MIC BPAC Jurisdiction Project Review Worksheet

Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council *BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE*

PART A: Project Information

Project Name (include location): DTA Bus Stop Improvements Project - SP 118-030-012 (FY 2028)

Entity with lead jurisdiction: City of Duluth

Entity(s) with secondary jurisdiction/ key players: Duluth Transit Authority

Primary project purpose(s): Improve transit stops and sidewalks

Project timeline: 2028 Construction

Funding source: Transportation Alternatives

Does the project pertain to the MIC Bike Plan, Ped Plan, or other related plans?
Chapter 5 of Sustainable Choices 2050 points out the need for more bus shelters, for improving the sidewalk condition systemwide, and closing the sidewalk gaps that exist. The Duluth Superior Metropolitan Pedestrian Plan shows a moderate gap and need for enhanced crossing on Mall Drive, and a moderate gap on 24th Ave. West.

This project moves the city to reach the goals outlined in the ADA Transition Plan, and with the DTA's Better Bus Blueprint. 22 bus stops will be improved, and of those, 12 sites are proposed to have shelters.

Related Bike/Ped Input Already Received:

1) Revised sites from application based on DTA changes and construction improvements on routes. Of the 26 on the TA application, we removed 4 sites, 4th St at Lake Ave, E Superior St at 18th Ave E, 3rd St at 24th Ave W, and Mall Dr at Decker Rd.

Other general project information BPAC should be aware of, including constraints such as ROW:
Burning Tree Road by Target needs additional easements if we desire to install stairs for a short cut to the Target parking lot. The project is constrained financially such that additional locations will be hard to add at this point. The environmental review will be done soon, and we will be unable to modify the project after that is turned in.

How will the project as currently proposed impact and/or improve availability and safety of non-motorized transportation?
This project will help transit riders, and the public by filling in gaps, improving pedestrian crossings, and installing a hard surface and some new shelters where none currently exist.

PART B: Questions to BPAC (following presentation, questions to begin the discussion)

1) Any recommendations or changes to the sites identified?
2) Any opinion on pursuing a short cut via stairway into the Target parking lot?
3) If the city runs into budget constraints, which site/sites should the city remove, which sites have the most benefit and should not be considered for removal?

Are there entities that are not represented on BPAC who are likely to have concerns/input on this project as it relates to improving non-motorized transportation accommodation?
MnDOT will be integral in the final project and will need to approve any work in their ROW.

Project photos/diagrams:
See attached draft plan layouts.

Presentation and Discussion Summary:

Presentation:

Introduction – The City received a federal grant to add concrete platforms at a series of bus stops throughout the City. Currently, many bus stops only have grass or dirt for riders waiting to board or getting off the bus. These platforms provide an ADA and convenience improvement. The grant has enough for 22 stops, some with additional improvements. An additional benefit from this grant, is it is allowing the City of Duluth to tie in sidewalk additions which will help fill key pedestrian network gaps and connect riders to the stops on new sidewalk. So far, the project development process steps have included:

- Meeting with the DTA to discuss high ridership and high need locations.
- Working with consultant partner LHB to work through environmental review.
- 4 stops, of 26 originally, were eliminated due to ongoing road projects.

Presentation – Cindy walked through the maps for the 22 selected bus stop improvement sites and talked through key notes about each location. Key points included:

- Kenwood Avenue is due for a project in approximately 2031. This could mean some new platforms proposed for this corridor would only be in place for 3 years and then would be replaced through the project.
- Large sidewalk additions along:
    - The west side of N 24th Ave W from W 12th to W 10th St.
    - The north side of Mall Dr from the Home Depot driveway to Central Entrance.
- Additional enhancements are included for the Grand Ave & N 42nd Ave W stop near Essentia West Duluth Clinic. This is a busy stop with visitors and staff at the clinic, so a median with pedestrian refuge island and RRFBs have been added to allow a safer midblock crossing across Grand Ave.
- At the Burning Tree Rd & Maple Grove Rd bus stop, the City is considering a staircase to allow pedestrians to cut directly to the front entrance of Target rather than walking to the corner on the existing sidewalk. This would not be ADA accessible, but a ramp is unfeasible due to the slope behind the proposed bus platform. The City seeks feedback on whether to build the steps for those who could use them, or to forgo them.

The City included the following discussion questions in their project input worksheet:

1. At these selected locations, are there any additional considerations or recommended changes beyond what is shown on the maps?
2. Is there any preference in pursuing the stairway shortcut at the Target location?
3. If the city runs into budget constraints, which sites could be considered lower priority if a site/sites needed to be removed? Which sites would have the most benefit and should

not be considered for removal? Conversely, if the project is under budget, what could leftover funds be spent on?

Discussion:

Questions & Answers Summary:

Q – Any opportunity for bike racks with these improvements?

A – Not with this project, there have been concerns about snow clearance in winter and snow potentially blocking racks, additionally, all DTA buses now have bike racks. There is a City of Duluth CRP project to add bike racks throughout the city which could add bike parking at or near some of these locations.

Q – Would it make sense to use wood as a temporary installation on Kenwood instead of placing concrete just to remove it?

A – The contractors would be equipped and experienced with concrete platforms, but would not likely have a wood version ready to construct.

Q – Why were sidewalk and platforms included for a certain side, but not the other?

A – Due to utility work on the sides not receiving improvements

Q – Has the City considered a raised crosswalk at the Essentia West Duluth Clinic?

A – Not with this project, this is not the city's road, so it would require more analysis of impacts and agreements to make the improvement. It would also take up more space.

Q – Has the City considered doing an S shape at Target to fit a ramp instead of doing stairs?

A – The slope is too steep and the space to do the ramp is too tight for this.

Q – Could the City consider adding crossing enhancements on Kenwood as budget allows because the bus stop improvements will be on the side of the road without sidewalk?

A – That could be another consideration as budget allows, or with the future project.

Input & Feedback Summary:

Participants expressed excitement for these improvements and gratitude for the City's work on them.

The group reached a consensus that, if the project runs into budget constraints: the Kenwood Ave locations, excluding those outside the road project area and the Martha/Skyline/Kenwood intersection make the most sense to exclude, because those could be addressed in another 3 years with the upcoming project. Alterations to some of the proposed sidewalk could be made to save budget, such as narrowing sidewalks from 5' to 4'. At locations receiving new sidewalk, improving crossings and clearing brush on existing sidewalk, and forgoing the new sidewalk could be one compromise.

The locations at Essentia West Duluth Clinic, 88th Ave W & Edward St, Idaho St & Hilton St, and any that have the highest ridership are most important to preserve.

The group reached a consensus that, if any budget is leftover, or the city looks to make additional improvements at these bus stops in the future, preferred improvements include:

- Bike parking
- Fresh paint for the nearest crosswalks or other crossing improvements
- Lighting
- Duplicating the West Duluth Clinic improvement at the 44th & Grand bus stops, due to high usage by Denfeld High School students

Other notes and considerations include:

- Locations on MnDOT right-of-way require limited use permits, these can sometimes take a while to get processed. The City should make sure to submit these early.
- The BPAC members appreciate the City looking into the pedestrian plan to select locations for improvements
- The city could consider moving the Martha/Skyline/Kenwood platform 10-15' north in case intersection improvements are possible in the future, such as a mini-roundabout.
- Siting of bike racks and other amenities should consider how a transit user would need them, what trips they might be making, and the lack of other nearby amenities.

Summary of Key BPAC Findings and Recommendations:

- If there are budget constraints, Kenwood Ave locations further from Arrowhead Rd are lower priority due to the upcoming road project providing an opportunity to make the improvement in the future. Martha/Skyline/Kenwood improvement should be kept.
- The locations at Essentia West Duluth Clinic, 88th Ave W & Edward St, Idaho St & Hilton St, and any that have the highest ridership are most important to preserve if budget constraints occur.
- Adjusting proposed sidewalks may provide another option instead of removing 1 or 2 platforms, if there are budget limitations.
- Additional transit rider, pedestrian, and bicycle amenities such as bike racks, lighting, fresh crosswalk paint would help to further enhance these locations.

Recap of the first BPAC project review using the new procedures

The City felt this was a helpful presentation. They are glad to hear that there is broad support from the BPAC for these improvements, and is thankful for the new considerations that participants provided that the City otherwise may not have came up with.

Additional notes from participants:

- Make sure to hold questions until the end
- When the agenda goes out, give more callout for any associated plans to review, not just the presentation materials.
- This project was a relatively simple, low conflict project. In the future, for larger projects, the process or presentation & discussion time needs to be flexible for the anticipated time needed for a thorough review.
- Make the project review scheduling process clear to jurisdictions. Two ways that review can be initiated:
    1. Jurisdiction reaches out to BPAC wanting a review
    2. BPAC staff & chair reach out about a known upcoming project with relevance to bike or ped plans and ask if they would bring it in for presentation and discussion.
- Using the timer kept this discussion right on time with the allotted amount in the agenda.