

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2016
City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, November 21, 2016.

Chairperson Vionna Adams convened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Vionna Adams; Board Members Lara Edwards, Amy Folberg, Vice-Chairman Andy Lawson, Daniel Rontal, Johanna Slanga, Michael Surnow

Absent: None

Administration: Lauren Chapman, Asst. City Planner
Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City Engineer
Scott Grewe, Operations Commander
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

Also Present: Mike Labadie from Fleis & Vandenbrink
("F&V"), Transportation Engineering Consultants
John Heiney, Birmingham Shopping District

2. INTRODUCTIONS

New members Daniel Rontal and Johanna Slanga introduced themselves and summarized their backgrounds.

3. REVIEW AGENDA (no change)

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MEETING OF NOVEMBER 3, 2016

Motion by Mr. Surnow

Seconded by Mr. Rontal to approve the Minutes of November 3, 2016 as presented.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Surnow, Rontal, Adams, Edwards, Folberg, Lawson

Nays: None

Abstain: Slanga

Absent: None

5. OLD WOODWARD AVE. RECONSTRUCTION - WILLITS ST. TO BROWN ST.

Mr. O'Meara noted that as discussed at the last meeting, the City has hired a planning consultant, MKSK, to work with the City in devising the conceptual plan for the Old Woodward Ave. project. The effort has been fast tracked in order to allow for final design of the project to begin as soon as possible, with an anticipated spring 2017 construction start. The timeline includes a review by the Multi-Modal Transportation Board, followed immediately by a review by the City Commission.

The MMTB is asked to review and discuss the street design, including widths of street, sidewalks, and reverse angle versus head-in angle parking areas. The Board is also asked to consider the use of City standard materials, as compared to enhanced materials, particularly with respect to how the materials may alter the pedestrian experience.

Mr. O'Meara reviewed the infrastructure problems in that particular section, which is why the project has been undertaken. Ms. Ecker explained there are two different Master Plans that govern this area; the Downtown Birmingham 2016 Plan and the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan. She went on to outline many of their recommendations for improvements.

Mr. Brad Strader from MKSK was present along with Mr. Joe Marson, Traffic Engineer from Parsons Transportation, and Mr. Brian Kinzelman, Landscape Architect with MKSK. Mr. Strader took the board through the same PowerPoint that will be presented to the City Commission. Their goals are to make Maple Rd. and Old Woodward Ave. more walkable and consistent with the Multi-Modal Plan, but also to consider trucks, automobiles, bikes, and all of the different users. The project scope is in three phases. Tonight's concentration is on the segment of Old Woodward Ave. between Willits St. and Brown St.

In looking at road design, they considered safety for all users. Usable passable sidewalks along with improved lighting on Old Woodward Ave. will make it a vibrant, walkable space. A proposed road width of 66 ft. curb to curb strikes a

Multi-Modal Transportation Board Proceedings

November 21, 2016

Page 3

balance between what is best for cars and parking maneuvering space and what is best for pedestrians and outdoor dining. With road travel lanes at 13 ft. and a left turn lane of 9 ft., the pedestrian right-of-way would be a minimum of 10 ft. wide. Back-in angle parking is safer for bikers which is consistent with the Multi-Modal Plan that calls for sharrows on Old Woodward Ave.

Considering Maple Rd., a little bit more room can be added for sidewalks but it makes the travel lane and the conflicts between parking vehicles and the through traffic tighter. The parallel parking allows a tighter travel lane for pulling out. Presently the sidewalks are 11 ft. in width but the passable area is more like 5 1/2 ft. in some spots.

Mr. Kinzelman noted curb extensions are introduced at the intersections to minimize the passage distance across the street. However, the large trucks and vehicles need to be accommodated as they make a turn. Therefore the curbs are dropped flush to the street so large vehicles will not tear them up. The proposed cross-walk length of Old Woodward Ave. is two 13 ft. travel lanes and a 9 ft. center turn lane, or 35 ft. Currently it is 70 ft.

Mr. Strader advised that about half of the crashes recorded for this segment of Old Woodward Ave. are related to a parking maneuver. Back-in angle parking is much better for bikes and also allows safer loading of goods into the trunk which is adjacent to the sidewalk. It loses about one space per block over what presently exists.

Ms. Ecker said that the business community has submitted a letter saying they are not in favor of enhanced materials because it would cost more and they don't like back-in parking because people may be reluctant to park in front of the stores.

Ms. Slanga commented she does not love the idea of a non-uniformity of parking along Old Woodward Ave. because it seems confusing. When asked, Mr. O'Meara explained if the City wanted to change N. Old Woodward Ave. now to back-in angle parking there would be pavement markings to grind out and parking meters to move.

Mr. Strader advised that MDOT has recently taken the position that if angled parking is to be installed on a State road, it has to be reverse angle. The dimensions that are shown are recommended as a common standard for back-in parking.

Mr. Kinzelman reviewed the materials. He noted that Old Woodward Ave. is a very special place and a better quality of material such as granite curbs and brick pavers would be appropriate. Higher efficiency LED light sources are proposed for the signal mast arms so the pedestrian environment is illuminated at the

Multi-Modal Transportation Board Proceedings

November 21, 2016

Page 4

intersections. A light fixture is suggested for Old Woodward Ave. that is different from the Birmingham Green lantern fixture. It directs the light down onto the sidewalk rather than throwing it out into the atmosphere.

Concern was expressed by Ms. Slanga that the middle turn lane along Old Woodward Ave. will become a passing lane. Ms. Edwards thought that traffic won't stop when someone is backing in if there is a middle turn lane. Mr. O'Meara noted the center lane could also be used as a truck unloading area. Mr. Kinzelman explained it would also be defacto storage space for police vehicles if needed. A different material could be used so that driving on the middle lane feels different, almost like a rumble strip.

Ms. Slanga did not know if this is a big enough change from what they are trying to get out of the downtown or whether it creates enough cafe space. Many proprietors want to put two rows of cafe outside of their business. She did not think this proposal that will last at least seventy years into the future is progressive enough for what they want to do in the downtown. Mr. Strader advised that by getting rid of angled parking and adding parallel, it would allow much wider sidewalks.

Further discussion concerned getting rid of the middle turn lane. However, when a car sweeps around as it is getting out of a parking space it will partially go into the center lane. So that lane cannot be completely eliminated or it will put cars into oncoming traffic when they leave a parking space.

Due to the need to finish the meeting, members of the Board felt that this matter needed further study and discussion. The problem of timing in order to have construction in 2017 puts a limit on these considerations. Ms. Ecker said that for this meeting they are looking to see if the board would agree on the 66 ft. cross section and front-in or reverse angle parking.

Mr. Kinzelman explained there would be two types of parking on Old Woodward Ave. until such time that the City wanted to go to N. Old Woodward Ave. and reverse that angle of parking. Then the whole street would be back-in angle parking.

Motion by Ms. Folberg

Seconded by Mr. Rontal that the Multi-Modal Transportation Board recommends that the City Commission authorize the 66 ft. wide street design as presented by MKSK for Old Woodward Ave., from Willits St. to Brown St., with the inclusion of back-in angled parking.

There was no discussion from the public at 7:28 p.m.

Motion carried, 4-3.

Multi-Modal Transportation Board Proceedings

November 21, 2016

Page 5

ROLLCALL VOTE

Yeas: Folberg, Rontal, Adams, Surnow

Nays: Edwards, Lawson, Slanga

Absent: None

Dissenting board members discussed their motion. Ms. Slanga reiterated that this is Birmingham's signature street and it is not being given enough due process. She feels the board needs to hear more from the public. Ms. Edwards was not sure this proposal is a big enough gain for the City from a multi-modal perspective. Mr. Lawson did not know if it maximizes the pedestrian space. It is a long-term commitment.

6. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA
(no comments were heard)

7. MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS (items in the packet)

8. NEXT MEETING DECEMBER 1, 2016 AT 6 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the board members adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Jana Ecker, Planning Director

Paul O'Meara, City Engineer