

SAPCC Transportation Committee — DRAFT
September 28, 2021

Present: Ray Bryan, Betty Wheeler, Bailey Waters, Karen Nelson, Pat Thompson, Scott Jensen, Joseph Kendrick, Kim Frair

Guests: Yumi Nagaoka (Metro Transit)

Minutes of August 31, 2021 were approved (Wheeler/Waters).

E Line Bus

Metro Transit's new E Line bus rapid transit line will be serving Westgate, with its northern/eastern terminus at University and Berry. This route will essentially replace much of the Route 6 down Hennepin to Southdale, but also through Dinkytown and near-NE Minneapolis. It's fully funded and targeted to open in 2025 (construction in 2024/25, engineering in 2022/23). The nearest stations to Westgate are Malcolm, 23rd Ave, the U of M rec center, 15th Ave, 10th/11th Ave, 4th Ave, and Central... Then it turns onto Hennepin to go to downtown.

We discussed placement of the current proposed stops at Berry, giving feedback about how pedestrians currently move across the station there, suggesting placement as close to the traffic signal at Berry as possible would be best and safest.

The comment period on the route and stops is open until October 31. Because of covid, a lot of outreach is electronic, with direct mail to residents along corridor and bus stop outreach.

- Project website: <https://www.metrotransit.org/e-line-project>
- E Line Draft Corridor Plan: <https://www.metrotransit.org/e-line-corridor-plan>
- To view individual stations and submit comments: <https://www.metrotransit.org/e-line-stations>

Metro Transit would appreciate everyone sharing their social media or posting your own.

- Facebook: [facebook.com/MetroTransitMN](https://www.facebook.com/MetroTransitMN), Twitter: @MetroTransitMN
- Facebook post: <https://www.facebook.com/MetroTransitMN/posts/4020261431419055>
- Twitter post: <https://twitter.com/MetroTransitMN/status/1438507215099367434>
- Video about Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2r5LR-uNPTg>
- Map: <https://www.metrotransit.org/Data/Sites/1/media/e-line/e-line-stations/draft-corridor-plan-map-2021-09.jpg>
- For public questions on the project, email: ELine@metrotransit.org

Comments to the Metropolitan Council and St. Paul Bike Plan

Comments on the Metropolitan Council regional solicitation are due by Oct 18. This is the first step in a competitive grant process that determines how investments of federal transportation funds (gas-tax money) are spent on roads, bridges, public transit, and pedestrian and biking infrastructure.

For instance, the 2020 grant-making allocated \$209 million in the metro area. By category, 57% went to roadway projects, 25% to transit, and just under 18% to bike and pedestrian projects. If reducing vehicle miles traveled and mode shift are a goal, perhaps those priorities are skewed, and commenting about that is appropriate. (This page of background has some overwhelming transportation speak background, but here it is: <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation.aspx>). The list of the 2020 projects that were funded is here:

<https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Funding/Regional-Solicitation/Results-of-Solicitations/2020-Awarded-Regional-Solicitation-Projects-List.aspx>.

The place to send your comments is here:

https://metropolitancouncil.formstack.com/forms/app_rshsip It's a really non-intimidating form!

KEY NOTE: Reuben Collins, the St. Paul bike coordinator, commented on a Twitter thread that "Saint Paul is extremely well positioned to perform well in funding categories related to pedestrian, bicycle, and Safe Routes to School improvements. Increasing these funding categories would directly benefit Saint Paul." So responding and speaking up for all of those areas particularly would be helpful.

Within that comment form, you can also offer your thoughts on a related program – the **Highway Safety Improvement Program**. You can also comment on the **Regional Bicycle Transportation Network** plan while you're on that page. (That first link also connects to explanations of those things, plus the Regional Bicycle Barriers update form I emailed about earlier, where it would be helpful to comment on the Greenway Extension and possibly other things, like the lack of connection between Hamline Midway and South St. Anthony Park because of the railroad tracks and other barriers.)

We also need to send in survey responses on the **St. Paul Bike Plan** by Oct 31. We will have a presentation here about it on Oct. 26, where you can also comment directly to Public Works staff, and you can send survey responses after the presentation as well, but if you have thoughts now, they encourage responses before they come to our meeting. <http://stpaul.gov/bikeplan> If you want to watch the presentation early so you can comment more effectively, that's here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6uHUWVtCrbc>)

In this update to the bike plan, they are already focusing on two things:

1. Revising the planned network to include more **separated** bike lanes and paths, because they have heard from the community that to get more people biking, there needs to be a connected network of separated bike lanes and paths.
2. Identify where and how they should **prioritize resources** to expand the bike network and get more people riding bikes.

So while it's helpful to reinforce their desire to add more separated infrastructure, it's most important to talk about prioritizing resources that will get more people riding. What would get you to ride, or ride more? What makes it feel unsafe to ride a bike? What would it take to mode shift?

Seal Street painting

If you haven't signed up for the Saturday, October 2 painting event at Seal Street, please do. <https://sapcc.org/streetpainting/> We need core volunteers to help manage other volunteers throughout the day, as well as all roles — whatever you can do. SAPCC staff and Transportation Committee co-chairs, with the selected artist, Kada Goalen, visited the Seal Residents Council meeting last week to talk about the project and get feedback on concepts for the design. The proposed design was shared with the committee to appreciative response.

Territorial crosswalk painting

Update on the Territorial crosswalk painting: photos were shown of the successful painting project with Tomasina Topbear, carried out on 9/25. It took longer and more work than anyone expected, probably something like 20–25 person-hours each for painting and taping (with help from three other Indigenous muralist friends of Tomie's, plus Pat, Scott and Scott's neighbor Alden). The result is beautiful. The white transverse lines from SPPW have not been painted yet. Many details of how the process worked

with SPPW will be documented to remember for future reference and to share with other district councils.

Territorial sidewalk

Jary Lee at SPPW says the final segments and the bench bases will be installed by the end of October. Given all the end-of season work underway, he can't promise sooner than that.

Extend the Greenway

Karen will contact the Midtown Greenway folks about getting a better connection with SAPCC Transportation Committee; it didn't happened yet. Bailey, Joseph and Karen met at the new park to talk about the Prospect Park Spur (Stadium Village Spur) – MnDOT should use their leverage with the railroads to get more action on the unused parts there, according to Robin Garwood (Cam Gordon's aide).

Union Flats garage exit

Pat filled everyone in on visibility issues for drivers turning out of the Union Flats garage exit. Saint Paul requires only 5' of space at alley and driveway entrances before parking starts, and it is truly difficult to see, especially to the right when an SUV or pickup truck is parked there. Many less-experienced drivers coming from the garage, and much heavier traffic from the garage than a typical alley or driveway (200 or so parking stalls). We discussed that in addition to this (asking to remove one parking spot to the right of the driveway), the area around Union Flats has a list of global problems related to parking that require a conversation with Beth Stiffler: double-parking which indicates the need for a drop off zone near the door (Metro Mobility), illegal chassis parking north on Hampden taking some of the parking away, snow emergency route on both adjacent streets means no parking anywhere nearby at all on those nights. Pat will contact her.

SAP Elementary school drop-off

Pat reported briefly on school drop-off during the first days of school at SAP Elementary. She spoke to the principal about the idea of School Streets. If you want to read about it, she wrote it up for streets.mn: <https://streets.mn/2021/09/23/three-days-of-parent-drop-off-for-back-to-school/>

Rethinking I-94 update

At the most recent Community Leaders meeting, MnDOT (and their consultants) surprised everyone by saying they were starting to do scoping and alternatives even though the Purpose & Need, evaluation criteria, and logical termini are still in preliminary draft form. Seems completely illogical, and also not what anyone who had been attending dozens of meetings had understood was the process.

Next meeting: October 26, 7:00 p.m. (Bike Plan presentation).