

Ped Plan Advisory Committee – Meeting Summary

Friday, September 18, 2020

Participants:

Carol Andrews, St. Louis County

Eleanor Bacso, City of Duluth

Amy Demmer, Zeitgeist

Judy Gibbs, BPAC

James Gittemeier, MIC

Russell Habermann, ARDC

Holly Kostrenzki, TZD

Kris Liljeblad, City of Duluth

Shawna Mullen, Essentia Health

Teresa O'Halloran-Johnson...

Dena Ryan, WisDOT

Rachel Thapa,

Maren Webb, MnDOT

James began by reviewing the top pedestrian issues identified by the MIC, TAC and BPAC, including:

- Missing pedestrian connections
- Year-round upkeep of ped facilities
- Built environment/design
- Insufficient revenue
- Ped crossings

He then reviewed the issues identified in the public surveys, which were remarkably similar between all responses, those who identified as dependent on walking and mobility-challenged individuals, as:

Improvements for walking along roadways

- Obstructions
- Sidewalk gaps
- Streetscaping
- Sidewalks on both sides
- Wider sidewalks

Improvements for walking across roadways

- Improve visibility
- Increase yielding
- Longer walk signal
- More frequent crossings
- Easier access/Slower traffic speeds/Less time waiting at a walk signal

Policy Priorities

- Snow clearing
- Maintain sidewalks
- Prioritizing pedestrian needs
- Clear obstacles
- Add vegetation/Invest in pedestrian facilities

James then raised the topic of opportunities and impediments in the issue of clearing obstructions. Discussion included:

[9/18 10:49 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

once upon a time I was the person at the city that was sent out to cut back shrubbery and people are not at all receptive to doing that. the hillside is particularly bad about cutting back shrubbery. I don't think people understand that it is their responsibility.

[9/18 10:51 AM] Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson (Guest)

oh yes! especially when you add the snow to the obstructing fence, or shrubs

[9/18 10:52 AM] Carol Andrews, St Louis Co. PW (Guest)

Related to personal responsibility and Judy's follow up question about "how do we get people to adopt that value and make a change?" 1) try to get press coverage for the Ped Plan public input sessions by showing several problematic obstructed sidewalks, including pointing out the problem with fences, etc at corners [Yes! a PROBLEM SHRUB FAIRY!]

Excellent idea Dana - an annual free pick up day for brush as part of a sidewalk accessibility push.

[9/18 10:53 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

Shrub fairy. good idea. Also an annual pickup in some cities I know it works. But, I will say, there are a lot of landlords who do not live in the city and it is not important.

[9/18 10:54 AM] Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson (Guest)

Yes, Shawna, between the neighbor's shrubs/trees, and the city plows there is almost always a point in the winter, where I can't get my walk cleared thoroughly, and I am a walker!

[9/18 10:54 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

I agree with Shawna. All it takes is one person who does not comply to wreck an entire system.

James then raised the topic of opportunities and impediments in the issue of filling gaps in pedestrian facilities. Discussion included:

[9/18 10:56 AM] Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson (Guest)

And yes, if you're challenged in your mobility, whether it's a wheelchair, or other device, or pushing a stroller, a break in the system means a barrier.

James then raised the topic of opportunities and impediments in the issue of design for pedestrians. Discussion included:

[9/18 10:58 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

I agree. Redesigning streets to include boulevards. topography comes into play. Western Duluth and Superior have great boulevards.

[9/18 11:01 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

High volume sidewalks like Arrowhead road. There are no sidewalks that get cleared.

[9/18 11:03 AM] Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson (Guest)

I have thought the same thing, about some of our streets, they are so narrow, and so difficult in our region to maintain that one working sidewalk in a neighborhood rather than two which are not passable.

[9/18 11:04 AM] Carol Andrews, St Louis Co. PW (Guest)

Yes - need sidewalks both sides on busier streets. I can send a paper I found discussing this. ..."Car's receive design default" is also an impediment, though I feel like we are getting some improvement in that approach. Related opportunity = BPAC can plan another workshop aimed at local design engineers and planners focused on pedestrian infrastructure design to ensure all are working with most recent policies and design guidance.

[9/18 11:04 AM] Carol Andrews, St Louis Co. PW (Guest)

SRTS and other grant programs = an opportunity to fill gaps

[9/18 11:05 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

"equipment" is becoming available, but almost all are gasoline devices and add to climactic concerns

[9/18 11:07 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

Shawna, I agree - if there was some 'real time' snowplowing info. MN Power has that when power goes out, you can see maps.

[9/18 11:15 AM] Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson (Guest)

I wonder if part of that public pressure is the MN passivity, and the result is that we 'complain' to the wrong places. Another PSA opportunity, who to complain to? Especially in high rental neighborhoods, its not clear who is responsible? And then there is just plain fear of retribution if you do complain. That does happen.

[9/18 11:19 AM] Maren Webb (Guest)

Another opportunity is building awareness and support well in advance, especially in cases where parking or lanes might need to be removed to add or improve pedestrian infrastructure.

[9/18 11:26 AM] Carol Andrews, St Louis Co. PW (Guest)

Design "opportunity" = so much new guidance from NACTO and FHWA and state DOTs that are the standards/design sources engineers use

[9/18 11:27 AM] Carol Andrews, St Louis Co. PW (Guest)

Corner Design for All Users Cities have been working independently on solutions to make intersections more compact and to better balance design decisions that pit the safety of vulnerable road...links to videos –

<https://vimeo.com/459149014>

<https://altaplanning.com/resources/corner-design-for-all-users/>

City of Duluth hiring a Transportation Planner (Kris L)= an opportunity

[9/18 11:29 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

How can we get the state to allow slower speed limits?

[9/18 11:30 AM] Mullen, Shawna

Judy, I think they just passed some legislation allowing this in certain situations. BikeMN does great legislative lobbying for this kind of thing.

(1 liked)

[9/18 11:30 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

WI has 25 in their neighborhoods, and they have better topography. better ability to see around intersections. And speeds are enforced.

[9/18 11:31 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

Thanks, Shawna

[9/18 11:31 AM] Theresa O'Halloran-Johnson (Guest)

Thanks again James, and everyone!

[9/18 11:31 AM] Judy Gibbs (Guest)

Can this plan include have 25 pmh in both jurisdictions?