



Appendix A - Steering Committee Meeting Summaries

Central Entrance Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Friday, April 9, 2021 | 10-11:00am |

Attendees

Ron Chicka, MIC
Rondi Watson, MIC
Mike Wenholz, MIC
Adam Fulton, City of Duluth
Kris Liljebblad, City of Duluth
Cari Pederson, City of Duluth
Chris Belden, Duluth Transit Authority
Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT
Bryan Anderson, MnDOT
Jody Martinson, WSB
Tony Heppelmann, WSB
Dan Pfeiffer, WSB
Austin Hauf, WSB

Summary

1. Welcome & Introductions - Ron Chicka/Jody Martinson
 - a. Jody and Ron welcomed the group.
 - b. Attendees introduced themselves.
 - c. Jody gave an overview of the agenda for the steering committee meeting.
2. Project Goals and Objectives - Jody Martinson
 - a. Jody gave an overview of the project goals & objectives.
 - i. Goal for the project team is not recreate what has been done before - will build on the work that has been done previously.
 - ii. Purpose of the steering committee is to
 1. Ensure that goals and objectives are being met.
 2. Ensure that a diverse group of stakeholders within CAC are involved.
 3. Provide advice/recommendations to Project Team, TAC, and policy board at key decision points in the process.
 - iii. Key date: October 31 - Develop 10 concepts for the corridor, have draft plan prepared, steering committee will have one month to review.
3. Public Engagement - Dan Pfeiffer
 - a. Dan provided an overview of the public engagement work plan.
 - i. Visioning Process/Public Engagement Framework
 1. Develop public engagement plan for visioning process.
 2. Community Visioning: Community Advisory Committee, Virtual Corridor Walks, Online Engagement
 3. Community Advisory Committee planned to have 4-5 virtual meetings. Invitation to local elected leaders to appoint members.
 - a. Question posed to City of Duluth staff - Would they like to ask local elected leaders to appoint CAC members?
 - b. Targeting 12-16 members, 20 max.

- ii. Results of Engagement Planning Survey
 1. Dan shared the results of the Engagement Planning Survey
 2. Potential stakeholders, concerns, and ideas.
 3. Public expectation vs decision-makers expectations for the public. Important to convey that we will incorporate ideas into the plan and if not possible, explain why.
 4. Success in the process vs. success in the outcome
 5. Challenges or opportunities in the corridor
 6. Challenges or opportunities to project success
 7. "One Thing"
 8. What is "Right on Target"?
- b. Building a Vision
 - i. What do you think of when you think of this corridor? Any words to describe the vision/project/process? This will help team develop the "brand" - cohesiveness and consistency throughout the process.
 1. Needs to be redeveloped.
 2. Gateway potential - Great view coming from the airport. Welcoming corridor into and out of the city.
 3. "Helter skelter" commercial environment. Should emphasize the neighborhood that it passes through. Emphasize community cohesion.
 4. Opportunity - Does not serve any of the stakeholders very well at the moment.
 5. Fresh start/clean slate.
 6. Needs to be "patient" versus now, which is "impatient." Can it be better while maintaining volume needs?
 7. Not very attractive today - lots of hard surfaces.
 8. Multimodal connectivity.
 9. Has not changed much in 10 years. Non-airport runway look is needed. Narrow the vision triangle.
 - c. Dan to start reaching out to organizations to seek representatives.
 - i. Early May corridor walkthrough with CAC.
 - ii. Discuss elements to be carried forward from previous plans and existing conditions.
 - d. Adam - City staff would like to review details of approach to have city staff appoint CAC representatives.
4. Overview of Past Studies - Jody Martinson/Austin Hauf
 - a. Jody and Austin gave an overview of information from past plans and studies reviewed so far and suggested an approach for representing past recommendations visually on maps.
 - b. Suggestion to build on issues map from proposal - it was a good start in terms of representing the corridor.
 - c. Group agreed that graphics will be critical to communication as we go to the public.
 - d. Good opportunity to highlight where past recommendations conflict.
5. Next Meeting - Jody Martinson
 - a. The group was okay with the second Friday of the month from 10-11am.
 - b. Discuss previous plans in more detail - Discuss draft visuals.
 - i. Will send materials ~1 week before.
 - c. Talk about upcoming placemaking event - Better Central Entrance - Run by Zeitgeist Arts June 4-5th.
6. Closing - Jody Martinson
 - a. Chris shared that Central Entrance is a major focus of the Better Bus Blueprint process. There will be 10-minute frequencies on Central Entrance.

b. Next meeting May 14th

Action items:

- Dan to send PIP info to Adam for review.
- Dan to start reaching out to organizations to seek representatives for CAC.
- WSB to send meeting invites for next steering committee meetings.
- WSB to move forward with map representations of past recommendations.

Central Entrance Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Friday, May 14, 2021 | 10-11:00am

Attendees

Ron Chicka, MIC
Mike Wenholz, MIC
Adam Fulton, City of Duluth
Kris Liljeblad, City of Duluth
Chris Belden, Duluth Transit Authority
Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT
Bryan Anderson, MnDOT
Jody Martinson, WSB
Dan Pfeiffer, WSB
Austin Hauf, WSB

Summary

1. Welcome
2. Review of past plans and studies w/corresponding maps of each zone
 - a. Hampton Inn area - development restrictions/property issues/environmental concerns could be an issue for new road connecting to Mall Drive
 - b. Corridor will potentially have BRT (1 of 2 lines)
 - i. BRT frequencies ("pre-BRT") coming June 2022 (10-minute headway in peak, 15-minute rest of day)
 - ii. Stations for full BRT would come later
 - iii. Route is on Central Entrance
 - iv. Route would convert to limited stop service
 - v. DTA has been talking about BRT for a few years, but may not be well known in the public yet
 - vi. Draft preferred scenario in month or two
 - vii. DTA hoping to apply for HOPE program for preliminary BRT design/engineering
 - viii. Transit Oriented Development/land use study along BRT to ensure usefulness of investment - would explore land use and development patterns along proposed BRT
 - c. Proposed development between Mall Dr and Anderson Rd
 - i. Development proceeding at SW corner of Anderson and Central Entrance
 - ii. Other proposed developments would only have RI/RO access
 - d. In general, City does not have big redevelopment plans in Zone 1
 - e. City has received complaints about the ability to cross the road at Joshua Ave/Central Entrance intersection (people cross here to get between Walgreens and the mall)
 - i. No ped facility on south leg of intersection to provide access to the mall - Trinity crossings do not connect to anything

- ii. DTA runs buses directly to Walgreens due to lack of ped connectivity
 - iii. The free right turn lanes in this area do not have any crosswalks
 - iv. Trinity and Mesaba intersections not currently part of construction project scope; however, they should be included in this plan. Need to be clear with the public on setting expectations for limits.
 - f. Surrounding neighborhoods would benefit from better bike connectivity, but there is need for better bike facilities on Central Entrance itself, not just a parallel route.
 - g. Questioning what would happen due to access closures - removing access could increase vehicle speeds on Central Entrance when we may want them to be decreased
 - i. Medians could change the dynamic at access locations
 - ii. If medians are added, would more ROW be needed
 - iii. Accesses are also very wide, could this change with reconstruction
 - h. Palm St/Myrtle St may be backage roads
 - i. Difficult to make left turns off Palm St.
 - ii. Not functioning well as reliever in current state
 - i. Queuing on Arlington to get onto Central Entrance can go all the way back to Palm St.
 - j. A lot of issues to consider at Arlington/Palm with sidewalk, shared use path, on-street bike route, high volume of traffic, etc.
 - k. How do we fit everything without expanding the ROW?
 - l. Comparisons between this corridor and Excelsior Blvd in Minneapolis/St. Louis Park (could be similar model)
 - i. Transit corridor
 - ii. High number of access locations
 - iii. Ped connections
 - iv. Commercial corridor
 - v. Development is more intense than Central Entrance
 - vi. Higher traffic volume
 - m. Comparison to Belknap St in Superior - another potential model
 - i. Median islands, crossings, bumpouts
 - ii. 2 lanes each direction
 - iii. Similar traffic mix
 - iv. Could apply to Zones 2-3
 - v. Likely more ROW than Central Entrance
 - n. Are traffic signals accomplishing what is needed?
 - i. Signal at Basswood - backups at Lakeview Christian Academy
 - o. Need to look closer at recommendations for Ebony intersection
- 3. Community engagement event
 - a. Better Central Entrance – Coordinating with Zeitgeist Arts
 - i. June 4th 5-9 pm
 - ii. June 5th 3-7 pm
 - b. Held at NW quadrant of Arlington and Central Entrance intersection
- 4. Community Advisory Committee
 - a. First meeting to be held in early June, will focus on review of previous recommendations.
 - b. Discuss Zone concepts July-August
- 5. Upcoming Virtual Workshops
 - a. June 24th 5-7 pm
 - b. June 29th 5-7 pm
 - c. Small group focused discussions on each Zone

- d. Virtual corridor walks
- 6. Next Meeting
 - a. **June 11, 2021, 10-11:30 am (time is being extended to 1.5 hours)**
 - b. Will finish review of maps and previous recommendations

Action items:

- Dan to send copy of charter

Central Entrance Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Friday, June 11, 2021 | 10-Noon

Invitees

Ron Chicka, MIC
Mike Wenholz, MIC*
Rondi Watson, MIC
Adam Fulton, City of Duluth
Kris Liljeblad, City of Duluth
Cari Pederson, City of Duluth
Chris Belden, Duluth Transit Authority

Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT
Bryan Anderson, MnDOT
Michael Kalnbach, MnDOT
Jody Martinson, WSB
Dan Pfeiffer, WSB
Austin Hauf, WSB *
Samantha Lorenz, Terra Soma

*Not in attendance

Better Central Entrance Event:

- Significant feedback on future signals and/or roundabouts
- Discussion on not-allowing left turns out of access
- Significant number of transit stops
- Past studies identified a few new roadways
- Heard need for continuous and improved sidewalk conditions
- Heard discussion of Palm as backage road

Existing conditions and recommendations from past studies

Zone 4 is Arlington Ave. to Blackman Ave.

Comment that the layouts captured past recommendations. City (Adam) was asked to expand on local street connections. How committed is city? The City noted the whole area is potentially developable. Good development sites on north side. City has been hearing quite a bit about traffic speeds. Not having sidewalks on northside is a big problem. Many people are crossing in this area.

Enterprise car rental is located on north side with small lot. They store some vehicles in another lot. They have an agreement to park on other side of street and people are trying to cross in that area without crossing or signal (Ron).

Upham Road by Blackman is very close to Central Entrance. West of Upham is partially vacated. Numerous auto-oriented businesses are located on this roadway. Surprised it is not reflected more in past studies. May want to spend time to think about it with this group. There appears to be right-of-way encroachments. Local business is seeking changes. City is having some discussions with Pawn America. Upham Road should be highlighted during virtual walk to get feedback.

Zone 5 trails

- Missing segment between Blackman and east to 13th. Stream is immediately adjacent. It is an important part of the bicycle transportation network
- Pecan/Skyline Drive has a missing link in the mountain bike trail
- Cross city trail is in rough shape
- Affordable housing (Harbor Highlands) on hill across from MnDOT is important to connect to the mall along trail.

Should this project encourage the consolidation of accesses?

- Local access is important to businesses and we don't want to exacerbate speed issues
- Access modification can improve pedestrian movements
- We want to limit ped-vehicle conflicts but we don't want to continue speed conditions at 45 mph
- Get the speeds down with a design that encourages the safety for the people
- Myrtle Street to Central Entrance has very steep slopes (Myrtle is 20-25 ft higher)
- The frequency/impulse decisions to fast food is scary for cyclists along Central Entrance which warrants considering bikes routes that are off Central Entrance to limit the bicycle-vehicle conflicts

One-way Pairs with Central Entrance (WB) and Palm (EB) as an alternative

- Past study in early 2000s did not consider roundabouts (it looked at transitions between Anderson and Arlington on west end and Blackman and Pecan on east end) (MnDOT)
- Will affect the residential community in Zone 3
- Depending on traffic volumes potential to use roundabouts at Arlington and Blackman
- If we consider One-way Pairs as a long term solution we may want to do some microsimulations
- One-way pairs should be considered in the solution set, but there should be consideration about the neighborhood west of Arlington
- Date on drawing from 2002 pre-dates a lot of public engagement and industry practices
- Negative aspects of a couplet - seems too far toward accommodating cars compared to other users (it does not get to speed reduction)
- It does provide more room to accommodate other modes in the right-of-way
- From a transit perspective, one ways pairs are difficult as it increases crossings

General Comments:

- Being pedestrian on this corridor is horrendous most of the year. If traveling to the mall or Hermantown a few extra minutes is not horrendous
- Reducing from 5 lanes to 2 lanes slows down the roadway
- We need to get creative within the ROW
- Need to enter a distinct traffic flow and environment between roundabouts that will slow people down
- Part of it relies on thru traffic finding another way if speed is their concern
- If we double the signal operations to get people across, it may slow down traffic, but it doubles Operation and Maintenance costs
- Central Entrance has high traffic volumes, comparing 2019 counts there is more traffic on CE than I35 downtown
- Trinity is option from downtown to mall
- Many examples at 25K AADT that are better operations (find examples)
- Speed limit signs do not change people's speeds, drivers need to recognize the different space; look and feel changes people's behavior
- When its congested it improves pedestrian experience because people are going slower

Transit

- Bus stops are too close together (partly because the lack of sidewalks)
- Would like to see fewer bus stops but that depends on design
- Townhome residents go through trees to get to the bus stop.

Zone 5

Segment 5A Blackman to Pecan

- Few businesses, do not have access onto CE, not driving pedestrian
- Blackman needs a signal at some point, not there yet

Segment 5B Pecan to Mesaba

- More challenging due to terrain
- Northeast quad has Brewery Creek
- South side is a giant hill
- Pecan from CE up to school the school district will need to rebuild street and add sidewalk
- Transit dependent population on the northside
- Is there innovation (cost effective solution) in pedestrian systems such as a pedestrian bridge but who would maintain it May be solutions that are cost effective.

General comments:

- Existing old high school site is a nice recreational attraction and view
- Pecan and CE is project crossing for Superior Hiking trail and the Traverse trail (easements are getting in place for these)
- Traverse and Superior trails drive ped and bike traffic
- Trails, especially mountain biking and single track are driving visitors

Engagement

Samantha – How to redesign for people while still accommodating the car

Virtual workshops/engagement

Focus to bridge the past plans and analysis and the community pulse to put the tools that might be in the tools box and start to apply to Central Entrance. What are the tools we want to start with?

First part is focused on grounding to the human scale – bike and walkability. Meant to be informative and build common language and somewhat interactive. First day is project overview, high-level streets as places and explore some principals to street design – how through design do we achieve the speed we want, what does walkability mean, why do people walk in some places and not others. Use videos to be out walking. What are the challenges and experiences in the virtual walking audit. Each breakout will summarize through their top 3 ideas.

The second part builds on starter concepting ideas, spend majority of time in thinking through tools and big picture concept ideas. Goal is to involve community members in designing shared ideas. Building informed consent.

Questions/comments:

- Do you want steering committee members to attend? Yes
- How do you plan to announce this? Dan to be sending information to all email registrants and Steering committee
- Is sound available for the video and whether Samantha would present design? No
- Samantha indicated the presentation would highlight other projects and locations that have tackled challenges
- Access to transit is important
- Is there a Vision Zero policy? No, adopted policy but working to get more local control. There was discussion on the Toward Zero Deaths campaign
- Initiative to lower VMT over time
- Duluth also is driving Safe Communities initiative – focus on walkability
- Arlington – apartment building with low income and people with disabilities accessing transit
- Duluth Heights Community Center north of Arlington
- Looking for a variety of examples to show what the potential might be for transit

Central Entrance Transportation Plan Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Friday, July 9, 2021 | 10-Noon

Invitees

Ron Chicka, MIC*
Mike Wenholz, MIC
Rondi Watson, MIC*
Adam Fulton, City of Duluth
Kris Liljeblad, City of Duluth
Cari Pederson, City of Duluth*
Chris Belden, Duluth Transit Authority
Samantha Lorenz, Terra Soma

Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT*
Bryan Anderson, MnDOT
Michael Kalnbach, MnDOT
Jody Martinson, WSB
Dan Pfeiffer, WSB
Austin Hauf, WSB
Brad Hamilton, WSB

*Not in attendance

Meeting Summary

- Welcome (Jody)
- Summary of June 25th and 29th Workshops (Austin)

Transportation Themes:

Zone 1 – Trinity Road to Anderson Road

- Potential bike connection to Arrowhead Road
- Importance of connections to existing and future land use
- Addition of center median/turn lane or tree row
- Raised crosswalks, especially at roundabouts, however there is potential concern with EMS
- Roundabouts at Trinity Road and Anderson Road
- Opportunity for 4 to 2 lane conversion?
- Pedestrian connections missing at Mall Dr
- Gateway at Anderson Road
- Direct connection needed from transit stop to sidewalk
- Importance of ramps for wheelchairs access

Zone 2 – Anderson Road to Basswood Avenue

- Transit stop consolidation along with BRT?
- Evaluate a one-way pair
- Need mid-block crossing with median and possible raised crosswalk
- 4 to 3 lane conversion possible?
- Center boulevard/median
- Safe bicycle facility on CE to access destinations
- Potential for above grade pedestrian crossings?
- Multiple bike routes? (on and parallel to CE)

- Reduce number of accesses/driveways
- Zone 3 – Basswood Avenue to Arlington Avenue/CSAH 90
 - Bike/walk access for businesses on one or both sides
 - Traffic movements for businesses – enter on CE and exit on backage road?
 - Roundabout at Arlington – major crosstown route and connection to airport
 - Limited R/W – reallocate from car-focused to people-focused
 - Opportunity for placemaking in empty lot next to Arlington Avenue
- Zone 4 – Arlington Avenue/CSAH 90 to Blackman Avenue
 - Auto-oriented businesses, lots of driveways, parallel bike route may be more comfortable
 - Upgrade the ability of Palm St for walking and biking
 - Connection to campus connector trail (Blackman Ave)
 - Do ICE studies
 - Create gateway at CE and Blackman Avenue
- Zone 5 – Blackman Avenue to Mesaba Avenue
 - Roundabout at Mesaba
 - Potential overpass at Pecan
 - Create gateways at Pecan and Mesaba
 - Need sidewalk lighting
 - Controlled intersection at CE and 13th St
 - Mesaba is dramatic spot with transportation network, more complex, views, etc.
 - Potential for unique transit to help people up hill – public streetcar/funicular
- Other items (not zone specific):
 - Key connections across CE: Blackman, Arlington, and Trinity
 - Identify key crossings locations and provide supportive crossings such as refuge islands
 - Create sense of the surrounding neighborhood
 - Lighting and streetlights
 - Create a more welcoming, safe environment
 - Incorporate user perception
 - Separation and safety – walking and biking for all ages
 - Evaluate number of lanes (4 to 3 lane)
 - Intersection designs – roundabout to slow speeds
 - Reallocate R/W and maximize environment for walking and biking
 - Detached sidewalk with boulevard
- Questions/comments:
 - Adam: Interested to hear more about Blackman – access to cross? Easier turning movements? Supportive of land uses? Need to consider traffic volumes. Land uses around Blackman will continue to change. Anticipate how we could make this a dynamic area, and more supportive of amenities and aesthetic improvements. Samantha: Opportunity for this intersection to become a gateway and hub/node.
 - Interest in reduction of lanes discussion. Is there true value in this? Is it even feasible?
 - Some modeling will be completed to assess this scenario. Traffic volumes are very high, but we need more information to see what is feasible. Will look at different areas/zones, not just lane allocation changes for entire corridor. There may be some areas for alternative lane use.
 - Capacity issues: some people may choose to use other routes if roadway is changed which will affect numbers. Models will be helpful with identifying

- potential changes. Impacts of improving walking or biking may also have an effect. Potential to use Streetlight data to look at these uses.
- Add crossings at Mall Drive to key connections. Currently people struggle to cross.
- Comments on visualization with layers of roadway improvement options:
 - The example shown compliments transit. Per Chris, this concept type encourages transit use. These types of changes are not far-fetched, they are happening in many places. There is potential for CE to evolve and look similar to this someday.
- Bicycle facility and pedestrian crossing options (Jody)
 - Lots of detail - slides will be available on the website.
 - Raised crosswalks – is this an option?
 - MnDOT: All are options to consider and should be on the table, but need to wait for more details based on traffic modeling.
 - City: Nothing is completely off the table, subject to ongoing discussion with MnDOT and what they want to handle operationally.
 - Maintenance is a significant consideration in the design.
- Introduction of initial concepts (Jody)
 - Concepts are very early and high level.
 - Looking for high level feedback. Concepts will be available to share with other groups for comment soon.

Zone 1:

- Fits within existing R/W. Would have to look at transitions to next zone where there is less space.
- City likes inclusion of one-way separated cycle track.
- Would like to look further at maintenance advantages/disadvantages of each option.
- 10 ft boulevard: additional trees are compelling especially in center median – this would require a large dialogue between the City and MnDOT related to maintenance. Widen boulevard in center if trees are planted there to keep them alive. City has had issues with education related to snow plowing and trees.
- There will be maintenance with any boulevard grass.
- Could use boulevard space for building stormwater best practices.
- Trees for calming traffic would be a good addition to meet goal of slowing down cars prior to Zone 2.

Zone 2/3:

- Significant reduction in R/W compared to Zone 1.
- Maintenance concerns with narrowing center median (gutters, catch basins etc.)
- Lots of tradeoffs with 54 ft roadway width, including snow storage – 79.3 total section width.
- 4 ft median does not allow center refuge. There are still crossing options if 6 ft median cannot be accommodated.
- Design features should accommodate mid-block crossings. Very important because of ped usage in this zone.
- Drainage and splashing from roadway is unpleasant – need large ped buffers between road and sidewalk.
- Typical sections without boulevard space do not provide a lot of ped comfort.

- Need workable ped space with buffers on BOTH sides of the street to be an effective walkway year-round.

Comments on one-way pair concept:

- Double the maintenance - more roadway.
- Split needs to be addressed and discussed through traffic modeling.
- Potential for negative effects to adjacent residential land uses (noise, traffic speeds, etc.)
- Would need long-term land use changes.
- Existing residential neighborhood already impacted by CE.
- Palm St. would have to be studied extensively for speed issues.
- Transit perspective – very bad for BRT, especially ped access concerns.
- Harms walkability/ped network.
- Could help traffic on CE, but could be a huge issue for Palm St.
- Good to have option on the table to illustrate to people what it would mean for adjacent streets. Are there opportunities throughout CE and adjacent for solutions in traffic calming and use by peds?
- Existing Palm St has a comfortable residential feel. Do not want to disrupt that.
- Current one-way pairs in downtown Duluth are not calm, and speeding is an issue. Many cities are converting these pairs back to two-way.

Zone 4:

- Mid-block crossing important.
- Not desirable to lose snow storage.

Zone 5:

- Zone 1 and 5 options are similar.
- Lots of R/W.
- Opportunity to define area when entering roundabouts – create a sense of place and entering into something that is not a highway.
- Do not sacrifice boulevard.
- Separate one-way bike lanes if possible.
- Bike/ped facility width comparison - can we look at what Duluth Lake Walk is as far as biking and walking space?

- Next steps (Jody)

- Refine concepts based on what we heard today
- Work with MIC subconsultants on traffic modeling
- Mid-late July: First Community Advisory Committee meeting
- 8/13: Next Steering Committee meeting
- 9/10: Steering Committee meeting
- Mid-September: Community Advisory Committee meeting
- October: Draft Report

Central Entrance Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Friday August 13, 2021 | 10:00 AM–Noon

Invitees

Ron Chicka, MIC*
Mike Wenzholz, MIC
Rondi Watson, MIC*
Bryan Anderson, MnDOT*
Michael Kalnbach, MnDOT*
Duane Hill, MnDOT
Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT
Adam Fulton, City of Duluth

Kris Liljeblad, City of Duluth
Cari Pederson, City of Duluth
Chris Belden, Duluth Transit Authority
Brad Hamilton, WSB
Eric Zweber, WSB
Austin Hauf, WSB
Samantha Lorenz, Terra Soma

*Not in attendance

- Welcome (Austin)
 - Jody Martinson has left WSB. Austin Hauf will be primary WSB contact for the project going forward.
- Summary of July 27th Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting (Brad)
 - See slides.
 - Note, the City is opposed to one-way pairs option.
 - Roundabout education will be especially important for walking and biking navigation though roundabouts.
- Zone concepts discussion (Austin)
 - City comments/feedback (will provide feedback document via email):
 - Opposition to one-way pairs
 - Back of curb to sidewalk needs a buffer. The more boulevard the better in general.
 - What kind of sustainable hardscape can be used that still provides environmental advantage?
 - Agree with need for medians and crossing refuge.
 - City concerned over maintenance and capabilities to maintain additional facilities, sidewalks, widths of sidewalks, etc. Needs to be carefully considered. More maintenance demands are not equal to resources. Are there creative ways to address maintenance?
 - If landscape is added and City will be maintaining, they should be involved in decisions. Involve city forester if adding trees.
 - How can we introduce more traffic calming? Need to focus around DTA stops.
 - MnDOT comments:
 - Desire to improve multi-modal movement in corridor. Sidewalks – connections and ways to support BRT.
 - Will provide more consolidated feedback.
 - DTA comments:

- Economic development may spur resources for maintenance
 - Not envisioning full-blown station(s) on CE. Some will be just small standard shelters. Some “medium” amenity stations similar to Metro Transit C Line in Twin Cities.
 - Opposed to one-way pairs.
 - More connections for pedestrians needed.
 - Will provide further consolidated feedback.
 - Corridor needs to be conducive to transit and DTA hopes to consolidate stops.
 - Land use will be important factor.
- Additional discussion of Zone 5
 - Crossing opportunities and safety, especially near affordable housing (Pecan Ave).
 - Mid-block crossing less of a need in this zone due to land use. Some areas of concern for crossing. Some intersections are not safe for pedestrians including E Village Drive near Harbor Highlands. Needs to be addressed. Support pedestrian safety improvements.
 - MnDOT does not utilize driveway at E Village Dr - possible modifications in future.
 - This functions like a freeway. Dangerous to cross.
 - Continuous parallel bike facilities through corridor pose maintenance issues. City would like to see that elsewhere.
 - Current signal operations produce platoons and gaps. Need to consider that by adding better traffic flow will increase need for safer crossing for pedestrians.
 - We have plenty of ROW in this zone but are somewhat constrained by land features and slope.
 - Need alternative mode provisions - give people an alternative to having to walk along the roadway. City would like to have continuous off-street path on south side.
 - Update on traffic modeling (Austin)
 - See slides.
 - What is level of modeling? How far out are we looking at traffic diversion?
 - Regional model will look at broader impacts to some degree.
 - Update on Central High School site (Adam)
 - School district will have buses stored on site and will build a new administrative building. Continue to access via Courtney Dr.
 - Development agreement not finalized. Once finalized, will have 45 days to submit master plan.
 - City is requiring developer to deal with underlying plat issues.
 - ROW will be dedicated for public streets. Will be sidewalk on new public road.
 - Required to tear down old high school within 2 years.
 - Gondola transit? Current land use does not warrant.
 - Development will likely provide for new easements and trails. Need to construct last segment of Duluth Traverse Trail, Superior Hiking Trail discussed as well.
 - Anticipate EAW for site development.
 - School intends to keep Blackman Ave access closed for now, but developments on site may result in requirement for two access for EMS, etc.
 - Possible access opened to Blackman. Will be a community discussion.
 - Potential for sports dome or amphitheater as part of development.
 - Additional road down to Harbor Highlands had been discussed in the past.
 - What is estimate of commercial and residential use? At this time very hypothetical.
 - Land use concept updates and discussion (Eric)
 - Political history here that led to status quo.

- Approach for scenario analysis: At logical locations, spend time to look at possibility for increased density to support transit use.
- Look at Mall Dr., Anderson, Arlington, Blackman, Pecan, and Mesaba. Identify size of lots and take a high-level look at density. What could be added under existing ordinance.
- Identify places where development could help improve continuity and support BRT.
- Keep in mind this is a vision – look at it broadly. Future small area plans will likely be required to determine details.
- City and DTA agree with this approach for land use component of plan.

- Revised schedule (Austin)
 - See slides.
 - September steering committee meeting moved to the 17th.

- Next steps (Austin)
 - See slides.

ATTACHMENTS

- 08/13/2021 Steering Committee Slides

Central Entrance Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Friday September 17, 2021 | 10:00 AM–Noon

Invitees

Ron Chicka, MIC
Mike Wenholz, MIC
Rondi Watson, MIC*
Bryan Anderson, MnDOT
Michael Kalnbach, MnDOT*
Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT
Jim Miles, MnDOT*
Adam Fulton, City of Duluth*
Steven Robertson, City of Duluth

Cari Pederson, City of Duluth
Chris Belden, Duluth Transit Authority
Vic Lund, St. Louis County
Brad Hamilton, WSB
Eric Zweber, WSB
Austin Hauf, WSB
Samantha Lorenz, Terra Soma
Jim Meyer, AECOM
Angela Christo, AECOM

*Did not attend

Summary

- Welcome and introductions (Austin)
- Traffic modeling initial results (AECOM)

Key Takeaways:

- Traffic model shows modest growth to year 2045. Consistent with recent traffic counts.
- Anticipate some trips will shift away from the corridor under 3-lane scenario (7,000-8,000). Model is likely overestimating diverted trips
- Peak hour intersection LOS could be feasible for a 3-lane scenario
 - Arlington PM peak hour LOS appears to be biggest concern
 - It will take vehicles more time to travel through the corridor
 - What is an acceptable tradeoff? (increased travel time vs. better facilities for other corridor users)
- Future design considerations for a 3-lane scenario
 - Right-turn lanes will likely be needed at certain intersections
 - Feasibility of roundabouts (potential impact on bus operations, bikes, and pedestrians)
- No LOS concerns anticipated for one-way pair scenario

Questions & Discussion

- What about looking at volume to capacity ratios?
 - Those numbers will be run and will look at VC ratio.
- Travel time data is for length of the corridor (see slides).
- From a transit perspective, three lane section is a concern for bus operations – would likely require bus pull-offs. These volumes would be difficult to accommodate that – safety issue. Prefer in-lane stop in this scenario.
- Can goals and needs of transit help inform further analysis and findings? How can we start to analyze potential mode shifts?

- Three-lane scenario: Access management would have to be addressed in commercial section between Arlington and Pecan. Currently, outside lane functions as turn lane. Needs to be a serious discussion for access management in dense commercial area.
 - Need to analyze using Highway Safety Manual – analysis needs to be performed from safety lens.
 - Zones 2, 3 and 4 have limited space for other options. Keep this in mind. Also, turn lanes would probably not be required in Zone 2.
- Land use concept updates and discussion (Eric)

Key Takeaways

- Residential scenario developed - see slides for scenario details.
- Commercial development estimates in progress.

Questions & Discussion

- Does this area include old Central HS?
 - Was not included in the model presented.
 - Appreciate broad picture of land use as a component for a transportation plan.
 - This analysis goes hand in hand with BRT and transit planning, would also potentially help for grant applications or other planning efforts in the future.
 - Keep in mind, one or two dense projects can really alter this analysis.
 - This scenario is not unrealistic because of the options on this corridor.
- Discussion on maintenance strategies and practices (Samantha/All)
 - Questions to consider:
 - Think about how we can create a plan that supports what the city can support and fits into the community and political will.
 - Explore what are the needs -
 - Safety and maintenance concerns with street trees?
 - Can CE be an example and demonstration project for new ideas?
 - What maintenance and clearing standards exist today? How can that inform the plan?
 - What future do we want to create? How do we reverse engineer the pathway to get there?
 - Does CE meet the City's & State's sidewalk and/or bikeway clearing priority route criteria?
 - If yes, what does that mean for how it is managed?
 - If not, should it? What needs to change or happen?
 - Going forward there will be a maintenance agreement between the City and MnDOT – at this point the questions would be who does what? Assume that if more multimodal uses are added on this corridor the priority would most likely go up.
 - May be able to change the model of MnDOT doing street typically and city doing sidewalks following construction due to resource constraints.
 - Currently MnDOT does clear sidewalks on CE.
 - City sidewalk clearing is handled by
 - The door is open for conversation. Where is there room for changes in mindset?
 - As options are narrowed down, agreement and conversation will be more focused based on what will actually be built.
 - Multiple agencies clearing one corridor can be chaotic and ineffective - sequence and coordination of snow clearing is important.
 - Where in the process do the agencies make an agreement?
 - Usually about halfway through the design.

- Communication between all agencies will be key throughout the process. MnDOT is already initiating this discussion and preparing leadership that this conversation is coming.
 - What are the short-term and long-term tools that can be considered? Could a Business Improvement District be feasible in the future?
 - This group needs to steer the process and will soon decide on goals and specific recommendations.
 - What parameters need to be considered?
 - Question about how the Jackson Street (Saint Paul) porous pavement and stormwater management system worked?
 - Samantha will research and get back on this.
 - Access management is important for maintenance and pedestrian use as well. Lots of curb cuts impact this.
 - MnDOT: the project will likely require some sort of stormwater management (ponds or other BMPs) that would also be addressed in maintenance agreement.
- Virtual open house website updates (Brad/Austin)
 - New website survey on feature and concept preferences – what do you want MnDOT to know?
 - Link: <https://centralentrance-wsbeng.hub.arcgis.com/pages/community-input>
 - Please forward feedback survey to others.
 - Week of 9/20, we will be sending a specific survey to businesses on Central Entrance and businesses that utilize Central Entrance.
 - Next steps (Austin)
 - Complete traffic modeling
 - Feedback on concepts via project website
 - Revisit items discussed today
 - Begin discussing revisions to concepts
 - Develop guiding values

ATTACHMENTS

- 9/17/21 Steering Committee Slides

Central Entrance Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Friday October 8, 2021 | 10:00 AM–Noon

Invitees

Ron Chicka, MIC
Mike Wenzholz, MIC
James Gittemeier, MIC
Rondi Watson, MIC*
Bryan Anderson, MnDOT
Michael Kalnbach, MnDOT
Doug Kerfeld, MnDOT
Jim Miles, MnDOT
Duane Hill, MnDOT
Adam Fulton, City of Duluth

Steven Robertson, City of Duluth
Cari Pederson, City of Duluth
Chris Belden, Duluth Transit Authority
Vic Lund, St. Louis County
Brad Hamilton, WSB
Austin Hauf, WSB
Samantha Lorenz, Terra Soma*
Angela Christo, AECOM

*not in attendance

Summary

- Welcome and introductions (Austin)
- Project Updates
 - Traffic Modeling (Angie)
 - Angie provided an overview of the final traffic modeling results.
 - *See slides for traffic analysis key takeaways.*
 - Level of service and operations for one-way pairs overall is strong.
 - Question regarding LOS level of accuracy.
 - This is a planning level analysis - threshold volumes and ability of roundabout to process anticipated volumes.
 - Question: Have we done any study on systems where traffic is being diverted? Can city and county systems handle diverted traffic? Note and consider what 3-lane section will do and what impacts there may be to other systems in the area.
 - Regional model analysis showed which routes traffic diverts to. Diversion numbers are thought to be high.
 - If reduced to 3-lane section, it will take people longer to get through corridor.
 - Comment: One-way pairs - Any consideration of cutting Palm St length to avoid major residential impact? Would this impact benefits of one-way pair? Consider where correct tie in point is.
 - Would likely not be a huge change to model results. Should discuss tie-in points if this option moves forward.
 - Question: Were roundabouts evaluated with 4-lane section?
 - Yes - see slide 11 for analysis takeaways.
 - City of Duluth does not support one-way pair.
 - From DTA perspective, one-way pair would not perform well in terms of transit operations.
 - MnDOT: One-way pairs make sense from the traffic analysis perspective, also opens up opportunities for more bike and ped options on the corridor. May warrant further discussion.

- City of Duluth: If we study this more, it must be led with an economic analysis. Land use constraints are key. Would need to evaluate cost of initial acquisition and tax base impacts. From a neighborhood perspective this option is unacceptable. Understand the engineering aspect, but LOS should not be the only consideration.
- Comment that this plan's goal is to have a vision of what it can be. What is the best option for the overall vision. LOS shouldn't be the final decision driver. How does this infrastructure spur new types of economic development along corridor?
- Comment that one-way pairs can induce demand by improving traffic flow and increase VMT. Can decrease tax base, create incompatible land uses. Creates sprawl which reduces housing and business in the city. Cities across the US are reverting from one-way to two-way streets.
- Comment from chat: "It looks like the three-lane will divert traffic on to Swan Lake Road and Maple Grove Road; I suspect that Eklund will take more traffic as well. We have studied cut through traffic in this neighborhood for years, and this will add more to it."
- 3-Lane Section Concept (Austin)
 - Austin shared a 3-lane design concept for Zones 2-4 to show an example of what was evaluated (see slides).
- Land Use (Austin)
 - Austin shared the results of the retail portion of the land use scenario analysis (see slides).
- CAC (Brad)
 - Brad gave a brief recap of the CAC meeting held 09/29/21. Only one member attended, but the discussion was productive.
- Survey Updates (Brad)
 - Brad gave an overview of preliminary results from the online survey. There were over 150 general public responses and five business responses.
 - *See slides for key takeaways.*
 - Comment shared that the number of responses seems low compared to other projects. Need to discuss opportunities for further engagement.
 - Needs for additional engagement will be build into the public engagement framework that will be part of the draft plan.
- BRT on Central Entrance (Chris)
 - Chris Belden gave a presentation on the proposed BRT plans for Central Entrance.
 - Central Entrance is one of two corridors for BRT implementation proposed in the Better Bus Blueprint plan.
 - Comment: It is important to increase service and frequency in this corridor. BRT can accomplish this. Ridership in this area is very high and expected to climb.
- Guiding Values Discussion (All)
 - Proposed change to business access goal: "Maintain "reasonable" access..."
 - Comment: Central Entrance is a primary route to hospital systems. How does the design impact emergency services? This is a sensitive subject with people. Should review safety plan for city and look at evacuation routes. Central Entrance is one of the main routes up and down the hill.
 - Comment: Central Entrance cannot lose its dual roles as a main street and a through route up and down the hill. It is not doing either very well right now. The street needs to have character. We now have free flow on US 53 from the Twin Ports Interchange to the mall, does this reduce burden on Central Entrance? All design decisions need to weigh that dual role.
 - Question: Is values/goals framework useful to MnDOT?
 - Yes - hoping to take study and wrap into pre-design. Engagement framework is a big part of what is needed to move forward with design, this framework will help with that along with cross section recommendations.

- **Action Item: Tying in Pippi Mayfield to engagement framework discussions and future meetings.**
- Comment that green infrastructure may not be the best option in this corridor, do not want to create unrealistic expectations. Change goal to “Explore opportunities for green infrastructure...”
- Comment: Congestion is a real issue for traffic, air quality, and ped safety. Need to make sure we do not dismiss vehicle use. Look at functional classification system - as an arterial, primary purpose of Central Entrance is to move vehicles. Maybe functional classification should change?
- Comment: Need equitable balance of all road users. Right now, Central Entrance serves mainly just cars, needs to do more. Excelsior Blvd in St. Louis Park balances this well.
- Comment: Do we want this to be a city street or arterial corridor? Steering group needs to give direction, so MnDOT knows what to accomplish.
- Next steps (Austin)
 - Finish analyzing survey results
 - Finalize draft values, goals, and recommendations
 - Revise concepts
 - Complete draft plan and draft public engagement framework