

APPROVED

City Of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board Thursday, November 4, 2021

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, November 4, 2021.

Chair Schafer convened the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

1. Rollcall

Present: Chair Katie Schafer; Board Members Andrew Haig, David Hocker, David Lurie, Tom Peard, Doug White (arrived 6:05 p.m., sat in audience); Alternate Board Member Joe Zane; Student Representative Alex Walters

Absent: Alternate Board Member Amanda Fishburn; Student Representatives Lauren Morris, Justin Schoener

Administration:

Brooks Cowan, Senior Planner (SP)
Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist (CT)
Scott Grewe, Operations Commander (OC)
Jim Surhigh, Consulting City Engineer (CCE)
Scott Zielinski, Assistant City Engineer (ACE)

Fleis & Vandenbrink (F&V):

Julie Kroll

MKSK: Brad Strader

2. Introductions

3. Review Agenda

4. Approval of MMTB Minutes of August 5, 2021 & October 7, 2021

Motion by Mr. Haig

Seconded by Mr. Peard to approve the MMTB Minutes of August 5, 2021 as submitted.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Schafer, Zane, Lurie, Haig, Peard, Hocker

Nays: None

Motion by Mr. Hocker

Seconded by Mr. Zane to approve the MMTB Minutes of October 7, 2021 as submitted.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Hocker, Schafer, Zane, Lurie, Haig, Peard

Nays: None

5. Multi-Modal Transportation Plan Roadway Improvements (2021-2022)
a. Pierce Street, Lincoln to 14 Mile, Bike Lane Options

ACE Zielinski introduced the item.

Mr. Strader presented the item.

OC Grewe informed the Board that there are often speed complaints on Pierce. He cautioned that removing parking could result in further increased speeds.

The Board noted during discussion that none of the options resulted in an ideal set of conditions on Pierce.

After further Board discussion, ACE Zielinski suggested that seven feet on each side of the road be marked off with paint to create visual interference and to observe the impact on speeds. He noted that both the parking lane and the bicycle lane plus a two-foot buffer would be seven feet. He said that would give the City time to observe changes and solicit resident feedback.

Mr. Strader noted that when on-street parking on the southbound side of Eton was removed along with other changes the speeds went down. Residents along Eton also felt safer when the parking was removed because it improved sight distances and reduced crashes.

CCE Surhigh said the painting trial could be done after the road is resurfaced in Spring 2022.

Chair Schafer recommended studying whether the sidewalks should be widened south of Southlawn instead of along the whole length of Pierce. She noted that would help preserve the mature trees north of Southlawn.

Mr. Haig noted that both the current narrowness of the driveways and some of the proposed conditions might be particularly difficult for bus drivers going to and from Pierce School.

Mr. Zane recommended getting feedback from Pierce Street residents and members of the Pierce School community, including the bus drivers.

Mr. Zane and Chair Schafer agreed that the item should be re-addressed at a future meeting once more information has been gathered.

6. Bird Street Parking Permit Request

OC Grewe presented the item. He clarified that:

- He was amending the recommended action to be for a permit-exempt time zone from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays without the two hour allowance after a discussion with resident Richard Pourcho.
- Mr. Pourcho reported that this issue preceded Pierce School's parking lot construction.
- This was the first unanimous resident petition OC Grewe has received for the addition of permit parking.
- There is adequate on-site parking for teachers at Pierce, but that they prefer to park on Bird because it is closer to the school.

Public Comment

Mr. Pourcho asked the Board to support the recommendation to add permit parking to Bird.

Motion by Mr. Zane

Seconded by Mr. Peard to recommend to the City Commission the approval of the installation of a permit-exempt time zone from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Bird from Pierce to Edgewood on the south side of Bird on weekdays.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Hocker, Schafer, Zane, Lurie, Haig, Peard

Nays: None

7. Sidewalk Prioritization and CIP Recommendations

SP Cowan and CCE Surhigh presented the item.

Mr. Lurie said he suspected too few people would use a sidewalk along Greenwood Cemetery (Greenwood) to justify the cost of installation. He also said he would not be in favor of removing the trees next to Greenwood to install the sidewalk.

Mr. Haig said he also did not think a sidewalk along Greenwood would receive much use.

SP Cowan noted that Oak Ave along Greenwood is part of the Neighborhood Connector Loop and also a major road, which is why the prospect of adding a sidewalk in that location was being raised.

ACE Zielinski said that pedestrians coming from the west heading downtown would be likely to use a sidewalk along Greenwood if it were available.

Mr. Lurie said that pedestrians would still have to cross south at Old Woodward even if they followed the path described.

There was Board consensus that it would be more appropriate to add sidewalks to residential streets with no sidewalk coverage before adding sidewalks to streets that already have a sidewalk on one side. There was also consensus that safety-critical areas with more difficult right-of-ways should be considered as higher priorities.

8. S. Eton Striping and Multi-Modal Enhancements

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

Chair Schafer noted that she had emailed photo and video of some recent road improvements in Ann Arbor and recommended the Board consider whether some of the aspects of the improvements could be replicated in Birmingham.

Mr. Strader said he would look into the improvements Chair Schafer was referencing.

Ms. Kroll said it might be the Williams Street Bikeway.

In reply to Mr. Peard, Mr. Strader acknowledged that one booklet from the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) advises against installing a level two-way cycle track on a two-way road. He said that if a two-way cycle track were to be installed on a two-way road it is preferable for it to be raised. He clarified that the recommendation from the FHA did not amount to a hard-and-fast rule.

The presenters there have been a lot of innovations in the discipline of enhancing multi-modal options since the original recommendations were made for S. Eton in 2017. They said they would return to the Board with some of those newer options as appropriate.

9. Meeting Open to the Public for items not on the Agenda

Michael St. Germain reviewed his letter and his Birmingham Pedestrians Project submittal which was included at the end of the meeting's agenda packet. He added that improvements to the medians on Woodward where pedestrians wait could increase a sense of pedestrian safety.

Mr. Strader stated that he, Ms. Kroll and Staff would be meeting with MDOT about improving the safety multiple Woodward crossings. He stated Ms. Kroll asked MDOT to conduct a road safety audit at all pedestrian crossings of Woodward, including crossings occurring outside of crosswalks. MDOT was also asked to devise an overall pedestrian crossing plan. He said there were also possibilities of working with Ferndale and other communities along Woodward to advocate for increased safety.

Chair Schafer noted MDOT officials were also in attendance at a recent Commission meeting discussing the issue.

ACE Zielinski summarized improvements being made presently to the Brown/Forest intersection with Woodward. He also summarized condition differences between the Ferndale and Birmingham portions of Woodward.

Ms. Kroll explained how pedestrian clearance intervals are calculated. She said implementation of leading pedestrian intervals could be one option for increasing pedestrian safety along Woodward. She said she would have to pull the permits for Ferndale to know exactly how their crossings are timed.

Mr. Lurie raised concerns about speeds on residential streets.

Mr. Strader said that he and Staff could bring back a previous Board practice of having informational presentations during meetings with lighter agendas, and that traffic calming methods would be a worthwhile topic to study for one of those presentations.

Mr. Zane said he would be interested in learning more about how the decision is made to close off a street to through traffic. He cited Chestnut as one example, saying he thought it would be better to limit through traffic that continues onto Woodward.

Mr. Peard congratulated Chair Schafer and Mr. Haig on their election to the Commission.

It was explained that Chair Schafer and Mr. Haig would be resigning their positions with the Board after their swearings in with the Commission on November 8, 2021.

10. Miscellaneous Communications

11. Next Meeting – December 2, 2021

12. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the board members adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Brooks Cowan, Senior Planner