

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

Wednesday, September 29, 2021 | 4:30 PM-6:00 PM

- **Welcome & Introductions**

- Attendees

- Austin Hauf, WSB
- Brad Hamilton, WSB
- Samantha Lorenz, Terra Soma
- James Gittemeier, DSMIC
- Ron Chicka, DSMIC
- Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT
- Skip Williams, We Walk in Duluth and Citizen member of MIC BPAC

- **Project Overview and Background Refresher**

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 (MnDOT) – Doug Kerfeld (5 min)
- (5) Construction 2026 (MnDOT) – Doug Kerfeld (5 min)
 - a. Jan-March 2022 predesign and construction contract
 - i. Feasibility of proposed alternatives
 - ii. Additional public engagement
 - iii. Narrow to ultimate preferred alternative
 - iv. Roughly one year process - Late summer 2023 preferred alternative
 - b. Final design contract early 2024-fall 2025
 - i. Permitting
 - ii. Final plans
 - c. Letting November of 2025
 - d. Construction spring 2026
 - e. Skip - question about projected cost of project
 - i. Doug: \$14.3 million set aside

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
- (7) Feature and Concept Survey

- **Online Feature and Concept Survey**

- Skip: Comment on design of survey - that we may be putting the cart before the horse in terms of asking about roundabouts versus the outcomes that we want to see in each zone. Roundabouts are just one tool.
- James: Clarify that it is not a vote about what should be included but understanding how people feel about different design features.
- Samantha: Need to show how different designs/tools support the outcomes/values we want to see. For some designs such as roundabouts, people may not say they like it until they get to use it/see how it works.
- Skip: In draft report, include values like safety, walkability etc. as framing in beginning and throughout.
- Skip: Lots of traffic has already been diverted away from CE to US 53, can of worms, etc. The number one concern from recent MIC surveys was that all the different modal networks are not connected. Safety also a key concern.

- **Land Use and Traffic Modeling (3-lane example)**

- Land Use
 - Doug: Land use will likely be slow to change but could happen if the corridor becomes more friendly to people walking.
 - Skip: There could be an increase in single family home value as well, in addition to mixed use development. BRT stations could be important anchors. Need to provide lane space for buses.
 - James: Good presentation - have not seen something like this for the corridor. This area could switch to higher density housing, it has happened in other neighborhoods. Liked Kenwood Village example - that project was something the planning department really supported.
 - Skip: There are similar developments happening elsewhere.
 - James: Kenwood Village-type developments are what the city is talking about in the small area plan.
- Traffic Modeling
 - James: Possible to show bikeway at back of curb? Would give buffer space to separate the trees farther from road salt.
 - Skip: Change in maintenance practices? The lake walk is maintained by a specific vehicle. Street trees would improve livability. Maintenance policies should be included as an objective.

- **Clearing the Way – an All-Season Corridor (15 min)**

- Samantha: Design, practice, and policies need to work together.
 - Explore stormwater treatment options
 - How to implement street trees in winter climate? Need to work with city arborist.

- Possibility for demonstration projects?
 - Skip: Transportation networks are supposed to be integrated and work together. Should clear snow from transportation routes and transit stops before recreational routes. Where can we change the process? How can the design make the process work better? Possible to heat ped crossings with solar panels? Could explore cost-benefit analysis of heated bikeways.
 - How to identify key areas for snow clearing? Corners, transit stops, etc.
 - Central Entrance could be a priority route for snow clearing.
 - Central Entrance can be a demonstration for Duluth as a “trail city.”
 - Skip: Highlighted the importance of corner clearing. Safe route to school along Central Entrance is cleared by the city. Project example: Downtown Anchorage has covered, lit sidewalks.
 - Skip: Spend the money available with sustainability and accessibility in mind. Highlighted idea from virtual workshops of ped bridge with view of the city and the port.
 - James: Loves green stormwater idea. Not currently much green infrastructure in Duluth. MnDOT Central Office can help facilitate green infrastructure exploration. Previous floods have damaged areas down the hill from Central Entrance. MPO pedestrian plan includes looking at priority snow clearing areas. Opportunity for wide center median at both ends of the corridor for trees where there is more right of way.
- **Draft Plan & Draft Engagement Framework (10)**
 - Values
 - James: Value/goal idea: main street for Duluth Heights neighborhood. Gateway or signature street.
 - Skip: Keystone role in completing the transportation network for all modes. City has resolution on climate change/climate emergency - work resilience into values/goals.
 - James: Important connector role in roadway network, but also multimodal and currently dangerous for walking and biking.
 - Skip: Locals that attended workshop wanted to reclaim the neighborhood. Make this a pleasant place to live and be. Livability and value of economic activity in the place. A more human-scale place.
 - James: At better Central Entrance event, locals came and loved having a place to go. Speaks to importance of placemaking.
- **Next Steps | Stay Involved | Thank you (5 min)**
 - Survey open until Oct 5th.