

Minutes of the REGULAR MEETING OF THE TAAC COMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Committee Members Present: Chair David Fenley, Vice Chair Darrell Paulsen, Sam Jasmine, Christopher Bates, Patsy Murphy, Jeffry Dains, John Clark, Claudia Fuglie, Diane Graham-Raff, Erik Henricksen and Richard Rowan.

Committee Members Absent: Kari Sheldon and Heidi Myhre.

Committee Members Excused: *Ken Rodgers and Patty Thorsen.*

Council Staff Present: Doug Cook, Andy Streasick, Council Member Wendy Wulff, Jason Tintes, Heidi Schallberg, Nasser Mussa, Kyle Burrows, Guthrie Byard and Alison Coleman

Public Present: Jake Rueter, MnDOT

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Fenley called the regular meeting of the Council's TAAC Committee to order at 12:35 p.m. on Wednesday, January 6, 2021.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Dains to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Bates, seconded by Dains to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2020 regular meeting of the TAAC Committee. **Motion carried.**

BUSINESS & INFORMATION

1. Network Next

Kyle Burrows, Senior Planner, BRT Projects, Metro Transit
Nassar Mussa, Associate Community Outreach Coordinator

Kyle Burrows spoke to the TAAC committee. We are here to provide an update on the Arterial BRT on Network Next and provide a little update there and answer any questions that this group might have. I will go ahead and get started on that then we will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

We were here last in September. At that point we were sharing an initial set of Arterial BRT corridors that we were considering as well as the results of a screening process that led us to narrow down that group to the 10 corridors that we were getting ready to evaluate in a little bit more detail.

Today, what we will be doing is sharing the results of that more in depth evaluation and the sorting of those corridors into groups based on their near-term priorities for implementation.

The next slide is a reminder that guiding our work throughout this entire process both this portion of our evaluation and all of the steps we have been using going up to this point. We have been using four principles to guide our work through Network Next.

These principles are based on Council policy, shaped by performance data and community input. How our routes are doing in terms of ridership or other metrics and inputs based on communities and priorities with respect on what they want to see from our transit network and what is important to them.

Those principles are based on equity and we will be seeing racial disparities. Working on success to grow ridership on our network. Designing supports of a transit-oriented lifestyle. Ensuring a long term sustainable

growth of the bus network. To make sure that what we are putting out today is sustainable and can remain in place over the long term.

To identify the BRT corridors, through Network Next, we have been following a four-step process. Our focus today is really on the results of step 3, which is the evaluation there. We are taking the narrower group of corridors and had applied a more in-depth evaluation and process to them to help us identify the corridors for near-term, mid-term, and longer-term priorities for implementation.

Our next step, after having done that, is sharing the results of that today, will be to prioritize those near-term corridors to identify the next three lines to implementations. So we will be identifying the F, G and H line from the top tier of corridors into a little bit more detail.

But before getting into too much detail on the results of that Step 3 evaluation, I would like to recap Steps 1 and 2 to make sure we are all back on the same page. So we had initially identified a set of 19 corridors, which are shown here on this map. Earlier in 2020, we identified these corridors based on the principles of what I had articulated earlier and then specifically from the high frequency network based on existing routes today. High ridership corridors. So there are some local routes that aren't currently on the high frequency network that are pretty high ridership. So we included those as well.

Corridors that were previously studied for Arterial BRT's. So that would include things like that the North Snelling/Lexington corridor, which was considered for the E-Line previously as well as other corridors. Then thinking about network balance. Though we want to make sure that we are identifying corridors that are pretty well distributed across the metro in terms of geographic balance between East and West Metro and North and South. But also, the role that those particular corridors play in our overall transit network. So we know for example, that Arterial BRT corridors are really successful when they are into that core route into downtown. Those are the high ridership corridors that go along a main road into downtown. We also want to make sure that we are consistent in considering routes that provide crosstown service. Not necessarily going directly into downtown but go to important parts of the network. And looking at suburb to suburb service as well. We are trying to consider a wide application of those types of services.

Looking at these initial 19 corridors, we screened them down to a more manageable group of 10 corridors for more in-depth evaluation. This map here shows 10 corridors that we evaluated. I will list them here. 63rd/Zane, which is based on the Route 724. The Central Avenue corridor, which is based on the Route 10. The Como/Maryland corridor, which is based on the existing Route 3. The Grand Avenue corridor, which is based on the existing Route 63. The Johnson/Lyndale corridor, which is based on the existing Route 4. The Lowry corridor is based on the existing Route 32. The Nicollet corridor, which is based on the existing Route 18. The Randolph/East 7th corridor based on the Route 74. The Rice/Robert Street corridor, based on a combination of Route 62 and 68. The West Broadway/Cedar corridor, which is based on a combination of the Route 22 and Route 14.

To get to these corridors, we looked at high-level existing levels of transit in those corridors, existing rider demographic and income characteristics. And the current and potential ridership from that particular route to get to these 10 from that initial 19.

In our first round of engagement, on those initial corridors, we also asked folks to let us know which of those key principles that I talked about earlier, are most important to them for us to consider as we evaluated these corridors in a little bit more detail. That input would help us decide how to weight these overall principles as we are evaluating these corridors in detail. This graph shows the advancing equity and reduce regional disparities of folks who participated in our survey. There was about 47 percent of respondents indicated that as their first priority.

Supporting a transit-oriented lifestyle came in second place, which was about half as many people as selected that one than those who selected to advance the equity. Then building on success to grow ridership and ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the bus network were third and fourth respectively.

So we used that input as well as policy guidance from our Council members and from the 2040 Transportation Policy Plan, Thrive SP 2040 to land on the weights for each of these environmental principles. Then to help us identify criteria that corresponds to each one of those principles.

You can see this table shows the principles themselves along with the percentage that the overall score for each corridor that that principle represented. Advance equity and reduce regional racial disparities counted for 50 percent of the total corridor score. Build on success to grow ridership counted for 20 percent of the corridor

score. Design a network that supports a transit-oriented lifestyle counted for 20 percent of the corridor score. Ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the bus network counted for 10 percent of the overall score.

Within that table are the specific evaluation criteria that we used for each principle. I won't go into the details of these specifically, but I would be glad to answer any questions about those as we get close to the end.

The next slide shows a graph of the overall technical results of each corridor. They are arranged in order from highest score to lowest score on this graph. Each of the bar chart is color coded for the score within each particular principle. Going from highest to lowest I will establish what the overall total technical score was.

The Como/Maryland corridor scored 87 out of 100 for the total score. Johnson/Lyndale scored 79 out of 100. West Broadway/Cedar scored 77 out of 100. Nicollet scored 74. Central scored 66. Randolph/East 7th scored 57. Rice/Robert scored 56. Grand scored 51. Lowry scored 47. 63rd/Zane scored 42.

There is a pretty good distribution of scores across each corridor from a technical standpoint. With good groupings at the top, then the middle and towards the bottom. That is the result of those overall evaluation results.

But we know that the specific technical scores doesn't capture necessarily everything that is important about each of these corridors. In particular, we wanted to understand what other planning activities were happening in each particular corridor. So we did a corridor readiness review. So for each of these corridors we identified, we looked for operations to understand if there were any other transit planning studies ongoing in that area or anything else like that that might affect that BRT corridor.

If there were, we decided to remove that corridor from consideration for near-term implementation and to hold it off. So you put it in a middle term or longer-term implementation groupings. That way we avoid duplicative planning work or conflicting transit infrastructure investment where we are saying one thing and another planning effort is saying another thing about the same corridor.

We allowed time for these questions to be worked out between the different agencies that are leading the various planning efforts. That review affected four corridors. The West Broadway/Cedar corridor and the Lowry corridor were both affected by the Blue Line Extension project. So you recall that that project right now is considering other alignment options off the freight rail corridor. In order to make sure to allow that process to play itself out, we wanted to avoid getting too far ahead of ourselves in that area. On particular corridors that might be potential alternative alignments for the Blue Line corridor extension. So we held off on those two corridors.

The other corridors affected are the Nicollet BRT corridor. That is affected by the Nicollet/Central modern streetcar project led by the City of Minneapolis. You recall that that project is identified from basically just over the river in Minneapolis along Central but then down along Nicollet Mall and Nicollet Avenue to Lake Street. A big portion of that overlaps with our proposed Nicollet BRT corridor. So we wanted to hold off for now until we answer more questions about that project.

Then the Randolph/East 7th corridor. It is affected by the Riverview Modern Streetcar project, which is led by Ramsey County. That project is primarily along the West 7th portion of the area. So that impacts this corridor as well. So that doesn't mean that we are saying we won't be doing these corridors. But rather that they make more sense that they should be at that mid-term or longer-term evaluation rather than starting right away with those questions about these.

The next slide. This image here, which is a little bit complicated. So I will talk through it real quickly. It combines the technical evaluation of each corridor with that readiness result. It has the technical score for each corridor across the top. Arranged from highest to lowest. Whether or not the corridor is affected by another planning effort. So the corridors that we just talked through. If they are, then we are saying we are holding on to those corridors or we are not considering those corridors for Tier 1 implementation. So we would consider them for Tier 2 or Tier 3. But not for Tier 1.

Removing those corridors from consideration. We then just went down the line from the highest to lowest technical score to identify the corridors that are in Tier 1. That is in the near-term implementation. So the corridors identified in the near-term for implementation are the Como/Maryland corridor. The Johnson/Lyndale corridor. The Central Avenue Corridor. Then the Rice/Robert corridor. We have identified four corridors for consideration in the near-term.

Then looking at the corridors eligible for the main corridors. We then just went back down the line from the highest to lowest available technical scores. So Tier 2 becomes what is Broadway/Cedar/Nicollet corridor. Then Randolph/East 7th corridor. Then Tier 3 becomes Grand, Lowery and 63rd/Zane. That is based on their technical score.

The next slide. There is a map of these corridors as well as the key indicating which corridors are identified from near-term, mid-term and longer-term. It is a little bit easier way to understand this. You can see again those near-term corridors for implementation are Central, Como/Maryland, Johnson/Lyndale and Rice/Robert. Mid-term is Nicollet, Randolph/East 7th, and West Broadway/Cedar. Then the longer-term are 63rd/Zane, Grand Avenue and Lowry Avenue.

The next slide. Our next steps here. This is we are in our engagement period. We are asking for the public's input on those top tier corridors that we have identified. In terms of which of their preferences would we implement the corridors first, second and third. Then we have a number of different means of getting the word out about this and really asking folks to give us feedback on the survey. Based in part of results of that engagement we will be identifying the F, G and H lines from that group of four corridors. Those will be implemented. Likely beginning in 2025, following the implementation of the E-Line and then working from there.

So we would be going to the Metropolitan Council in March to approve the recommended F, G and H lines. Then going to TAB for action on the F-Line investment in April of 2021.

I will turn it over to Nasser to update you on our public engagement so far.

Nasser Mussa spoke to the TAAC committee. As of now, we are at 3,000 surveys that we sent out on December 14. We sent the surveys out to a number of areas. That includes Metro Transit users, Met Council Section 8 Housing voucher holders. It was also sent to the list of cities that are within the transit area. We also sent them out to the community. They should be returned by January 20.

We are planning to conduct an in-person survey next week. So that will allow us to attract people who would not get the opportunity to do an online survey. For those who don't have access to a computer. This is to let people know about the activities going on and collect their opinion about this project. We will be targeting an area within St. Paul, Minneapolis, Roseville and Bloomington city.

We did also published the survey in a number of media outlets that include MPR, Pioneer Press, Star Tribune and other community media as well. We also put some posters out where people can scan them and use that information for the survey. We will continue engaging this way until January 20. So that is where we are in engagement. If you can help us promote this information, send a link to the group or community members.

Bates said yesterday they announced that the state is going to be in a \$1.2 billion deficit by the end of the biennium. Under federal and state law we have to have a balanced budget. Are projects like this going to get pushed out further because of the finances in both the state and federal level. If that happens, how does that change the demographic?

Burrows said these are currently not funded. A funding source has not been identified for these. So right now, we are far enough out from these corridors, from the potential implementation of these corridors. Hopefully these funding sources will be identified to continue the program as scheduled. Right now, the F Line, which will be the nearest to us would be scheduled to be implemented in 2025. That project would hopefully have some TAB funding potentially allocated to it. that is one of the things we are going to TAB this April to identify potential funding from there.

Looking at the corridors beyond that, there is not funding identified from them, which may change timelines. But we are planning on the timelines we have right now, with the hope that funding is identified for these projects.

Dains said I did have Doug Cook come with Peter Lindsrom to our Lauderdale city council meeting. I have been pushing the various cities to get it on their various websites. I don't know if you had any feedback from the cities themselves. Because I think that that is a good place to put it. My question is how much focus there is on the frequency of the routes because that is the thing I think we keep hearing from people about input. We have the Como/Maryland route on our boundary, the Route 3. The question keeps coming up over and over again.

Burrows said your point about the cities. The cities have been a very helpful resource for us in getting the word out. So I know some have been putting on their website or showing it through their neighborhood organizations and the city. We have been sharing this information with the city staff so that they can help facilitate that as well. But we definitely appreciate the folks from this committee to bring their attention as well.

Then the question about frequency. The basic starting point for this base of service is a bus coming every 10 minutes throughout the day seven days a week. That is our basic starting point and our basic model that we stick with. So that is kind of the plan that we have for these corridors. Is that they would be coming every 10 minutes for most of the day. That would be through the peak periods and most of the day. Then into the evenings. That is they wind down a little bit towards the beginning and the end of the day.

Jasmine said I was curious about your numbers for ridership. When you did those numbers, when were they done? What was the timeline?

Burrows said the existing ridership was in the fall of 2019. Before the pandemic. It is important for us to get a pre pandemic picture of what ridership looks like. That it helps us understand what normal circumstances ridership might look like.

Jasmine said in the wintertime the numbers would probably be increased?

Burrows said typically, our highest ridership periods are generally in the fall, going into the winter. It varies by route. But it is sort of a general trend. It typically has to do with when students and school is in session. Currently, winter is part of that. We definitely anticipate ridership to increase when these corridors are implemented. That seasonable fluctuation does happen in the fall and winter as well. We try to consider that as we are looking to these figures.

Vice Chair Paulsen said can you explain how Robert Street or like the Robert corridor. How would the Evaluation Results Technical Score of 56 or what that 56 means to the project and so forth? How we as committee members or how we as riders can influence the process.

Burrows said specifically, with respect to the Rice/Robert corridor. And really more details to all these corridors. There is something.

Vice Chair Paulsen said what about the numbers for that corridor. I was familiar with that corridor and in the early 90's. Can you explain how the numbers were created?

Burrows said the technical score numbers you are referring to is ultimately the result of the evaluation criteria scores for each of those four principles. Specifically, in respect to Robert Street, the Rice/Robert corridor. That one got a 56. It was slightly worse than average, with respect to the transit-oriented lifestyle principle and the advancing equity and reducing regional disparity principle. The specific details of the free evaluation criteria. The specific results are available in a technical memo we put together that has score by score. But it is available on our website. I can share it with this committee. We can distribute it. It would be helpful if folks can go through it and review in detail if folks are interested in that.

Vice Chair Paulsen said if scoring those criteria and evaluating those 10 dedicated lines. Are the 10 dedicated lines the same ones that we identified in the Governor's budget two years ago? Has it slightly changed, or has it increased?

Burrows said they are slightly different. There is some overlap. Certainly, that was in the Governor's budget. I believe that they looked at the corridors I identified the Arterial Transitway Corridor Study in 2012. This process is updating that. That is taking some new information. Many of the corridors are the same through there. Because they still continue to be good corridors for investment. Some corridors have changed based on how things have changed in the past 10 years. I think you also asked how you as committee members can help influence this. One really helpful thing would be to take out the survey. It is asking for specific input on how we would prioritize between these top tier corridors. And then feedback today. Certainly, we can take that. And then distributing it to organizations that you are connected with or represent or just your networks overall. I think we can help get the word out about the process and about this opportunity I think would be really helpful to us.

Rowan said has there been any targeted outreach towards senior citizens? I know in Roseville we have high numbers of senior housing. Just to get input from them. In addition to that, I will send a survey to AARP and ask them to get it out to the membership.

Burrows said I will turn it over to Nassar if there is specific outreach for the senior citizen communities at the top of my head. That is definitely something that we do as we are getting into the specific locations of specific stations. That is a big constituency that we are thinking about as we are getting into the details of each specific corridor. Nassar, maybe if you get more information.

Nassar said I will share that information when we get more information.

Chair Fenley said Is it fair to say that communities in these areas, if you have overwhelming responses from some and not others, that that can change when these projects get implemented?

Burrows said I would say that we, particularly among the four corridors identified in the near-term, our next step is to identify which of those four should be implemented. The implementation order of those four. So certainly, public feedback and community priorities will be one of the inputs into that recommendation. We don't like to have it be a specific. It is not a specific vote, necessarily. Just because sometimes despite our best efforts it is not always the case that these engagement efforts are representative of the overall community. Sometimes a small organized group can really sway the results of these type of things. But that is certainly something that we are considering. So, if there is one corridor that stands out in popularity, then this is a clear favorite or similarly, there is one that does not have a lot of support, that is important information for the rest of us in making that consideration.

Chair Fenley said that leads me to commending Jeff Dains for doing exactly what the purpose for being on this committee. It is to bring this to the co officials and decision makers and spread information like this throughout the community. So ideally folks with disabilities could be one of those small organized groups that you speak of, Kyle. I know others like Darrell also do this too. I think it is important to point out when our committee is doing what it is intended to do.

Clark said I was just thinking of the politics of equity and regional disparity. Connecting that through the implementation and thinking about this. We have to hang together, or we hang separately. I am interested in any thoughts that Kyle has for members of the committee. This is outside of the discussion here. In terms of mobilizing to act in conference given the upcoming budget problems that Chris was referring to. I realize we only have until the 20th for the surveys.

Chair Fenley said did you talk about minority groups and how they intersect with disability?

Burrows said in terms of what we are able to look at from a demographic standpoint, we are a little bit limited in our data perspective to be looking at different intersections between identities and how they may show up in our data or not. I think the point you bring up stands in that we are trying to look at a broad group of historically disadvantaged communities. Not just limited to any particular individual set of groups. But looking at a broad set of groups as we are considering what equity means and how it applies to our evaluation criteria. In terms of the organizing around these issues, that is an important part of what we are trying to do here today and then analyze what we like to do in our outreach and engagement efforts. I think some community organizations are doing in contacting other stakeholders involved in this process as well.

Vice Chair Paulsen said can you take a look at the 10 pockets? How often do you take that back to the Equity committee or the outside stakeholders outside your own internal walls and say Hey?

Burrows said we have had three engagements like phases throughout this project starting in 2019 about really looking at community priorities and a big part of that push was making grants available for community organizations or individuals to host a community conversation on their own terms, not facilitated by us unless our support was requested. But really about what was the best way we could get in touch with our community and identify what of our priorities like for Metro Transit. That information was a key piece of how helping us identify those key principles that we are using to guide our work. And then the various points throughout this project and every milestone across this project. We have been going back out and checking in with this group, with the Equity Advisory Committee, and also doing public engagement around that to help us check on that.

Chair Fenley said so, it seems that near-term means five years? Is that correct? So, what are the meetings of the middle and long-term?

Burrows said yes, near-term, for planners, is a little bit different than near-term for, how you might normally use that word. Fortunately, for us. There is a lot of process that engineering and environmental that goes into these things. For us, near-term is basically between 2025 and 2030. That five-year window is what we mean by the near-term implementations.

That is not the only thing we will be doing between now and then. We also have, as you are all probably aware that the D-Line is in the light stages of planning work. Then the B-Line and E-line are on deck here as well. That will lead us into 2025. So we have three corridors coming up here that will be opening between now and 2030. And then that near-term and long-term will be in five-year increments. So mid-term would really be from 2030 to 2025. Then long-term is 2035 and beyond. That is all depending on funding rights. It could be less time if the funding becomes available.

2. Statewide Pedestrian System Plan

Jacob Rueter, Principle Planner, MnDOT Office of Transit & Transportation, spoke to the TAAC committee. This is a project that we have been working on for about two years at MnDOT. My role as a bicycle and pedestrian planner has been really a central part of the work that I have been doing as of late. As we get into the presentation, I want to start by sharing that MnDOT uses the National Center on Physical activity on Disability' definition of walking. Which through there is How I Walk campaign that is an inclusive physical activity that are individualized to the ways that people walk through the world around them. They may be using mobility devices: wheelchairs, walkers, canes. MnDOT uses the term walking to describe all the ways that are in the world.

For our Agenda, what we have here today. Hopefully we can have some discussion as well. I will walk you through what our Statewide Pedestrian System Plan is. I will share a little bit about what we heard from our stakeholders along the way. We can talk about what the graphs the system plan addresses. What is included. And then finally, I will talk about how you can give your input on the plan. The plan is currently up for public comment. The public comment period is on until January 11. You can talk about the public comment period in ways that folks can get involved.

So we will talk about the statewide overview of the system plan. There is an image on the slide of a demonstration project that was installed in Alexandria, Minnesota as part of our engagement work for this project. That demonstration project used some plastic tube delineators to make a median crossing island more visible for people driving on the roadway and to provide more of a protected space for people crossing the street. To cross a busy section of highway that is four lanes, two in each direction. It is a common crossing space for people than from the neighborhood, south and to the lake up north.

There are five key goals that are built into our statewide pedestrian system plan. First is to tell us the story of why pedestrian networks are an essential part of the transportation system. Second is to match investment planning and project development to public expectations. Third is to prioritize investments using a tool that relies on equity, safety, infrastructure, health and land use contexts. Fourth is to develop policy, guidance, and training for MnDOT staff. Fifth is to expand the definition of ped planning beyond meeting ADA compliance requirements.

The next slide is Planning Process. About the planning process itself. We kicked this project off in February 2019, which was almost two years ago. Our initial public engagement was in summer of 2019. Then we did our internal engagement in our district staff in the winter of 2019/2020. We then took all of the things we know for engagement and shared them with our Project Advisory Committee or PAC in the Spring of 2020. In that meeting, we had conversations with folks about do we think we will be here in the office next week? What is going on with the pandemic. How is this going to shape the way that we finish this plan?

Within a week we had all been working at home and remotely. That had big impacts on our Phase 2 engagement which was in the Summer of 2020. Plus, we went 100 percent virtual without any in-person canvassing.

We then did internal review of the draft plan over the course of fall 2020 and the plan was released for public comment December 10, 2020.

I want to talk a little bit about the engagement results that we received from the community and what we received from the stakeholders. There is an image of an event that we did in Mankato, where we had a listening session with a group of folks and talked over food about what people thought we could do walking in this state.

That is pretty representative of what we did in Phase 1. We hoped to do that again in Phase 2. But, with the pandemic, we used mostly virtual means.

So, there are a couple of big theme areas that we wanted to talk with people in Minnesota about regarding walking along in a cross MnDOT roadways. First was really honing in on crossing improvements and what we could do to make folks safer while crossing our roadways.

In Phase 1 of our engagement, we asked in more plain language higher level things. So, we asked the question: "What would help you feel safer crossing the street?" Some of the potential responses would be things like: "I would like cars to stop for me." "I would like to feel more visible." "I would like a shorter crossing distance." That kind of stuff.

We went back out in Phase 2 with some more technical sort of options of how we can achieve the results that people told us they were interested in. The most popular crossing improvements that we heard from folks were: "having more time to cross the street." Constructing curb extensions and pedestrian refuge islands.

Curb extensions are where the curb bumps out and shortens crossing distance at an intersection and a pedestrian refuge islands is where there is a safe waiting place in the middle of the roadway as you make the crossing.

We heard from folks where the least helpful in terms of crossing in inroads stop for pedestrian signs that are sort of a paddle in the middle of the roadway. We know that they get driver's attention, but they don't necessarily provide a sense of safety or any sort of improvement for people that were crossing the roadway.

The next slide. We also asked folks in Phase 2 what pedestrian or walking safety means to them. The number one response that we received from folks was safety at crossings and intersections. Which I think is a trend that we heard reliably throughout and maybe make sense given that we are asking people about the MnDOT system, which is not most of the places that people are walking along the roadway but are definitely places where people cross the roadway and may encounter difficulties.

The second most popular response we heard is to prioritize pedestrians over vehicles or provide equal access. Third was well maintained sidewalks and trails for all users. Fourth was not to have to worry about travel behavior and a run of pretty similar we voted on in responses we have proacted in responsible pedestrians and physical barriers between pedestrians and vehicles, lighting and shade and a complete sidewalk network without gaps.

There were some themes that came up when we asked this question when we thought was maybe pandemic related. People asked about why the sidewalks, perhaps wondering if there is a way that we could help with social distancing. Maintaining that six feet of space distancing folks. Adequate lighting, which we think is related to people. Expanding the times when they are outside and trying to stretch the peak in order to maintain the crowd. Just some general perceptions of safety. Folks were thinking about the pandemic and its relatively early phases.

Next slide. I want to talk a little bit about the engagement that we did with the disability community in Minnesota. So, in Phase 1 when we held events in partnership with SMILES (Mankato and Fairmont) and the Courage Kenny Institute just west of Minneapolis.

When we looked at the demographic background, on one of our surveys. People with disabilities made up 17 percent of survey responses, compared to 11 percent of the statewide population.

Then Phase 2. We did not know how things would go when we went completely virtual. We could look at our Phase 1 results. We knew from Phase 1 that we had better success connecting with people with disabilities, people of color and people of low wealth. So we were concerned that we might make those same connections in Phase 2. That was certainly true in terms of talking about connecting with people of color and people of low wealth. We had a harder time connecting with folks with the virtual engagement tools we had at our disposal.

But we were able to connect with folks in the disability community still. People with disabilities made up 12 percent of our survey responses in Phase 2, which is still higher than 11 percent of the statewide population. This was all voluntarily reported demographic information which was the survey. We were only able to share data on what people who are willing to share with us.

Next slide. Earlier there was discussion on a demonstration project that we put in Alexandria, Minnesota. That is an example of seven different demonstration projects that we installed around the state as a way to sort of show and provide a space for people to move through. That is representative of the kind of improvements that we might recommend through this plan.

So our Phase 2 engagement is a question of how supportive people who were at these demonstration projects. One being not supportive and five being very supportive. Overall, our response was a 3.9. So, I would say pretty supportive. Maybe not whole-heartedly. All in in doing these. The responses ranged from that 3.7 range to 4.2. We didn't have a really noticeable geographic trend regarding the state. Districts 1, 2 and 3 are the northern most districts. Those were all around 4. Districts 4, 7 and 8 are the western most part of the state. It is a slightly more interest in doing projects on the western most part of the state. Then district 6 is the east central and southeast part of the state in both of those communities. In both of those MnDOT districts we had 4.2 and 3.9. So, we think there is support for continuing to try these. What we heard from communities where we put these in is that they typically appreciate the effort but there are tweaks that they would like to see made and I think that that is an opportunity for us. These demonstration projects are a lot cheaper than coming out and doing a full road construction project and an opportunity for us to learn how we can do the final project along there in partnership with the community.

Next slide. There is an infographic that was produced as part of this project. I will read through the high points of it for folks on the call. So there were 2,700 of the surveys from across the state as part of our engagement work. nearly three out of four responded that they completely supported the improvements for walking. The number one choice for policies that improve walking was improving winter maintenance. That is not something that we were surprised to hear. I will talk a little bit more about what we were thinking about on the winter maintenance front later on.

Sixty-two percent of people want us to improve accessibility on or adding or widening paths and sidewalks. One out of four votes to improve crossings and designs that would encourage people to stop for pedestrians. Eighty-five percent of respondents highly support the installation of a demonstration project in their community.

In the top design choices for crossings that would make people feel safer are more time to cross, curb extensions and pedestrian refuge islands. In total, we did 42 in-person engagement events before the pandemic. We installed seven demonstration projects around the state. Generally speaking, I think we were pretty pleased with the engagement work that we did. We have learned a lot from folks that completed the survey. It really did help; to guide our work as we put this together.

Next slide. There is another clip on the demonstration project here. This one was installed in Saint Paul's west side. It involves a curb bump out and was featured in a Channel 5, ABC news clip about the pedestrian plan. I want to talk a little bit about what the plan itself addresses.

Next slide. These process recommendations that I referenced before. These are some of the big buckets of the internal MnDOT stuff that we can work through to make walking better along the process system. Those include the cost participation policy, which is how MnDOT shares costs with local governments. The plan really looks at how MnDOT can do a better job of supporting the infrastructure for walking.

We talked about scoping and need identification, which is how do we know where we should build improvements on the system. Then maintenance. How do we keep the system functioning year-round? A lot of times, at MnDOT, when we construct something, there is a maintenance agreement with some union of the government to take on some responsibilities of maintaining the sidewalk in the long-term.

So, what we are looking at is making sure that we have those partners that will be doing the maintenance involved when we design facilities so that we make sure that they pay attention to what equipment they use. How we can best set up the design in a way that allows for appropriate snow storage? All those kind of things.

One exciting thing that I can share is that we are about to kick off a research project looking at how we could potentially design our bump outs and median islands and other pedestrian safety measures in a way that will make them easier to maintain in the winter by changing the current profiles when you are looking at three angles of approach. Hopefully, make it a little bit easier with the equipment we have now to maintain these things in the winter.

Next slide. The next thing that we looked at. And this is a big part of a lot of MnDOT planning efforts is investment planning and this is a general cost approach. Unfortunately, in Minnesota, we don't have statewide data available for land use context and climate change impacts. The anticipated impacts of climate change. So, this approach relies on sampling roadways and intersections to develop assumptions that guide the statewide cost estimate.

Three steps we took to do that were:

1. Identified metro/rural context of intersections and roadways in high priority area (top 5 percent of need)
2. Sampled intersections and roadways to develop assumptions about the prevalence of various land uses and roadway conditions.
3. Applied assumptions across all high priority areas to develop cost estimates.

Next slide. Cost Estimate: Linear Pedestrian Facilities. Or the types of sidewalks and paths that we would have along the roadway. To meet that top five percent of need in the state, we expect it would cost between \$118 million and \$237 million. The estimate assumes that that includes 79 miles of shoulders, 114 miles of sidewalk, 111 miles of side path and 73 miles of sidewalk and side path. In the same corridor.

We also looked at intersections. Cost Estimate: Pedestrian Treatments at Intersections. The range here is a little bit wider. To meet that top 5 percent, we are looking at between \$76 million and \$351 million. This includes basic improvements: 267 two-lane intersections, 456 multi-lane intersections, and 170 ramps and roundabouts. Enhanced crossing add-on treatments is 160 crossings.

Next slide. On top of the overall infrastructure we wanted to look at some of the impacts that affect people walking along in the crossing system. We know that when it comes to mitigating climate change people who are walking do not have the luxury of a climate-controlled vehicle that encases them. They don't have the luxury of being protected from wind, rain or cold and so forth. We wanted to ask ourselves what we could do as a way to help make the walking environment a little bit more resilient for basic climate change. This will include creating a complete tree canopy and manage stormwater runoff when construction pedestrian improvements. We anticipate for that same top 5 percent of need to cost between \$130 million and \$360 million. This includes 455 miles of MnDOT roadways in high priority area, shade trees, tree vault systems, planted center medians, bioswales, flow-through planters or rain gardens in curb extensions.

All of these things help to mitigate storm water, flash flooding cuts to reduce heat island and provide shelter from the sun and other elements.

Next slide. The plan also includes some Infrastructure Guidance Tables to help outline what we would expect as a starting point for conversations about the best infrastructure. So if we were doing a reconstruction project in a suburban residential area. I will walk across the table and say that we would expect that we would investigate new or enhanced sidewalk on both sides of the street. We would look at narrowing as part of the project. Installing curb extensions or tighter turning radii, which makes it difficult for vehicles to take turns on fast speeds. We would look at adding benches and ped scale lighting and shade trees.

Next slide. That is a high overview of a pretty long document and I want to talk a little bit about the public comment period and on how folks can give input on the plan. There is an image here of a sidewalk cling that we used as part of our virtual engagement push. We stuck it down on sidewalks and on pedestrian bridges in the state that included a quick code that folks with smart phones can access with URL to take up the survey, which was kind of fun. They are fun to install. They come up very easy and they are non-slip. So we think they are an exciting tool in the future.

Next slide. We would love to hear what people think about the plan and our work so far. The draft plan is available for public comment through January 11, at 4:30 p.m., which is next Monday. The project website includes an interactive commenting system, which allows users to drag rectangles around the area, if they would like to leave a comment. You can also like and vote on other people's comments and agree with them. We also have another option available and a downloadable and accessible PDF. You can also leave comments in this as well and those are returned to me and fed into a common response document.

All of the information for that can be found on our comment website, which is available at www.minnesotawalks.org/participate.

Next slide. You can contact me at my email address: Jacob.rueter@state.mn.us I am free to answer questions.

Henricksen said I am curious how this plan addresses already efficient pedestrian access routes and pedestrian ramps. We are thinking about and investing in compliance with the pedestrian routes and ramps. We have already had so many that are already not in compliance. Does this plan take into account those efficient areas already within the system?

Rueter said for better or for worse, I think that there are good things about this and things that make this a little bit confusing. MnDOT is also updating its ADA transition plan. At the very same time this plan is being developed. The ADA transition plan is really where we detail our approach to rectify the issues that we have in terms of ramps or sidewalks and ADA compliance issues. The ped plan looks to sort of expand beyond the legal definition of accessibility and start to think about access to community locations, opportunities, friends, family, shopping, library, etc.

One of the things that I think is often true is that we make our improvements whether they are pedestrian network improvements or are they ADA compliance improvements in a way that follows our program context to basically achieve some cost efficiencies because so much of our system is of compliance that we can do the work just by following roadway projects that we have already. I think as we rectify more of the issues on the system, we probably will have to see us going and doing some specific ADA improvement projects to meet some of the things that aren't part of an existing MnDOT construction project. That ADA transition plan is going to have a lot more details about how and when and sort of the nuts and bolts of how we make that happen, than the systemwide pedestrian plan does.

Chair Fenley said I am participating on the transition plan with MnDOT. We will get them here in the near future. But MnDOT is taking a rather aggressive approach to eliminating barriers in the next under 10 years statewide. Aggressive being good. There is overlap and this project is more focused on usability and going above and beyond ADA and ADA plans. The intention is to address all barriers in the State of Minnesota for MnDOT properties and projects. Is that correct?

Rueter said that is correct.

Vice Chair Paulsen said I have some questions about the pedestrian right-of-way and the pedestrian work you are doing. In the very beginning of your presentation you talked about having relationships with municipalities and different cities. Relationships relating to snow removal. Or maybe trash removal or even the fact that maybe it is not one of the 179 shelters that they maintain. We have an agreement with cities. There are many cities and suburbs particularly that those agreements are not kept up and they are actually not followed because they actually fall in line with the public works department. Local government. Twenty hours snowfall would actually maintain and clean something up.

If that is truly the case, and you are aggressive in developing those relationships, then why aren't we addressing adequate lighting in those stations? And from those stations, because once we address adequate lighting, adequate heating, then the crime element, the undesirable elements. They typically go away. Once we address some comfort issues. I was involved in the 2020 and the 2030 plans. Then I spoke about and got involved in the 2040 plan. In each one of those plans, we addressed the equity piece that we addressed so eloquently. We don't address lighting or safety, security that we talk about in the wake of a pandemic. We don't address safety issues. Why don't we address those concerns?

Rueter said one of the action items in our plan is to figure out a way for us to actually staff up our enforcement of some of those municipal agreements. One of the things that we learned when we talked to our maintenance folks is that we haven't really put a lot of effort into our checking up to see if our maintenance agreements are being looked at. So, as MnDOT, we need to develop a process for how we create maintenance agreements that people who can follow through on. Then second, to make sure that that work is actually getting done. I think that this isn't just winter stuff. It can be trash removal, it could be vegetation clearance, it could be replacing a light bulb if a light bulb is burned out. There are a lot of aspects of it I think we need to pay closer attention to going forward.

Clark said I was heartened to see references to global warming in your presentation. My question is how forward thinking is MnDOT and the agencies and the legislature in terms of taking that of a broader ecological approach. We have the huge infrastructure problem with handling sewage. Billions and billions of dollars have been spent dealing with wastewater in Chicago and the Chicago River and another metropolitan community coming with an ecological view. If we try to deal with the issues of accessibility and equity on a piecemeal basis without looking at the entire ecological position. Since we are a marginalized group. Anywhere we are going to be fighting a losing battle. To what extent do people in the legislature understand the importance of the strategic allocation of funds in a future oriented sense?

Rueter said what I can share is that this pedestrian plan, in the way that planning in MnDOT works, is really limited in its scope of thinking about the system walking, MnDOT has a broader policy plan that equates similar to the Thrive Policy Plan. It is called our Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan. The update process

is just starting next month. So that plan is where we look at the connections between transportation and the environment and economy and equity. It really goes into those bigger picture topics. So, I would say that MnDOT has just created an Office of Sustainability and Public Health where we are working specifically on understanding the impacts of climate change on not just the system as it is built but also the ease of the system. We are seeing a lot of momentum of how we are responding to the threat of climate change in the systemic level. Hopefully that will be part of what comes out of that Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan. It would be great group to have come and talk to this group once they get rolling.

Jasmine said are we also including audible traffic signals or is there more of a push to do those or is it still up to individuals or certain cities to be initiating placement?

Rueter said I don't know the answer to that. I know that we have not covered audible traffic signals as part of the Statewide Pedestrian System Plan. But it may be a topic that is covered in our ADA Transition Plan. For the MnDOT roadway system, I'm not sure how it works for locally owned roadways.

Fuglie said I do have issues with the crosswalk system. When you are talking about crosswalks, are you going to have it so that it is going to be a more visible to the drivers, the motorists, to know where the crosswalks are? And also, the crosswalks are the ramps, the curb cuts become more wider and easier to use and more of an audible push button for the folks who need that? I do appreciate the survey that you have been doing.

Rueter said at MnDOT, in addition to the ADA Transition Plan, and in addition to the Statewide Pedestrian System Plan, we are also up doing a Road Design manual. Part of doing that work is where we would include technical recommendations for crosswalk markings that we installed. I believe the standard practice for MnDOT is to use the sort of Zebra style crosswalk. It has the thicker white blocks that are longer. We know from research that those longer blocks are easier for people driving to see compared to the two stripes on the outside that are sometimes used as well. We do have a number of safety counter measures types of things. Whether it is rectangular flashing beacons or signage or other things that we can install that help to improve visibility in places where folks can be expecting for people to cross the roadway. We also tend to rely on some of the recommendations are included in this plan. But the decisions where to install them come down to a project by project basis as I would say. We are providing a starting point, but what gets implemented is ultimately how this plan gets carried through our projects.

Fuglie said so, would you have folks being there to help out with the design of lighting pedestrian crossings? Things that need to be done for accessibility for everybody?

Rueter said we have a few different things that happen when we are scoping projects that are coming up with what would be included in some projects undergo what we call a pedestrian bicycle field walk, where we take the project manager and designers out to walk a project corridor and or bike the project corridor as well. They have the experience of using either a bike in the facility or walking along the facility. We also typically have an ADA field walk as well. Where we have our ADA technical team go out with a project manager to identify fixes. So there are a couple of opportunities for project staff to connect with folks to make recommendations on how to best serve the communities.

Henricksen said does this plan take the more idealistic best plan for an intersection or a pedestrian access route and not think about cost and the project tries to make it work with the budget that they have? There are certain things that I think they are to look at. I saw a slide that showed 100 miles of sidewalk. Sidewalk can be difficult to install if you don't have the right-of-way. You have to get the right-of-way acquisitions. There is a lot of funding. Funding can be a hamper when you want to do a lot of those improvements. If you look at it with the funding aside and say this is what should be done in this intersection? We do the best that we can with the constraints of the site. How does it work with the project?

Rueter said this plan is what we would consider a fiscally unconstrained plan. So it looks at what would it cost for us to do the best possible thing in the locations that we have identified. The reason that we do that is it gives us a better understanding for when the time comes for us to divide how we invest our roadway funding. It gives us the best understanding of what we expect costs to meet people's needs while walking along the system to be in the past. This is the first time we have done the Statewide System Plan. What we haven't had is as much more difficult for us to quantify what those costs would be on future projects. Then if we really run into a bind, when we are short of the resources that we need to make the improvements. So, yes, this is the best case scenario. Yes, there are constraints when projects come through. I do believe that having this up front puts us in a better position to make the case for those improvements to be included as part of the projects.

Chair Fenley said is there anything regarding roundabouts in this plan? I know that they are popping up in Greater Minnesota and also a lot in the suburbs here. They are not very pedestrian friendly. I think, to put it nicely. People are driving faster, and they are not signalized. I know folks with disabilities are not a big fan of these. They are great for traffic flow but not great for pedestrians.

Byard said we don't have, I believe, any specific mention about roundabouts in the pedestrian plan. One of the things that we do talk about. I want to share, since you brought up vehicle speeds in particular, in the plan we articulate is the slowest speeds save lives that we know that when we can reduce vehicle speeds and that has possible impacts for anybody who is involved in a crash. It reduces the amount of energy transferred and makes the outcomes more better for basically everyone. The one thing we have in the plan is focusing on doing those speed reductions and other safety improvements through design and not simply through putting up signs and ongoing reductions and something like that. So you know that people driving vehicles do so based on the environment they are in. I think this can apply to a roundabout. If we have a really large roundabout with multiple lanes, it is easy to breeze through it quite quickly with the behavior that we should expect to have happen. We designed it that way. While we don't directly call it roundabouts, I think some of the principles probably apply from our other statements about design.

Chair Fenley said I am pretty confident that most of the disability community would be onboard with that being a comment in this plan. Just a fun fact, about the 11 percent statistic of Minnesotans. The fact that 17 percent in the respondents in Phase 1, 17 percent were folks with disabilities, which is a lot closer to the national average, which is 24 percent of the population. As what qualifies as a disability under the ADA.

There are a few populations in Minnesota, there are some people in institutions. I am sure you already know that. The state demographer knows it too.

Byard said I am the Council's ADA and Title VI Administrator. I submitted comments online already. But I just wanted to make sure that I brought a few of them forward. I do want to make sure that, it is kind of related to Erik's initial comments. I am really focused on curb cuts too. The fact that the report does call out that 61 percent of the statewide curb cuts are inaccessible. Folks know there are different types of curb cuts. We are starting to see that they are being replaced. They are near a lot of schools. Schools are having them replaced with a blended transition. I know that there can be some issues with that and pedestrian safety issues with that. And want to know a bit more about how exactly the funds that are being dedicated for accessible pedestrian improvements are going toward addressing curb cuts. So the report says that by 2037, about \$354 million is needed to address these ADA improvements, assuming that this is related to the ADA transition plan and some other work that MnDOT has done. In fact, MnDOT has dedicated well over that. The report said that \$530 Million or so.

Can you talk just a little bit more on the focus on curb cut placement? And in particular. What kind of input will be asked for by community members from TAAC to address these curb cut issues? And what kind of partnerships do you see with Metro Transit more broadly?

Rueter said how do the funds of ADA improvement come through that actually fix programs and things? Those funds assigned through ADA MnDOT process and a plan that is called the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan. That will start pretty quickly on the heels of our Statewide Multi-modal Transportation Plan and that is part of the roadway investment funds that MnDOT has. So there is in past plans, there is a number, in the past version of the plan, of different categories of which accessible pedestrian infrastructure was won. And that is where the fund totals that were referenced were determined for our next 20 years of projects.

Byard said I think some of the more specific questions about how we do engagement and how we decide, which ramps our closest up in the queue, and which sidewalks are going to be replaced. Those are things that are definitely better answered by the closest working on the ADA transition. Those are things that would definitely be better than what those folks who are working on the ADA should plan to meet.

You and the committee with folks who are working on that project. I am sure that they would be happy to meet for that work.

Rueter said with that plan that you had mentioned, the emphasis with this pedestrian plan is that it expands beyond the plan accessibility or ADA compliance. I think where this plan could benefit from is with all the talk about ADA and accessibility, there really needs to be some guidelines or guidepost that the plan and individuals behind the plan are working towards to address expanded accessibility. So if it is universal design principles that are being employed, with that and ask for community input on or with that new Office of

Sustainability and Public Health. That there is a more public health lens that is being applied to accessibility more broadly. Those type of things that would be good to have that spelled out. In a large plan like this, it is not possible to have that may be in the updated in the ADA Transition Plan that is referenced through that. Or with some sort of working group or something like that. I think that would be very beneficial in this particular case.

Byard said so, kind of related to Darrell's comment. I am kind of interested in greater collaboration with Metro Transit opportunities for TAAC and for myself when it comes to things like the maintenance agreement conversations, Snow removal is a huge issue. There is a finite amount of space. You are talking about public right-of-way and snow removal and certainly a lot of dense urban environment. There is so many spots where that snow can pile up and then you have got Metro Transit. Public facilities that remove it and the city that comes through and pushes it back. To make some of those stops accessible even if there is ADA pads there. I think the ongoing conversations about what in particular, what MnDOT and Metro Transit can do to increase communication and to the degree that we need to have formalized maintenance agreement. I think that would be good to have a little more involvement from this committee and myself and folks with disabilities. I think that would be really great bus stop working group. I haven't been to many meetings or heard of them. It would be good to see if something like that could be revitalized, especially with the ADA Transition Plan of being updated and work coming out. A good opportunity to bring some of these considerations to fruition.

Just a few other things related to the sidewalk maintenance. The report says that MnDOT doesn't have a clearly articulated sidewalk maintenance policy. So if there are any ways this committee or again myself, we could work to partner on something like that tot would provide input on that. That would be a suggestion again. I could reiterate what I shared a line on my comments. But I wanted to make sure that I put them out here for the record.

The last thing I suppose that I will say here is that there was a comment about holistically looking at walking and that term walking. I am being sensitive to that and what does that ultimately mean. I understand that with a report, I kind of. Later on in the report, it does mention that we take walking to mean not just individuals on foot. It might be a suggestion to move that up towards the beginning and really state that for a pedestrian plan that has historically been about ambulatory individuals that we look at. Making that more of a front and center issue if cared deeply about would bring forward in the beginning. Looking for individuals to provide comment on such a large plan. A long document. That that be a very beginning or at least called out at the executive summary in the beginning.

Then one last thing. The ADA field walks, you mentioned it. I think it is a great opportunity for involvement in this committee and myself. If there is a way that maybe we have an individual or individuals from that unit, talk to the committee would be great to see if there is greater collaboration with ADA field walks going forward.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Blue Line

This item was not presented.

2. Green Line

Chris Bates said it is moving right along in the construction.

3. Gold Line

Vice Chair Paulsen said the Gold Line is 60 percent done. We are in the process of meeting with small groups along the corridor to finalize some station designs. We also took into account Ken Rodgers' comments and Sam's comments in relation to the corridor along the east side of the project. The comments that Sam and Ken brought forth are being very detailed. I know in our last meeting earlier this month, that was one of our first pieces on our agenda was that we connected with this group to retrofit a couple of station designs before we quote our engineers to go ahead with this. So thank you for keeping us accountable and on track and making us go back and looking at different station platforms. If they don't fit the designs, make them redo it. Because we will.

4. Rush Line

This item was not presented.

CHAIRS REPORT

Chair Fenley said there is a letter that we are working on for more accessible seating on buses is still moving along at a snail's pace. Any support from committee members, please let me know via email or phone call after this meeting. I would love to have some input on that.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MEMBER COMMENT

Jasmine said I just wanted to comment for the MnDOT Pedestrian Safety. I don't know who you will get information from with the pedestrian audible signals. But that really is a part of making crosswalks safer.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Alison Coleman
Recording Secretary