



Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting # 9

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board

Minnehaha Parkway Regional Trail Master Plan

Tuesday November 19, 2019, 6:00 – 8:00pm
Powderhorn Recreation Center, 3400 15th Avenue South

CAC members present: Cory Schaffhausen, Devin Olson, Frank Burton, Jim Tincher, Lesley Lydell, Mary McKelvey, Michael Jishke, Michael Torres, Rebecca Johnson, Richard Duncan, Richard Nyquist, Ryan Seibold

CAC members absent: Betsy Brock, Bill Shroyer, Caitlin Ross, Francesco Marraffa, Jessica McKenna, Jonathon Heide, Martha Grant
Approximately 73 members of the public attended the meeting.

Staff, consultants, and speakers present:

Adam Arvidson (MPRB), Madeline Hudek (MPRB), Bryan Harjes (Consultant-HKGi), Jody Rader (Consultant-HKGi), Sarah Evenson (Consultant-HKGi), Jonah Finkelstein (Consultant-Spack Solutions), Tiffany Schaufler (MCWD)

1. Planning Process Overview/ Meeting Ground Rules

- MPRB staff provided an update on the status of the planning process

2. Traffic Study Overview

- MPRB staff provided an overview of the traffic study
- Clarification on 95th percentile queue: 95% of the time, you'd expect x vehicles or fewer
- For roughly 3 minutes during the busiest hour, you may expect x vehicles or more
- You don't want to plan everything for the maximum queue. 95% queue is a main driver for decision making.

3. Parkway Intersections at Portland Ave and E 50th Street

- All way stop idea seems obvious. Makes a lot of sense and doesn't involve changing traffic flow or putting median in.
- When you studied the stop, how much time is allowed for people to cross?
 - Spack used the PTV Vistro software to determine queue times. It doesn't program in a specific amount of time for crossing; the time is based on traffic control, volumes, the type of roadway, and HCM standards.
- Safety would be improved if intersection was squared up to be more of a standard intersection
- How do you define a delay? Level of service? LOS D/E boundary?
 - Average delay/vehicle is for signalized/controlled intersections.
 - Level of service is graded A-F. Don't want all intersections to be A all the time. Preferred level of service during peak periods should be C/D, but D/E range is also a normal experience in peak hours. You wouldn't want an F level of service all the time, but they're meant to have lower grades during peak hours.



- Preferred concept creates backlog during peak hour from Portland/Minnehaha- a concern. Like all-way stop option.
 - For about 3 minutes during peak hour, you could see up to 12 vehicles queuing. Multiply queue by 25' to get distance estimate. The queue length is not projected to interfere with other intersections.
- If looking at 95% queue- is it worse at all way stop, or with the 1-way concept?
 - Queueing is similar, but extends in different directions (either south on Minnehaha Parkway for those waiting to go north/east, or eastward toward Portland for cars waiting to go west/south).
- 3-way stop is much more intuitive. The one-way option would confuse people.
- A signal seems like it would be beneficial for bikers and pedestrians.
 - A signal-controlled intersection was ruled out based on intersection spacing guidelines- spacing available was below the minimum spacing preferred. It becomes difficult to coordinate signals this closely spaced. You even tend to see larger queues with signals because of the artificial hold and release. This wasn't modeled specifically, but is based on best practices/understanding.
- What does squaring up the intersection look like?
 - Preferred concept site plans show a realigned intersection conceptually. Minnehaha would meet Minnehaha/50th at nearly a 90 degree angle (a T rather than a Y). The bridge abutments are a factor in the extent of the realignment possible.
 - A possible bridge realignment could be part of the priority projects, but that's yet to be determined.
- The creek is forced to take a hard right under the bridge, which is unnatural and creates extensive erosion. The preferred concept realigns the creek and likely the bridge, in order to optimize water flow and address the erosion. Realigning the bridge would allow additional space to realign the intersection as well.
- Did the study look at the impacts of area construction on the traffic counts?
 - The study only looks at existing volumes. You may expect slightly lower counts once I-35 construction is finished.
- Would RRFBs (rapid rectangular flashing beacons) be beneficial here?
 - They do increase safety. Cities and counties are starting to set up more guidelines on where to use those. Frequently by schools, regional trails, and based on ADT of the roadway. Unsure of the City of Minneapolis' current guidelines. MPRB has had to advocate for them at certain places (mid-block crossings). Less often used at intersections.
 - Potential conflict with "keeping the corridor natural"
- Is there any clue to future traffic patterns over the course of the 20 year plan?
 - Minneapolis is very residentially dense already. MnDOT and County have counts to use toward projections. County projects very little to no growth, but the engineers use a ½% growth rate.
 - Use of the Regional Trail is projected to increase over the next 20 years

4. Upper and Lower Minnehaha Parkway at Nicollet Avenue

- You say 500 to 1500 cars is normal for a residential street- normal for which street?



- This varies for a 2 lane road with different access points
 - The addition of the number of cars projected does not create an abnormal condition
 - As an estimate, PM peak hour sees roughly 10% of the daily traffic (so, here that translates to slightly fewer than 3 vehicles/minute during the peak hour)
- Do the houses prior to the parkway split and the houses after the split get the volume of cars projected?
 - Correct. The overall traffic is not being changed by this concept (it will remain the same to the east and to the west)
- Concern about additional cars routed to cross Nicollet. It takes a long time already.
 - Projection of 6 to 7 vehicle queue during PM peak hour
 - The side-street volumes are not enough to warrant additional traffic control (City would not allow it)
 - There is already a signalized crossing at 54th street to the south. This can make it easier for cars to cross Nicollet when northbound cars have a red light.
 - Delays projected are average (could be more or less for individual cars)
- Supposedly a similar condition for the Parkway crossing at Lyndale- could there be a more specific comparison? It isn't clear if the number of cars crossing there is similar to the number of cars crossing here. It may be helpful to see whether or not they're similar and if the queues and delays occurring at Lyndale are acceptable.
- Lyndale seems a similar design as this would be. People don't necessarily avoid that intersection, they just use it differently. Keep an open mind about the environmental opportunities afforded by this proposed concept.
- People may take a right turn on Nicollet and then scramble to get back left at 54th Street. Did you look at that potential impact?
 - No. The numbers of cars that may be diverted from the Parkway are able to be handled by the 54th Street signal.
 - Signal could not be moved from 54th to the parkway crossing because the existing volumes are not high enough to warrant a signal (City rules)
- East of Nicollet is a 2-way road necessary? Is it just to provide potential future parking access?
 - Parking access/exiting would be the only reason to have a 2-way road. If there were no activity node, there may not be a reason for that to be a 2-way street.
 - There's already a small section of 1-way Minnehaha Parkway west of Stevens

5. Minnehaha Parkway and 50th at Lynnhurst Park

- What fraction of the 2300 full day traffic is going to want to stay headed east? People like to take the creek.
 - 85% of the traffic was routed to James. Roughly 85% of 1900 vehicles throughout the day.



- Residents may be able to live with additional traffic in front of their houses, but they should know about it first.
- Recommended concept with existing road conditions makes a lot of sense. It still allows us to achieve connectivity under 50th street to connect the community center, park, creek, and school. It takes some of the complexity out of the T intersection where the 2 Minnehaha intersections meet. Opportunity to improve that intersection even beyond not having the access drive to the community center.
 - City of Minneapolis did not believe additional stop signs are warranted at the parkway intersection.
 - It should be noted that the recommended concept may not be able to achieve the same flood mitigation or habitat connectivity with the Minnehaha Parkway bridge remaining in place because the abutments may restrict where the daylighted tributary can enter the creek.
- The Lynnhurst Subcommittee looked at moving community center to the north and having the entrance on James. The parking lot for the church on 50th often spills out and effects traffic on James. Adding traffic to James should be viewed with extreme caution.
- Light timing on 50th has been a huge improvement. I urge exploration of these technologies in other areas along the parkway.
- There's a pedestrian crossing at 51st street and the Parkway and then at the Parkways intersection. Without stop signs (not warranted per the City), it looks like there are ped/bike/traffic conflicts.
 - Yes. The trail route will need to be reexamined if bridge stays in place. Trail will need to be rerouted and will cross an additional roadway (creating conflict) compared with the concept that has the bridge removed.

6. Public Comment

- Will parking on east side of Nicollet remain onstreet?
 - Yes.
 - This is the same condition as west of Nicollet which is noted (at 23') to be too narrow to adequately accommodate 2-way traffic and parking (although that is the existing condition)
- Increased traffic on Portland, Nicollet, and Lyndale due to I-35 rerouting- was this taken into consideration at all?
 - Traffic volumes are likely inflated. We may see fewer traffic impacts once traffic goes back to normal after the construction is complete.
 - We're responding to community concern about intersections that have been present for some time. So there were issues before the traffic increase due to construction.
- Is there data showing major increases in pedestrian or bicyclist fatalities?
 - There is not good data on near misses or all actual accidents. Even so, this is not primary motivating factor. Master planning motive is largely based on a variety of factors (required by met council for future funding). We have seen lots of qualitative data about fear of safety when walking/biking the parkway and crossing intersections. We want to make sure that people feel safe using their regional park.
- What is the best way to be heard if you can't make it Thursday?



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- www.minneapolisparcs.org/minnehahacreek
- Adam's contact info is available for direct contact and an online survey is up as well
- If this plan is implemented how long does it take and how much will it cost?
 - The master plan will take 20-30 years and will be implemented incrementally over time
 - Disruption lengths will vary
 - CAC will make recommendations on what makes it into the master plan, and then priorities will be discussed for future projects
 - Funding can come from multiple pools (MPRB, MCWD, city of Minneapolis, met council)

Concerns Board

- The parkway is fine as it is (if well maintained). Master plan is a "solution" looking for a problem
- Stop creating a problem when none exists with the current bike, ped, and drivers under Nicollet Bridge
- Public is not being heard
- Very concerned the board members making the decisions do not live on the streets or neighborhoods impacted. How were they appointed?
- Tone deaf park board wasting tax dollars on a plan which practically no one wants
- The process just continues though tax payers don't want it to
- Love our historical parkway! It's silly to change it
- The curved parkway works fine. New plan creates more problems
- Leave it alone. Great & functional now.
- Further safety at Diamond Lake Rd.
- Congestion of intersections + impact on routes
- We have all we need- walking, biking, and driving routes
- The parkway is a valuable and peaceful traffic corridor. Keep it open. Plenty of room for bike/walking, etc.
- Huge increase in residential traffic- 3-4x current
- People making the decisions don't live in the area and won't be affected
- Were the homeowners specifically surveyed?
- Aging population doesn't bike, they drive the parkway and they vote
- NE Minnehaha Parkway 165 cars use this road. Why block the access by concrete blockade?
- No concerns. The new plan is beautiful.
- Tennis court at Lynnhurst should be North/South & not East/west due to sun
- High taxes of residents pay to live on Parkway- and they vote
- People love driving on parkway as a peaceful route around town
- People are moving out because of taxes. Those who stay enjoy the parkway
- Increased traffic on Girard & 50th & solution looking for a problem
- What about a "no left turn from parkway to 50th west"
- Leave the Nicollet area natural- leave the road in place.
- Routing eastbound Parkway traffic to cross Nicollet is a terrible idea. Significant safety issues.
- Live on Girard & 50th & worry about increased traffic around Shir Tikvah, 4-6 pm (religious school)- highly congested now
- Concern about crossing Nicollet with no stop light



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- Why reroute traffic up to Nicollet?
- Concern about losing natural surface paths along the creek
- Concern that there has been a lack of serious consideration, weight, and gravity placed on the very real concerns about changes to the parkway & greenspace that have been vocalized by residents that live near & on the Parkway
- Inadequate duration of traffic study
- Using a brief, inconclusive traffic study to justify closing the parkway. Should study traffic patterns for 1 year.
- Traffic study taken on 1 day in October!!
- The traffic study seems one sided by not having it during summer months
- I am very concerned that if you make the 50th/Portland intersection one way lots of cars will shoot onto 51st into the neighborhood
- Concept design pie in the sky with no balance or modifications from feedback Nicollet Hollow
- Huge safety issue. Intersection of 50th St and Minnehaha Parkway just west of Portland. Unsafe for autos, bikers and walkers. Need more stop signs!!!
- No data to support unsafe intersection perception
- What about enforcing bike road rules?
- We have parks nearby
- Traffic study was poorly and unscientifically executed. What about all seasons usage?
- October doesn't reflect summer days.
- Traffic study too short & no seasonalization
- According to Minneapolis' own stats, very few residential streets have >1000 traffic
- Just don't understand rationale given how few accidents have been reported
- No one under 25 years old is in this room
- Small group is overpowering community residents
- Concern that voices that are interested in seeing change feel intimidated and marginalized by a vocal and well organized resistance
- Major safety concerns with lower road closure!
- Increased traffic and associated crossing issues with elimination of portion of Parkway under Nicollet, for both road cyclists & auto traffic
- Closing streets unnecessarily
- Do not limit emergency vehicles access
- Another park in an affluent area?? How about supporting poor neighborhoods
- What about the bike/ped crossing by Nokomis Center used parkway for 40 years and have seen lights activated 5-10x?
- Safety and beauty of community
- Safety of children
- The health and safety of future generations are not being thought of
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Hopes Board

- Stop forcing unnecessary changes to the roadway
- Don't close streets



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- Keep the grand round!
- Move people- not cars- efficiently, safely, & equitably
- Hope that we think larger than motor vehicle parking and driving
- Hope that other concerns (water, safety, lighting, erosion) are all considered evenly
- Tie this project up in court until the next park board election
- Vote in a new and different park board
- Cut funding for the park board
- Fire Adam Arvinson
- Drop this project entirely
- Register & tax every bike more,
- Including trail users not in cars
- Educate bikers & pedestrians they need to stop or slow down before crossing streets...most assume a clear right of way
- Hope the parkway access for automobile traffic will not be changed
- Much longer traffic studies
- Hope that the words “95 percentile” will never be said again
- Before changing traffic at the bunny, let’s try a good old fashioned set of stop signs
- Keep lower road & preserve natural resources we have now
- Pilot changes at nicollet
- Hope that the portion of the parkway under Nicollet Ave will remain to through traffic
- 50th and Pkwy all-way stop is clearly the best solution. I really dislike the other two proposals
- The trail crossing at 50th/Minnehaha Parkway is made safe
- Improvement to Lynnhurst Park & pedestrian bridge over 50th
- Hope stormwater is filtered and cleaned so Nokomis beaches and others stay open all summer
- Build bridges
- Hope we make a forward-thinking decision that allows for ALL stakeholders
- Hope that we use this opportunity to make a park for the future by moving people toward more sustainable modes of transportation
- Hope natural surface paths along the creek will be planned for & maintained
- Subtle interventions that enhance the beauty of the parkway. Not over programming or disrupting the continuity of the existing
- Listen to your citizens concerns
- Listen to the community

7. Next Steps

- Open House on traffic Study Thursday November 21st at Windom South Recreation Center, 5842 Wentworth Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55419
 - Opportunity for the public to discuss the preferred concepts and the traffic study
- Next CAC Meeting (CAC #10) December 17th, 2019
- CAC Meeting #11: January 2020 (Date and location to be determined)