

City Of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board
Thursday, October 4, 2022

151 Martin Street, City Commission Room 205, Birmingham, MI

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, October 4, 2022. Vice-Chair Tom Peard convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

A. Rollcall

Present: Board Members David Hocker, Anthony Long, Tom Peard, Joe Zane; Alternate Board Member Mark Doolittle

Absent: Chair Doug White; Board Member Victoria Policicchio; Alternate Board Member Amanda Fishburn; Student Representatives Isabela Betanzos, Ben Rosenfield

Staff: Senior Planner Cowan, Operations Commander Grewe, Lieutenant Kierney, Assistant City Engineer Zielinski

F&V: Julie Kroll

MKSK: Brad Strader

B. Approval of MMTB Minutes of September 1, 2022

Motion by Mr. Hocker

Seconded by Mr. Long to approve the MMTB Minutes of September 1, 2022 as submitted.

Motion carried, 5-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Long, Hocker, Peard, Doolittle, Zane

Nays: None

C. Introductions & Chair Comments

D. Review of the Agenda

E. New Business

F. Unfinished Business

1. E. Brown Street, S. Old Woodward to Woodward Ave

SP Cowan introduced the item.

Staff and consultants answered informational questions from the Board.

Mr. Hocker said that, given the complications of the intersection, he was not in favor of adding parking to E. Brown.

Mr. Long noted that once the few proposed spaces for E. Brown are filled up, vehicles would likely either conduct illegal maneuvers to try and access them and/or would continue to park illegally on Peabody.

Mr. Zane said that if the proposed spots on E. Brown were limited to five minutes, the quick turnover would likely prevent double-parking or vehicles stopped in the road.

Mr. Doolittle concurred with Messrs. Hocker and Long.

Mr. Long spoke in favor of the right-in only access from Alternate A, saying that the other option results in slowed traffic entering Jax's off of Woodward, which could be more dangerous.

Motion by Mr. Doolittle

Seconded by Mr. Long to Alternative A of the proposed Brown Street design to the City Commission for the purpose of enhancing the safety and flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic along Brown Street and Woodward Avenue.

Motion carried, 3-2.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Long, Hocker, Doolittle

Nays: Peard, Zane

2. Pierce Street Considerations

SP Cowan introduced the item. Mr. Strader and ACE Zielinski presented the item.

Staff and consultants answered informational questions from the Board.

Mr. Zane said that if these options were to be explored further, he would first like to hear from the neighborhood and school community whether a bike lane would be used. He noted that sharrows were not required for cyclists to be able to share the road with vehicles.

Mr. Long concurred, and added that it would be worth knowing whether much conflict between pedestrians in the area and children riding their bikes on the sidewalk. He said that without that sort of conflict, there would be no reason to add a bike lane that would result in children being closer to traffic.

Mr. Doolittle said he lived in the area and rarely sees cyclists of any ages on Pierce.

Mr. Strader explained the options considered for the area and stated that the consensus among the consultants and Staff was that the options would be disruptive with little value added.

ACE Zielinski concurred.

Mr. Long said that in light of Staff's recommendation, he would be comfortable leaving the area as-is.

The Board concurred.

3. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program

SP Cowan introduced the item. Mr. Strader, Ms. Kroll, and SP Cowan presented the item.

Staff and consultants answered informational questions from the Board.

Mr. Long said 100% written concurrence by owners within 200 feet of a speed hump would likely be too limiting a criterion, given the other criteria that need to be considered.

Mr. Strader and Ms. Kroll suggested that a better criterion could be that a majority of the street is in support of a speed hump, and that the City determines where it needs to be placed.

Mr. Zane observed that a different municipality that requires 100% written concurrence by owners within 200 feet of a speed hump likely would have an easier time obtaining approval because the homes are spaced further apart, so fewer homeowners would need to approve. In Birmingham, a higher number of homeowners would need to approve if the same criterion were applied.

OC Grewe noted that the City's residential parking petitions currently require 75% agreement among residents of a street.

The Board concurred that 75% was a reasonable standard for the second baseline criterion, instead of 50%.

Mr. Strader recommended that '100% written concurrence by owners within 200 feet of hump' be replaced with a criterion that 75% of residents agree that a speed hump would be selected based on whatever would be most effective for the street.

Mr. Doolittle noted that homeowners with a bump in front of their home would be disproportionately affected. He said that needed to be considered. He noted that would be one reason to require that more than a simple majority of the residents on the street agree.

In reply to Mr. Long, ACE Zielinski said it was difficult to install speed humps on unimproved roads since they lack a sufficient base. He said speed humps would be much more likely to be ripped out and to become a hazard on unimproved roads.

Messrs. Long and Peard noted that speeds on unimproved roads were also likely limited by poorer road conditions relative to improved roads.

Mr. Strader asked the Board and Staff to consider other candidate corridors for speed humps for next meeting's discussion.

The Board noted that Farmington Hills begins to consider speed humps when the 85th percentile speeds are over 35 mph.

SP Cowan asked the Board to consider whether they wanted the threshold for considering speed humps to be 85th percentile speeds over 35 mph, over 30 mph, or another figure.

In reply to Mr. Peard, Ms. Kroll said success would be indicated if the the 85th percentile speeds were at or below the speed limit.

In reply to Mr. Doolittle, Ms. Kroll and Mr. Strader explained that they would recommend lower-volume streets with higher speeds first because 1. Speed humps create noise, so too much volume could create more noise; 2. Lower volumes are more reasonable for speed humps; 3. Adding speed humps to higher-volume streets can divert traffic and increase the volume on other roads; and, 4. If success is seen on the lower-volume streets, then speed humps could be considered on streets with more moderate volume.

In reply to Mr. Hocker, Mr. Strader and Ms. Kroll clarified that the baseline criteria would indicate a need for traffic calming, but would not necessarily indicate that speed humps would be the appropriate mechanism.

Ms. Kroll noted that the speed hump criteria would determine whether they were the appropriate mechanism in a given case.

4. Scooter Policy

SP Cowan introduced the item. OC Grewe presented the item.

Staff and consultants answered informational questions from the Board.

OC Grewe noted that most of the riders on sidewalks in the downtown area tend to be younger residents.

In reply, Mr. Zane suggested that the City could better publicize the current scooter policy by going to the Birmingham schools. He said that enforcement would be less of an issue if working with a fleet of rental scooters since they offer more precise enforcement mechanisms.

G. Meeting Open to the Public for Items not on the Agenda

Wendy Dewindt, Randy Davis, Laura Stevenson, and two additional Fairway residents spoke in favor of sidewalks on Fairway.

Darin McBride, resident of Fairway, spoke against sidewalks on Fairway.

Renee Suchara said that while she was not in favor of sidewalks on Fairway, she would accept Fairway being designated as a third-tier priority for sidewalk installation instead of a first-tier priority.

Janelle Whipple-Boyce recommended that the City hold a study session regarding the City's sidewalk implementation policy along a question and answer period. She noted that the City could likely reduce resident confusion by addressing residents' questions and supporting those answers

with data. She spoke in favor of the City's sidewalk implementation policy in general.

Mark Nickita said the speed study did not indicate a need for speed humps in the neighborhoods. He said he was not in favor of Birmingham joining a scooter rental program, that bicycles and scooters on sidewalks pose a significant safety issue, and recommended some ideas for enforcement. He spoke in favor of the City's sidewalk implementation policy in general.

Tony Merolla spoke in support of installing sidewalks in the City in general, and called for the process of installing sidewalks to be expedited.

Mr. Zane noted that the Board recommended that stretches of road without sidewalks be prioritized for sidewalk installation. He explained that was how Fairway became one of the streets with the highest priority for sidewalk installation.

Mr. Long noted that Fairway was only designated a high priority for sidewalk installation because the majority of the road currently lacks sidewalks. He noted that there are a number of other streets in Birmingham ranked at the same priority level in terms of sidewalk installation for the same reason.

H. Miscellaneous Communications

1. Letters from residents regarding sidewalk gap priorities

Mr. Long and Zane recommended adding a study session to a future agenda to review the criteria used to rank streets in terms of sidewalk implementation priority and to explain how those recommendations interact with the City's capital improvement plan.

In reply to Mr. Peard, SP Cowan said the study session could be publicized via the City's social media and online newsletter.

Mr. Hocker recommended the sidewalk priority map be updated to include a brief description of the priorities, noting that priority one is for roads with no sidewalks, and so on.

I. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the Board adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Brooks Cowan, Senior Planner



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

APPROVED