

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2017  
City Commission Room  
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, September 7, 2017.

Chairperson Vionna Adams convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairperson Vionna Adams; Board Members Lara Edwards, Amy Folberg, Daniel Rontal, Vice-Chairperson Johanna Slanga; Alternate Members Daniel Isaksen, Katie Schafer

**Absent:** Board Members Andy Lawson, Michael Surnow

**Administration:** Lauren Chapman, Asst. Planner  
Jana Ecker, Planning Director  
Austin Fletcher, Asst. City  
Scott Grewe, Police Commander  
Paul O'Meara, City Engineer

**Also Present:** Julie Kroll and Mike Labadie from Fleis & Vandenbrink ("F&V"), Transportation Engineering Consultants

**2. INTRODUCTIONS (none)**

**3. REVIEW AGENDA (no change)**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, MEETING OF AUGUST 3, 2017**

Ms. Schafer corrected the spelling of her name.

**Motion by Ms. Edwards**

**Seconded by Ms. Schafer to approve the Minutes of August 3, 2017 as corrected.**

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Edwards, Schafer, Adams, Folberg, Isaksen, Rontal, Slanga

Nays: None

Absent: Lawson, Surnow

**5. S. ETON RD. CORRIDOR  
Yosemite Blvd. to 14 Mile Rd.**

Mr. O'Meara recalled the MMTB has been studying various multi-modal improvements to S. Eton Rd. and recommendations were sent to the City Commission for review. At the August 14, 2017 meeting the Commission did not approve the recommendation regarding the island at the Maple Rd./ S. Eton Rd. intersection. It was noted that changes will be coming in the near future when the Whole Foods Market opens just east of the intersection. In the meantime, the MMTB can study the rest of the corridor, S. Eton Rd. from Lincoln Ave. to 14 Mile Rd.

Ms. Kroll gave an overview of the approach by F&V. They looked at the options from 14 Mile Rd. to Lincoln Ave. and how they might match up with the options that have already been looked at from Lincoln Ave. to Yosemite. They used the National Assoc. of City Transportation Officials ("NACTO") Urban Bikeway Design Guide as a reference. There was only 14 ft. on each side of the road to work with. So the two options they came up with were:

- Leave the parking as it is and add sharrows which is consistent with the Multi-Modal Master Plan recommendation for that section of S. Eton Rd.;
- Provide directional bike lanes and eliminate any on-street parking.

Ms. Edwards did not believe the cross section diagram provided was correct. There is no parking on the east side of S. Eton Rd. from 14 Mile Rd. possibly through Lincoln Ave. Also, nothing is painted and there are huge easements. Residents are parking partly or entirely on the easement. She was not confident with the suggested options. Ms. Ecker verified the 28 ft. road width was correct.

Discussion turned to adding a bike lane and Ms. Kroll stated that a bi-directional bike lane requires 4 ft. + 4 ft. + a 2 ft. buffer. That leaves 18 ft., or two 9 ft. lanes, which would not be feasible with a 28 ft. road width.

Ms. Schafer noted there is a lot of concern with the speed of traffic in this area of town and people are looking for it to slow. She did not think sharrows would do anything to change the way people behave on that street. Dr. Rontal thought the bike lane as it has been set up along S. Eton Rd. is too complex.

Ms. Ecker observed there will be a lot of traffic but it can be slowed down. Parking on both sides narrows the road and slows traffic. Adding in bump-outs at

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several of the intersections changes where the curb line is and it protects the parking along the side of the road. Ms. Schafer hoped to envision what would make someone driving on that street feel like they were in someone's neighborhood, rather than driving down a long stretch. Ms. Edwards noted the wide easements aren't helping that feeling. She thought there could be a totally protected bike lane in the easement next to the sidewalk on both sides.

Mr. Isaksen said the vast expanse of asphalt in the intersections has always bothered him. Ms. Schafer thought new crosswalk markings would make people feel they are in a pedestrian friendly area and that they should slow down. Ms. Slanga wanted to ensure the bump-outs will accommodate larger turning vehicles.

Ms. Ecker observed everyone seemed to be in agreement with doing the bump-outs and adding some crosswalks.

Ms. Folberg said that for any kind of coherent bike strategy all along S. Eton Rd. there should be a no parking standard throughout. Input would be needed from the residents as to their wishes in terms of parking.

Ms. Slanga thought a decision should be made whether to ask for a wider street. She wondered if cars would get side-swiped more often if they are crammed into a parking space, or if people would dodge in and out. She felt the board should re-think this because they don't feel comfortable with it. Mr. Isakson said S. Eton is not a typical residential street in Birmingham - it handles a lot of through traffic. Dr. Rontal thought the board may want to ask the City Commission to treat the street like Lincoln and make it a little bit wider.

Ms. Edwards indicated it would be important to have traffic counts along this section of S. Eton Rd. Mr. Labadie noted that S. Eton north and south of Lincoln don't have to be the same.

Ms. Folberg recalled that residents said the bi-directional bike lane that was discussed on S. Eton Rd. north of Lincoln is a road to nowhere. Now when she looks at plans for the section south of Lincoln, the bike lanes are not connected and what the residents said is justified. The two pieces don't fit together. That is why she is not happy with the options presented.

Ms. Ecker summarized the discussion:

- Maybe the street is not wide enough;
- It will cost more money to expand the street a little;
- Staff should think outside the box and come up with a new set of options with a new set of parameters based on today's comments;
- Look at how to connect the bike lanes to Royal Oak and how much space is needed for that;

- Get the traffic counts;
- The board is not ready yet to ask for input from the residents.

Dr. Rontal said when calculating the amount of space needed, a bi-directional bike lane requires 10 ft.; two lanes of traffic require 10 ft. each; parking on one side would be 8 ft. more, for a total of 38 ft. That means adding 5 ft. to each side of the road.

Mr. Labadie voiced the concern that 38 ft. is quite wide. He noted they have traffic counts already. What they don't have is the residents' thoughts. Ms. Ecker noted that staff can look at some options to minimize the road width.

Ms. Slanga asked for some generic drawings of what the options would be.

Chairperson Adams suggested that MMTB members submit their ideas to Mr. O'Meara in order to help F&V come up with options that the board favors.

## **6. OAKLAND AVE. AND LAWNSDALE AVE. STOP Sign Study**

Mr. O'Meara recalled the City is planning to reconstruct the short block of Lawndale Ave. between Oakland Ave. and Woodward Ave. The MMTB endorsed staff recommendations to rebuild Lawndale Ave. narrower than it is presently, at 20 ft. wide. That recommendation was approved by the City Commission. However, it was noted at that time that the handicap ramp placement at the Oakland Ave. intersection was problematic in that the ramp at the southeast corner directed pedestrians out into the middle of the intersection, with no connection on the north side of Oakland Ave. Staff studied the issue further, and made recommendations at the July 10, 2017 City Commission meeting. While the Commission endorsed the changes to the ramps, it was now noted that relocating the Oakland Ave. crosswalk to the east may introduce a safety hazard, since northbound Lawndale Ave. traffic does not currently have to stop at the intersection. Staff then requested F&V to conduct a full scale STOP sign study for the intersection. Traffic counts were taken. Based on the new information, new recommendations relative to the STOP sign placement have been provided by F&V. Also, since this issue was last reviewed by the MMTB, it has been confirmed that MDOT will relocate the northbound Woodward Ave. crosswalk at Oakland Ave. Since this crossing is also a part of the now being implemented Neighborhood Connector Route, a widened shared use sidewalk is being proposed from Woodward Ave. to Lawndale Ave.

Ms. Kroll advised that F&V conducted a STOP sign warrant analysis and the intersection did not meet the volume thresholds for a STOP sign. So then they took a look at what can be done to make it safer. Guidance from the Michigan

Manual Uniform Traffic Control Devices ("MMUTCD") indicated that putting STOP signs on the minor streets at this location would be recommended due to the site distance constraints and pedestrian activity.

Mr. O'Meara summarized that northbound traffic would get a STOP sign that has not existed in the past, but the STOP sign for westbound Oakland Ave. traffic would be removed. Ms. Kroll added the traffic volume westbound is relatively low. The highest volume was northbound on Lawndale right onto east bound Oakland Ave. Providing the STOP sign will require those vehicles to stop, look to the right, and look for pedestrians crossing before turning. They feel this is a much safer option for pedestrian and bike traffic through this area.

With that in mind they looked at a couple of additional options to help promote the multi-modal aspects. Because the volumes were so low, it doesn't warrant a dual right turn lane configuration along the westbound approach of M-1 and Oakland Ave., nor do they recommend a dual right turn lane from a stop control as it is not very safe. This provides an opportunity to narrow down and create a shorter crossing distance. The first option is revised per what the City Commission has already seen. The second two are additional options that are being presented for consideration based on data regarding the traffic volumes. Option 2 was to narrow the street with striping, and Option 3 was to do it with landscaping.

Dr. Rontal noted they are taking away a STOP sign at Lawndale and the people in that Oakland neighborhood will get a freer pass out of their neighborhood to Woodward Ave., but it is being narrowed to one lane out instead of two. Mr. O'Meara explained that Oakland is wide because it used to be the way to get into Downtown.

Mr. Isaksen said that biking through there he would go west down Oakland Ave. and stay to the left. When cars turn right he would go straight across and merge into the crosswalk. He would not use the sidewalk going west. When he is going east he would probably use the sidewalk.

Ms. Edwards said bikers heading east might benefit from signage that says "Walk bike to sidewalk to cross Woodward." Mr. Isaksen observed his experience is that the current crosswalk that conflicts with the right turn onto Woodward Ave. is less convenient and less safe than this would be.

Ms. Ecker thought the change in the stop signs is a no brainer. Ms. Ecker did not agree with striping off a lane because no one will ever follow that. Shrinking the width of the road and adding green space will be a big plus.

**Motion by Dr. Rontal**

**Seconded by Ms. Folberg to recommend the relocation of the STOP sign for the Oakland Ave. & Lawndale Ave. intersection from its current westbound Oakland Ave. location, to northbound Lawndale Ave. Further, to go with Option 3 in terms of narrowing westbound Oakland Ave. with green space, including the bit of sidewalk and including the signage or notification for shared use sidewalk.**

**Motion carried, 6-1.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Rontal, Folberg, Adams, Edwards, Isaksen, Schafer

Nays: Slanga

Absent: Lawson, Surnow

## **7. CROSSWALK MATERIALS STUDY**

Ms. Chapman recalled the City Commission has directed the MMTB to recommend the type of material to be used for new crosswalks.

She discussed the various pavement marking materials:

- Paint is grouped into waterborne and alkyd paint. Waterborne paint is better for the environment and it is typically used.
- Thermoplastics fall into the categories of alkyd based, hydrocarbon based, and pre-formed thermoplastics. Hydrocarbon based thermoplastics are not recommended for crosswalks. Alkyd based are used for crosswalks. Pre-formed thermoplastics are tapes. They have been found to have very particular application procedures and to not to hold up well.
- Thermosets come in three types: epoxy, polyester, and polyurea. Epoxy thermosets are used most for continuous applications including centerlines, lane lines and edge lines. Polyurea has been used in multiple areas.

Of the three materials, paint is the cheapest, followed by thermoplastics and then epoxy and polyurea. It was found that other cities use thermoplastics and paints the most. Thermoplastics and polyurea have longer service life than paints, which is good for higher volume roads because they don't need to be closed as often to repair the crosswalks. Paints generally need to be re-applied each year. So, that is what is currently used on most Birmingham roads. Polyurea applications have not held up quite as well as thermoplastics. Also it is more expensive.

So the recommendation is to continue using paint on low volume and local roads, and to go with alkyd based thermoplastics on major roads and around schools if

it is deemed to be necessary. Paints and thermoplastics have a very similar appearance and reflectivity. Cost-wise, thermoplastics come out even if not cheaper than paint because they don't have to be replaced as often.

Grooving expands the life span of all products but it comes at a substantial cost. It is recommended that grooving be installed only when a street is being repaved. The entire crosswalk standards, materials and design would be a gradual transition with road construction. They will use only paint unless the road is being rebuilt and then thermoplastics will be applied on the major streets.

**Motion by Dr. Rontal**

**Seconded by Ms. Slanga to use paint on all non-major street crosswalks. Use paint on all major streets that are not going to be completely re-built; but when those major street crosswalks are being re-paved and re-built they will groove and use thermoplastic. Re-evaluate annually with the thermoplastics that are applied to make sure they are truly living up to their suggested retail life span.**

There was no public input on the motion.

**Motion carried, 7-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Rontal, Slanga, Adams, Edwards, Folberg, Isaksen, Schafer

Nays: None

Absent: Lawson, Surnow

**8. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**  
(no public wished to speak)

**9. MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. O'Meara spoke about correspondence received from Mayor Nickita showing a picture of a sidewalk marking that Royal Oak is using to try and discourage bike riding on their sidewalks Downtown. Board members did not think that people riding bikes on the sidewalk in Downtown Birmingham are a problem. Commander Grewe verified there have not been complaints or accidents with bikes on the sidewalk. If necessary in the future, the marking can be affixed at any time.

Mr. Labadie informed everyone that the new signal at N. Eton and Maple Rd. is not working as it is supposed to yet. There is still some work to do and the painting isn't finished either.

Ms. Slanga thought traffic lights Downtown along Maple Rd. need to be updated because they are dim.

**10. NEXT MEETING OCTOBER 5, 2017 at 6 p.m.**

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

No further business being evident, the board members adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Jana Ecker, Planning Director

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Paul O'Meara, City Engineer