

## Union Park District Council Transportation Committee Meeting

Monday, 3.13.2023, 6:30-8:00 p.m., virtual via Zoom videoconference

### Attendance:

- **Committee Members Present:** Lisa Nelson (presiding co-chair), April King (co-chair), Amy Gage, Allen Saunders, Scott Berger, Lisa Mueller, James Johnson
- **Committee Members Absent:** Gene Christenson, Debbie Meister
- **Guests:** KC Cox, Austin Wu, Regina Purins, Mike Finney, Tim Faust, Keynsey Lipstreuer (MGCC), Hugo Bruggeman (MGCC), Jimmy Shoemaker (Safe Routes to School, and Saint Paul Public Works), Sarah Stewart (Safe Routes to School, SPPS), Trisha Whinnery, Nick Peterson (SPPW), Randy Newton (SPPW)
- **Staff:** Leah Timberlake Sullivan

### Minutes:

- New member introductions, as there are a number of new members present.
- Agenda: moved by Scott, seconded by Amy Gage
- Executive updates: Discussions on people noticing Cretin, and how it is becoming more visible lately with the UST letter to the City of Saint Paul.
- No updates from other committees
  - CLUED: Employees in three shifts, vacancy of Hague
- I-94:
  - Reconnect Rondo was afforded \$2M in funding
  - Corridor conversion bill to afford MnDOT \$600k to study
  - Discussion of [Feasibility of Corridor Conversion](#) in streets.mn
  - While not in favor of either Boulevard or Rondo lid, but not in favor of freeway expansion, noting that Boulevard is closer to stances of the city with regards to emissions reductions.
- Joint transportation committees earlier in March, learned about what other district councils were up to.
  - Mention of surveys about Summit
- Open Forum:
  - Question about what the I-94 feasibility study would cover
    - 50% of traffic on I-94 is people leaving the downtowns
    - Traffic is local, yet I-94 creates a north-south barrier and remove it
    - Commuters and planners called for I-94 to link the business districts, after the war the city chose the Saint Anthony corridor.
- Jimmy Shoemaker (St. Paul Public Works) and Sarah Stewart (St. Paul Public Schools), talking about Safe Routes to School
  - Having received any updates on funding with regards to improving safety with regards to pedestrian improvements
  - Jimmy starts presentation, discussing what public works does (building roads, plowing, etc.) – Jimmy is in planning committee, focusing on bicycling and transit

- Sarah Stewart – health and wellness section of the district, works across district to help coordinate safe routes to schools efforts. Position is pretty new, started in 2019, parenting of kids in first and fourth grade.
- SPPS: wants school to be able to wike, bike, and roll to school safely
- Walking used to be a lot more common amongst kids when we were kids, but that has declined as car driving has increased
- Why walk? Increased health and improved health impacts and community health. Kids are also better able to focus with exercise.
- Safe Routes also wants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of [St. Paul Climate Action and Resilience Plan](#) – outside of buildings/homes, the biggest source of emissions in Saint Paul is emissions
- Air quality is also significantly better around schools with more walkers and bicyclists
- Walking and bicycling also improves safety
- Safe Routes approach: education, encouragement, engineering, engagement, evaluation, equity
- Creation founded with Steering Committee in 2015, partner agencies include SPPS, City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and BikeMN
- Safe Routes also runs Bimonthly School Transportation Safety meetings (note: get link)
- Schools in Union Park: Central, Maxfield, Hamline, Hidden River, Groveland Park, as well as Four Seasons, JJ Hill, LEAP, Early Childhood Hub West, Agape, and Gordon Parks High
- Schools have a one mile walk zone, half-mile walk zone for elementary
- Have hosted several Walk / Bike events
- SPPS has bike fleets across the district, schools can reserve for a few weeks a year and do events with them
- Bicycling event around Lake Phalen as well
- Hub & Spoke OWL Bicycle Repair, and installing extra bicycle parking, bicycle education
- How do street improvements happen in Saint Paul?
  - Planning: issue identification and reaching consensus around solutions
  - Design: refinement of solutions and considerations for space and funds
  - Construction: communicate impacts
  - Maintenance: snow and ice, surface repairs, striping and signage
- Safe Route to School plans are [available online](#)
- Some examples of successfully receiving funds:
  - Sidewalk infill around Washington Tech
  - Ranham plan got sidewalk infill behind Expo elementary
  - Bruce Vento pedestrian and bike improvements
  - Maxfield pedestrian improvements (crossing)
  - Sidewalk over by Crossroads elementary
  - Application to improve medians around Central High School

- Contacts: Sarah Stewart ([sarah.stewart@spps.org](mailto:sarah.stewart@spps.org)), Jimmy Shoemaker ([jimmy.shoemaker@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:jimmy.shoemaker@ci.stpaul.mn.us))
- What happened to school patrols and safety crossings? We do have school patrols in Saint Paul for a long time in elementary schools. No more crossing guards. Not sure why they went away – expense?
- Do we have percentages on bussed, walking, bicycling, driving? Not for all schools and not all-time.
- Winter and winter maintenance is an issue.
- Does the bicycle plan include whether it passes by schools? 2025 bike plan does consider the existence of schools, at least informally, and they are considered very highly in walking infrastructure.
- Public comment: Dedicated bicycling infrastructure can be the primary method for how we get kids to school.
- Historically, Safe Routes has been limited to K-8 concerns, recently opened up to high schools.
- Public comment: At Mac-Groveland, also struggling with icy sidewalks and making complaints about the sidewalks. Core of program will become “[walk audit](#)”. Mention of [streets.mn article about winter mobility issues](#).
- Steering committee could be open, contact Sarah Stewart if you would like to attend.
- Cretin Discussion, with Nick Peterson and Randy Newton from the City of Saint Paul
  - Introductions
  - Informal discussion of Cretin concerns, with regards to UST, pedestrian safety, UST requested changes to Cretin, 2020 Cretin Study
  - UST has requested the removal of parking on alongside Cretin, as far as two complexes under construction
  - Ford Plan site is asking for transit along the side, along with 4-to-3 conversion
  - 2020 Cretin study recommended considering 4-to-3 conversion, and was conducted prior to COVID (and before reduction in traffic)
  - Spaghetti junction between Cretin and MRB (Mississippi River Boulevard), maybe forbidding left turns onto MRB. Lack of painted pedestrian crossings along Cretin, and most of the houses nearby are occupied by students who dangerously dash across Cretin.
  - Quite a lot of design constraints all up and down Cretin, at Lake, MRB, difficulties with left turns, places for busses to pull over, modifying roadway to chip in for bus stops, and getting it wrong can push traffic onto other streets (such as MRB) and Shadow Falls neighborhood.
  - Currently no bicycling infrastructure along Cretin, especially for taking lefts, often taking Summit and then sidewalks (or alleys), and cars aren’t often prepared for sidewalks
  - Talking about how nice the improvements to Fairview have been
  - Having Cretin as off-ramp from I-94 has lead to a lot of extra traffic since then
  - Noting that the existing traffic levels on Cretin, especially taking into account Saint Paul’s traffic plan, would be calmer.

- Cretin is on the list as part of the regional routes that are on a list as part of the sales tax work, 124 / 200+ year road cycle with current funding in the city
  - A lot of pressure to get this into the legislature in a way to make this acceptable, as we are significantly underfunded
  - Cretin is an avenue we hear a lot about, has a lot of competing challenges, but there hasn't been a chance to really significantly consider what the city wants to do. Very much needs a community conversation, but the city does not have much in the way of bandwidth or funding for such an effort.
- A lot of corridors were super easy to determine if 4-to-3 was possible, but both Cretin and Hamline have a lot of tradeoffs that require a significant look.
- Lots of concerns with speed along Cretin, hard to solve, and lots of concerns about aggressive driving along the road.
- Meeting wrap-up, plan to get a letter of some kind to address the University Saint Thomas letter.
- Options are: to approve general details of a letter, or vote over email to more finished letter.
- Scott suggests a motion to send a letter to the city generally in favor of writing a letter to the city to do a 4:3 conversation and study further road diets. Jim was second.
  - Aye: Scott, Allen, Lisa, James, April
  - Nay: None
  - Abstentions: None