common product used on city streets; I'm not aware of any environmental impacts.

CM Toni Carter: Does the addition of the bus lane narrow the furnishing lane?

Mechtenberg: No, including the bus lane does not widen the street. If we were not moving forward with its use as a bus lane it would instead be used for traffic and/or parking.

Chair Barber: Have we seen changes in traffic flows in areas where we have installed bus lanes?

Mechtenberg: Changing travel patterns from the pandemic have made it more challenging to get a good before and after analysis of bus lane impacts. That said, on Hennepin Ave the bus lane operates in what is otherwise a parking lane, so there are no impacts to general purpose traffic. Along 7th Street in downtown Minneapolis both the bus lane and general purpose traffic appear to be moving with few impacts.

CM Tyronne Carter: Interested in the improvement in the speed of the bus from the bus lane.

Mechtenberg: Generally speaking, we've seen larger improvements in the reliability of bus service. The biggest benefit of bus lanes is that they allow us to operate more consistently, narrowing the range of travel times and thus providing more reliable service to our riders.

Motion by Council Member Morales, seconded by Council Member Dolkar. Motion carried.



Business Item

Metropolitan Council



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Hennepin Ave and 1st Ave NE Bus Lane Project

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| District(s), Member(s): | District 8, Council Member Yassin Osman |
| Policy/Legal Reference: | FM14-2 - Expenditures for the Procurement of Goods, Services, and Real Estate Policy |
| Staff Prepared/Presented: | Lesley Kandaras, Interim General Manager, 612-349-7517 Adam Harrington, Director of Service Development, 612-349-7797 Michael Mechtenberg, Program Manager, 612-349-7793 |
| Division/Department: | Metro Transit / Service Development |

Proposed Action

Request authorization to execute agreement # 23I017 with Hennepin County for up to \$650,000 to paint bus lanes on portions of Hennepin Ave NE and 1st Ave NE in Northeast Minneapolis.

Background

Metro Transit, in partnership with the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, is planning bus lanes on Hennepin Ave NE and 1st Ave NE between NE Main St and SE 7th St. We saw an opportunity to add bus lanes to an existing Hennepin County-lead bike lane improvement project in this segment, and the county agreed. Hennepin County is the lead agency on design and construction, and both the bikeway and bus lanes improvements will be implemented together in 2024.

Four local bus routes – Route 4, 6, 25, and 61 – operate in this corridor, providing about 280 bus trips each weekday. Together, nearly 2,200 customers travel this corridor originating from Minneapolis, Richfield, Edina, Bloomington, and Saint Paul. Note: trip counts and ridership figures are from fall 2022, and do not include Route 10 or Route 17, which are currently operating through this segment on detour.

In 2025 the METRO E Line will begin bus rapid transit service through this segment, adding 80 percent more trips in this area than Route 6 today. Both METRO E Line and local bus service will benefit from these bus lanes through improved speed and reliability of operations.

Red paint, specifically methyl methacrylate (MMA), is commonly used in bus lane applications. Painting the bus lane has shown to reduce bus lane violations between 42-61 percent, improving bus lane performance and reducing the need for more labor-intensive enforcement strategies. MMA has an expected lifespan of 4-10 years and has not shown significant damage or color degradation due to plowing, salting, or freeze/thaw. This combination of longevity and durability make it the preferred material for bus lanes.

Rationale

Hennepin County is the lead agency on design and construction, and both the bikeway and bus lanes improvements will be implemented together in 2024. This business item authorizes Metro Transit to reimburse Hennepin County for costs related to the bus lane.

Council Policy requires Interagency agreements with expenditures valued at greater than \$500,000 be approved by Council.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Investment in high-quality transportation options like bus lanes will advance the thrive outcome of **prosperity**, by making the region more economically competitive through increased workers' access to employment, and support to employers by increasing available workforce with affordable, convenient transportation.

The proposed action also advances the Thrive outcome of **stewardship** by delivering bus lane improvements efficiently with regional partnership from Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis.

Funding

The project is anticipated to be approximately \$650,000. Funding has been identified in the Metro Transit Bus Operations budget.

Small Business Inclusion

There is no direct impact on small businesses with this funding action. The Office of Equity and Equal Opportunity confirmed with Hennepin County that they will be utilizing Federal Funds, received from FHWA, as part of a regional solicitation grant. Therefore, MnDOT's DBE program will be applied to this project.





Hennepin and 1st Ave NE Bus Lanes

Transportation Committee, Business Item 2023-92

Michael Mechtenberg, Program Manager, Service Development

May 8, 2023

Speed and Reliability Program

- Improve the rider experience
- Reduce travel times and improve reliability
 - metrotransit.org/speed-reliability
 - Better Bus Routes – TSP, bus stop spacing, bus lanes, accessibility improvements
 - Bus lanes – transit advantages within a specific corridor

| Corridor | Year | Corridor | Year |
|--------------------|------|---------------------|------|
| Hennepin | 2019 | Lake Street (West) | 2024 |
| 7th Street | 2021 | Hennepin/Lyndale | 2024 |
| Lake Street (East) | 2023 | Hennepin/1st Ave NE | 2024 |

Why Bus Lanes?

- Bypass congestion and reduce merging and turning conflicts
- Paint is shown to improve compliance vs. unpainted lanes
- Highlight the prominence of transit in a corridor
- Provide a more premium feel

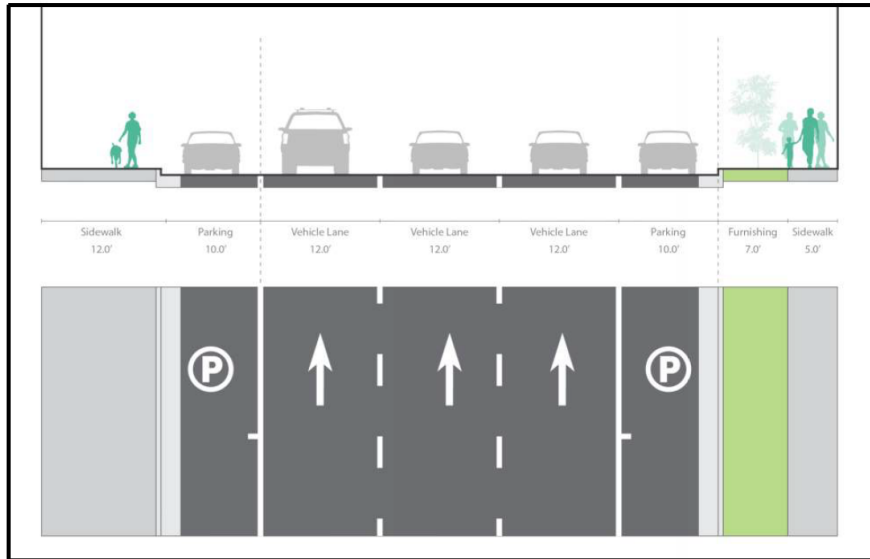


Hennepin and 1st Ave NE Bus Lanes

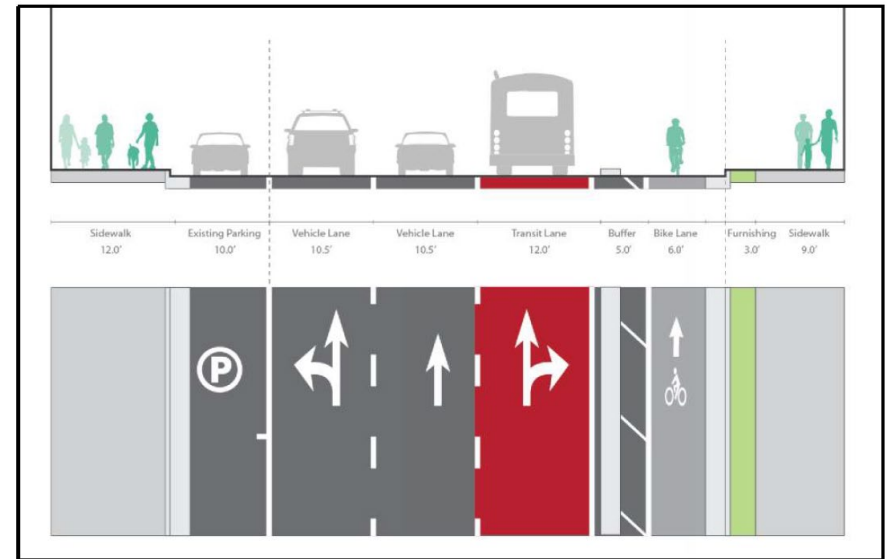
- Planned in partnership with Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis
- Opportunity to add bus lanes in conjunction with county-lead bike lane project
- Strong market for local bus service, including future METRO E Line
- 2024 construction, single year

Hennepin and 1st Ave NE Typical Sections

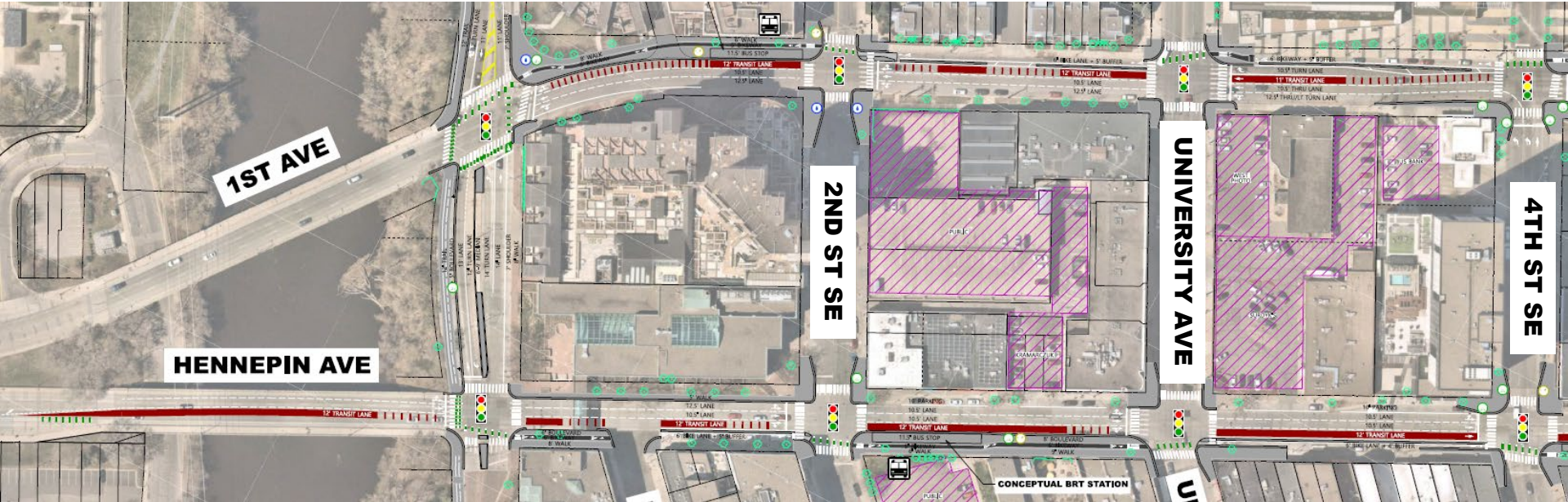
Current



Proposed



Planned Design (West)



Planned Design (East)

