

Present: Pat Thompson, Nick Studenski, Betty Wheeler, Scott Jensen, Kim Frair

Guests: Dan Pfeiffer, Zan Associates (for Metro transit); Yumi Nagaoka, Metro Transit; Carrie Desmond, principal engineer, Metro Transit; Cameron Smith (neighbor)

Minutes of October 26, 2021 were approved (Wheeler/Jensen).

### **Metro Transit Zero-Emission Bus Transition Plan**

- A transition plan to all zero-emission buses is required by the legislature by Feb. 15, 2022. Will get regular updates after that. Broken into three areas: Technical, equity/environmental justice, financial. Milestones in three time periods: 2022-27, 2028-32, and beyond. Strategies are based around service design, bus numbers, charger types/locations. Buses can be battery or hydrogen fuel cell, but battery will be very dominant. Diesel heaters will be needed for winter.
- “Bus block” is an important term. Definition: how far one bus travels in a day, including with multiple operators and routes – 132 miles average. Affects decisions made about which routes get ZE buses first.
- Technical: making ZE buses the default. Many challenges: engineering is working on these.
- Financial: working within Metro Transit’s means.
- Equity/EJ: prioritize to areas where air pollution and past impacts, disparities are greatest; carrying out public engagement.
- Quieter, GHG/tech challenge, fleet lifecycle (gas **buses have 12-14 year lives**, 12 years required by feds, electric life is unknown), facility/operational changes
- Equity principals are key for public engagement: Twin Cities has high disparities on education, employment, income, home ownership. These affect environmental justice, transportation equity. Equity score: population characteristics x environmental factors = total equity score. Heat island, lifetime cancer risk/air toxics. Interacting with the block system lead to priorities for implementing ZE buses into routes.
- In giving feedback, Wheeler pointed out that bus idling locations should be prioritized – especially if near hospitals, congregate living, other concentrated living areas where people may have breathing issues.
- Peer interviews on technology have been done in Toronto, Chicago and Seattle. Foothills Transit (Southern Cal.) has the longest installation.
- Technical challenges from Xcel, which garages can take the installation. Range of batteries and how they fit into the blocks (midpoints), weather effect for all seasons. Trying to make it work with blocks without mid-block charging. There’s a learning curve for Metro Transit and the manufacturers. Metro Transit (C Line) was the first real world use case.
- If you haven’t already, take the survey they have about the ZE transition plan:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N85Y9CQ>

### **Hendon Triangle school bus stop**

Thompson was contacted by neighbors who live near Hendon and Branston and have children who board the school bus there at the top of the blind rise on Hendon. Drivers have been exceeding the speed limit and on multiple occasions also passing the school bus when it has its warning lights on, etc. as children board/exit. Parking on the north side of that block was removed during the Como construction a few years ago, when Hendon was the Metro Transit bus detour and was not restored because SPPW was concerned the block was too narrow with the blind approaches, but it appears the wider passage now encourages speeding. Were there ever any actual crashes from the narrow passage, or just a perception that it was dangerous? (During the detour with buses it was needed, but not during normal use.) This school bus stop location clearly meets the description of a location that needs a driver warning in the MUTCD.

**Motion** to write a letter to Elizabeth Stiffler at SPPW requesting School Bus Stop Ahead signage on either side of the hilltop (if possible, with an additional warning sign about the attendant fine amount) and to request analysis of restoring parking on the north side of Hendon for traffic calming purposes. (Wheeler/Waters) **Passed unanimously.**

### **Wabash sidewalk (between Cleveland and Montgomery)**

Metro Transit's Bus Overhaul Base, located at 515 Cleveland Avenue N., fills the block bounded by Cleveland, Wabash, Montgomery, and the railroad tracks on the south edge, adjacent to Gilbert Ave. While there is a sidewalk on the Cleveland side of the Overhaul Base, there is not a contiguous sidewalk on the Wabash side, nor is there a sidewalk on the north side of Wabash. In recent years, two buildings on Wabash just west of Montgomery (east of Cretin) have been renovated and reopened with commercial, retail, and a brewery (the popular Lake Monster Brewing). To access these buildings, pedestrians coming from Cleveland Avenue (our neighbors in Union Park) are walking in the roadway adjacent to Metro Transit's property. Walking in the road on Wabash is dangerous, since commercial vehicles park on this street and in winter there is often ice and snow on this street, which is in poor condition. Union Park District Council is making a similar motion.

**Motion:** Write a letter to Metro Transit physical plant leadership requesting that they install a sidewalk on the south side of Wabash between Cleveland and Montgomery (adjacent to the Metro Transit Overhaul Base). Include our hope that they are able to access funding from the American Rescue Plan or the recently enacted infrastructure law. Send a copy to St. Paul Public Works and the Union Park District Council. (Studenski/Wheeler) **Passed unanimously.**

### **Follow-up survey**

A follow-up survey about pedestrian safety was sent by Brad Drahos of the HumanFIRST Lab at the U of M. These are the people who are doing the study with the signs at intersections showing how many drivers stop for pedestrians. [https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bIrin9QOLwS1ymy](https://umn.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bIrin9QOLwS1ymy)

### **Update on the Seal Street benches**

We have preliminary designs for the benches at Seal and Carleton. They will be made from high-density plastic, probably yellow. Will be showing concept at the December Seal Residents Council. Working with the encroachment people at SPPW now to understand what we can and can't do, spatially.

### **Safe Routes to Schools**

Thompson looked into it after the last committee meeting (read materials on the MnDOT website, watched a number of bureaucratic videos) and found out that St. Paul has an overall Safe Routes to School plan, and probably has a coordinator... She will call that person and see what it would take to get St. Anthony Park active in it, if it makes sense to do anything from a \$ application standpoint this year or not. This may be a multi-year process even to get started.

### **Questions for Russ Stark at SAPCC annual meeting**

What questions should we forward to Russ Stark ahead of the meeting about how thinking may have changed since the Climate Action and Resilience Plan was passed in 2019, given more recent news on climate?

- How does he practically envision the way to get to 40% reduction in vehicle miles traveled?
- Given the setback to transit use from covid, decrease in Metro Transit routes coverage that's about to start (like the 87 schedule, other frequencies, routes), shift in commuter/rush hour focus... how does he see that interacting with the transit aspects of the CARP?
- Rethinking I-94 seems to related directly to TM-5 (Implement pricing strategies that accurately capture the cost of driving and auto-centric infrastructure on city roads) and TM-6 (Identify strategies to mitigate the impacts of inner-city highways including capping, conversion to boulevards, or complete removal). If not with Rethinking I-94, then when?

- What actions have happened at Public Works (or other departments) to institutionalize LM-14 (Invest in street crossing treatments that highlight pedestrian visibility and slow drivers) and LM-15 (Invest in proactive sidewalk inspections after heavy snowfalls and provide city resources to clear snow where needed) that weren't already in place in 2019?
- Ebike thinking has taken off since 2019, and their cost both financially to users and environmentally is much lower than EVs. Also better land use. Does he see revision to the EV section to boost ebikes more than they are currently in that section?

### **Health forum on effects of highway proximity**

A move is afoot to initiate coordination among District Council Transportation Committees, including Hamline Midway, Union Park, Lex Ham, Frogtown, Summit-University, and a possible Health Forum related to I-94 is a good focal point. There is an organization called Health Professionals for a Healthy Environment that has been part of the loose coalition of groups working on Rethinking I-94 that is very interested in helping with this also, as is St. Paul 350. Studenski is/has been interested in this coordination in general, and Waters is interested in helping with this forum. Thompson will connect them with some of the other people from the I-94 work to see if that can get going.

### **December meeting**

Given the way dates work in December, we decided NOT TO MEET IN DECEMBER. We will elect committee co-chairs in January.

### **Accomplishments, goals**

We will review of our 2021 accomplishments at the January meeting and also set our 2022 Committee Goals. Review the 2021 goals in the meantime for what we accomplished and what we should set for 2022.

### **Next meeting:**

January 25

### **Transportation Committee lending library for committee members... ask Pat**

- Cities for People – Jan Gehl
- Confessions of a Recovering Engineer – Charles Marohn (if Bailey is willing to lend it!)
- Curbing Traffic: The Human Case for Fewer Cars in Our Lives – Melissa Bruntlett and Chris Bruntlett
- Designing Streets for Kids – Global Designing Cities Initiative
- Right of Way: Race, Class, and the Silent Epidemic of Pedestrian Deaths in America – Angie Schmitt
- Street Fight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution – Janette Sadik-Khan
- Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-Term Change – Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia
- Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us) – Tom Vanderbilt
- Trains, Buses, People: An Opinionated Atlas of US Transit – Christof Spieler
- Walkable City Rules – 101 Steps to Making Better Places, Jeff Speck
- Why We Drive: The Past, Present, and Future of Automobiles in America – Andy Singer