

Central Entrance Transportation Plan Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting Summary

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 | 4:30 PM-6:00 PM

Attendees

- Teresa Johnson - Resident, Director of Bridging Hearts
- David Schafroth - We Walk in Duluth
- Judy Gibbs - MIC Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- Dr. Pam Harrington - Business Owner, Harrington Endodontics
- Kelley Raisanen - Resident
- Steve King - Pastor, North Star Baptist Church & Bus Driver
- Mike Wenholz, MIC
- Jody Martinson, WSB
- Austin Hauf, WSB
- Brad Hamilton, WSB

Invited but not in attendance:

- Heidi Johnson
- Henry Banks
- Tony Rogers
- Alyssa Mallory Cloud

Meeting Summary

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Community Advisory Committee Charter Overview
- Project Overview and Background

Project Goals:

Advance the vision for a walkable, bikeable and transit- oriented thoroughfare which will create an attractive destination that:

- (1) is safe and comfortable to use for those of all ages and abilities
- (2) encourages new types of residential and commercial development

Project Timeline

- (1) Visioning (we are here) Spring to Fall 2021
- (2) Draft Plan October 2021
- (3) Final Plan December 2021

- (4) Project Design and Engineering 2022 – 2025
- (5) Construction 2026

History and Past Studies - Recommendations from past plans include:

- (1) Improving existing sidewalks and eliminating sidewalk gaps
- (2) Pedestrian crossing improvements at existing intersections
- (3) Adding mid-block crossings with advanced warning technology
- (4) Intersection improvements (adding roundabouts or new signals)
- (5) Locations of future bike routes and trails, including along Central Entrance
- (6) Short segments of new roadway to create street grid connections
- (7) Driveway access consolidation and closures and other improvements to access management
- (8) Adding or removing turn lanes
- (9) Creating right-in/right-out intersections
- (10) Using Palm St and Myrtle St as backage roads
- (11) Developing a streetscape plan and adding landscaping
- (12) Coordinating traffic signals

Engagement and Outreach

- (1) Better Central Entrance Event June 4 & 5
- (2) Virtual Workshops June 24 & 29
- (3) Steering Committee
- (4) Community Advisory Committee
- (5) Online Comment Opportunities
- (6) Mailings

What have we heard so far?

- (1) Gateway – inviting corridor for multiple modes
- (2) Address missing pedestrian connections
- (3) Safe places to cross the street (mid-block and intersections)
- (4) Winter road maintenance impact on sidewalks
- (5) Importance of center median and boulevard spaces
- (6) Bike facilities along Central Entrance
- (7) Intersection improvements (possible roundabouts)
- (8) Evaluate number and width of lanes

Draft Concepts: CAC Discussion & Feedback

- **Zone 1 Poll Results** (only recorded from CAC members)

Question 1

Would you prefer a wider center median or wider boulevards between the roadway and the sidewalk/trail in this zone?

- a) Wider center median – 1 out of 5
- b) Wider boulevards – 4 out of 5

Question 2

If there is not room for a shared use path on both sides of Central Entrance, would you prefer a two-way shared use path on one side or a one-way separated bikeway (“cycle track”) on both sides?

- a) a two-way shared use path on one side – 2 out of 5
- b) a one-way separated bikeway on both sides – 3 out of 5

- **Zone 2 – 4 Poll Results (only recorded from CAC members)**

Question 1

If there is not room for a shared use path on both sides of Central Entrance, would you prefer a two-way shared use path on one side or a one-way separated bikeway (“cycle track”) on both sides?

- a) a two-way shared use path on one side – 2 out of 5
- b) a one-way separated bikeway on both sides – 3 out of 5

Question 2

Previous plans have proposed three different locations for mid-block crossings in this area. Where do you think a mid-block crossing is most needed? (Check all that apply)

1. Ebony Ave (near Lakeview Christian Academy) – 3 votes
2. Kissell Ave (between McDonald’s and Burger King) – 2 votes
3. Harding Ave (near Enterprise Rent-A-Car) - 0
4. Some other location - please share – 0

Question 3

Should boulevards be included between the roadway and the sidewalk/trail?

- a) Yes (concrete, grass, plantings) – 4 out of 5
- b) No – 1 out of 5

- **Zone 5 Poll Results (only recorded from CAC members)**

Question 1

Would you prefer a wider center median or wider boulevards between the roadway and the sidewalk/trail in this zone?

- a) Wider center median – 1 out of 5
- b) Wider boulevards – 4 out of 5

Question 2

If there is not room for a shared use path on both sides of Central Entrance, would you prefer a two-way shared use path on one side or a one-way separated bikeway (“cycle track”) on both sides?

- a) a two-way shared use path on one side – 2 out of 5
- b) a one-way separated bikeway on both sides – 3 out of 5

Summary of Comments/Feedback (verbal)

(Comments that were brought up by multiple CAC members multiple times are **bolded**)

- (1) Questions about R/W width – concern over losing property
- (2) 4 lanes with roundabouts – concerns raised with speeds increasing in between roundabouts – slows traffic and does not do anything to improve pedestrian movement
- (3) Center medians unsafe for autonomous vehicles (AV)
- (4) Need to consider AV technology advancement as this is modeled. Do we need 4 lanes?
- (5) Roundabouts are confusing for drivers and difficult to understand for pedestrians
- (6) Concern that a center median would hamper access to business (Dental Office). Can there be a left turn lane? Businesses need access that does not restrict customers.
- (7) Palm not utilized effectively now. What are ways to utilize Palm?
- (8) Would be helpful to show existing typicals
- (9) Good example in Superior, WI Tower Avenue/Banks Avenue
- (10) Roundabouts at every intersection would irritate public
- (11) Where else in Duluth are 11 ft lanes? Grand Ave?
- (12) Roundabouts for walkers are not great and not an improvement
- (13) **How will center median be maintained, especially in winter?**
- (14) How do we maintain shared path in winter?
- (15) Pedestrian safety is one of largest concerns on corridor – it is lacking now
- (16) Do not “over-correct” for pedestrians as cars are main uses of corridor
- (17) **Accessibility is a huge issue especially at Arlington and Blackman**
- (18) Roundabouts are better for cars than people
- (19) People use the shortest path for crossings. Afraid people will not use crossings if too long.
- (20) If no roundabouts, then bump outs, need more traffic calming measures
- (21) **Very intrigued by one-way pairs option. (Want to explore that more)**
- (22) Roadway needs work. Make sure to address basics before anything else.
- (23) Add ped crossings to existing typical concepts

Comments/Feedback (Zoom Chat)

- (1) It's great that the ROW is so wide - it makes for so many possibilities - like the protected bikeways and roundabouts
- (2) Given the increasing automation of transit, do you genuinely believe that we will need 4 car-only lanes in 50 years?
- (3) Consider utilizing electric scooters like we have downtown
- (4) I like wide medians, but the trails become less usable if they are packed closer to the roadway. The more separation they have, the more comfortable to use.
- (5) I would like people to keep in mind all the people in wheelchairs that are around the intersection of Arlington and CE. It's not just bikes and pedestrians.
- (6) Roundabouts are safer for pedestrians - they shorten crossing distances.
- (7) I can't believe I'm the guy speaking in favor of roundabouts, but while they have a known educational impediment for people who are not accustomed to them, they move traffic extremely well. Ann Arbor has adopted them extensively in the last 15-20 years and the improvements to some significant intersections is noticeable. Particularly helps with business access.
I'm a bit concerned about a roundabout at Arlington for pedestrian purposes.
- (8) Can the 88' section width be maintained as a minimum through the entire corridor?
- (9) Can we provide an example of another road section that has 11-foot lanes? It was mentioned it helps slow traffic.
- (10) Concern that the folks' houses/businesses are not going to like the 'government' taking their land...that might be a real hard sell.
- (11) If the powers that be balk at purchasing right-of-way, is it required to have a strip of sidewalk on the one side with a multi-purpose trail on the other? Obviously, it's not optimal, but if there is a clear and usable trail on one side, that may eliminate the need for a sidewalk on the opposite end.
- (12) Simply too much traffic for three lanes, though. It's not feasible to anticipate a 30%+ reduction in five years.
- (13) Palm street option is interesting.
- (14) Superior has a one-way pair in a residential neighborhood that works well.
- (15) This looks to be a much more walkable, safe option for walkability on Central Entrance. Not perfect but much, much more walkable. (one-way pairs option)
- (16) The trail doesn't get used because it isn't maintained nor recognized by the Parks Maintenance folks.
- (17) There will be a part of the Superior Hiking Trail and the Duluth Traverse multi-use trail that will be coming through the old Central High School property and likely crossing at Pecan Avenue
- (18) Much more wheelchair and pedestrian use in zone 1-2, and bikes from Blackman down to end of zone 5.

- (19) What are the impacts a 4-to-less lane conversion along CE when paired with roundabouts?
- (20) Traffic moves over speed limits as it is - slowing traffic to actual speed limits is a good thing.
- (21) Winter snow removal is awful
- (22) Require businesses be closer to CE and have parking in their rear. that would help slow things down, too.
- (23) Input from tonight will be incorporated into the concepts
- (24) Using Palm is a very good idea
- (25) Interested in the amount of private equity you'd need to get this done.

Next Steps - Anticipated Schedule

- (1) Refine concepts based on what we heard today
- (2) Work with MIC subconsultants on traffic modeling
- (3) Mid-August: Steering Committee meeting
- (4) Early September: Steering Committee meeting
- (5) Mid-September: Community Advisory Committee meeting
- (6) October: Draft plan submitted to Steering Committee