

Pedestrian Bicycle Advisory Committee
Minutes from May 10, 2016
Lincoln Parks and Recreation – 2740 “A” Street

Members Present: Gary Bentrup, Parks Coble, Barb Fraser, Elaine Hammer, Jordan Messerer, Roy Rivera and Michael Wylie

Staff Present: Kellee Van Bruggen, JJ Yost, Sara Hartzell, Mike Heyl, Shane Dostal, Mark Lutjeharms, Kris Humphreys

Guests Present: Doug Holle, Ryan Brandt

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 a.m., followed by announcement recognizing regulations of the Open Meetings Act as posted by the door.

Minutes:

Approval of April 12, 2016 minutes: Moved by Fraser, seconded by Hammer.

Staff Reports:

Hartzell gave updates on trails projects.

Billy Wolff – Lower Platte South NRD is doing a project near the ramp down from the Zoo plaza. Will close the trail for several weeks.

Rock Island – PW&U is working with Hawkins Construction to address the pavement quality issues under Penny Bridges.

Helen Boosalis – LES will be doing a project for about a week near 20th

Old Business:

33rd and Cornhusker – Doug Holle of Schemmer Associates introduced some of the principle players in the Cornhusker Highway and 33rd Street PEL study currently underway for the RTSD. He explained what the RTSD is and what the boundary of the study was. The purpose of the study was to improve safety and reduce traffic delays due to trains on the tracks at 33rd and Adams Streets. They also want to accommodate future traffic needs, improve mobility in the area, and improve multi-modal transportation opportunities. These crossings are closed about 3.6 hours per day. There are about 1.3 million chances for a crash per day. The study considered environmental and social impacts, including those to parks, riparian areas, historic structures, and floodplains. The study also took into account work being done along Deadmans Run as part of an Army Corps of Engineers project.

Many alternatives were considered, including a no action alternative, but they reduced the options to 4 which were taken to the public at an open house. Alternative B includes consolidation of 33rd and Adams, rerouting of State Fair Park Road, and a new rear entrance to the commercial area northeast of 27th and Cornhusker. This was the most expensive alternative and generally did not get a lot of public support. Alternative C re-routed Adams to follow the south side of the tracks to intersect with 33rd

Street. This alternative is less expensive and includes some improvements to pedestrian and bicycle, but does leave the only crossing of the tracks and cornhusker to the west of the current crossings. There has been discussion about adding a pedestrian structure at some point east of this crossing to help with that problem. Alternative C-3 included a flyover of Adams Street over the tracks and Cornhusker. This one has more opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle. Alternative H is an underpass of the RR, similar to the one at N 48th Street. This one received a little bit of support. The two selected to move forward, based on public input, are C and C-3. 2023 is likely the earliest that construction would start.

Pedestrian trespass is a hot topic in the RR world right now and there is a lot of concern about safety. The RR has projected future increases of rail traffic in this area and there has been one recent pedestrian death. Providing good bicycle and pedestrian connections as part of this project is a priority. Messerer commented that he can envision an increase in bike traffic in the area immediately west as Innovation Campus continues to develop. The group wants to caution the project does not create a “no-man’s land” in this corridor. In June the RTSD will ask for adoption of the study. Materials can be found on the RTSD website and the actual report may be found at 33rdcornhusker.com

Lonnie Burklund shared a memo he has prepared explaining some of the issues associated with the N Street Cycle Track signal timing. He wants to make sure everyone knows he has had a lot of positive comments from the public about the cycle track. There have been some comments as well about safety and operations. There seem to be three major issues, outlined in the memo.

1. Motorist Confusion. They have added flexible “candle stick” bollards to help keep vehicles out of the bike lanes. The geometry of the curbs at the intersections does not always make it obvious that vehicles are supposed to move out into the intersection further before turning in order to avoid going into the cycle track.
2. Signal Timing. The signals are currently timed as recommended by the FHWA. The FHWA currently considers these signals to be “experimental” as is operating under an abundance of caution. They do not allow for any conflicting vehicle movements. So, whenever a conflicting movement (such as a vehicle turning left and crossing over the cycle track) is allowed, the lights for bicycles must be red. This means there are separate phases for bikes and cars at several of the intersections. Right now this is the case at Antelope Valley Roadway, 16th Street, Centennial Mall, 13th Street, and 11th Street. At those intersections there is a 5 second green followed by a 3 second yellow and then 6 seconds of all red, for a total of 14 seconds of crossing time for bicycles. The green phase could be extended, but the yellow is at the minimum already. Bike traffic progression depends on the speed of the cyclist which varies from person to person. Portland, OR, has theirs set at 12 mph which is really just a coincidence because that is what all their downtown traffic lights are set at. Currently the lights are set to serve cyclists at every phase simply because the detectors are not functioning. Stacking at the stop bar also complicates things because it takes a little for each person to get started. His understanding of the purpose of the cycle track has always been that it was to help the casual rider to feel more comfortable and encourage them to ride into downtown. He fully expects that experienced riders will be more comfortable with traffic and will likely be able to move faster that way.

3. Special Events. The intersection at 9th Street presents a special problem. N Street was originally designed to serve east bound traffic to 9th street after major events in order to get people who park in the West Haymarket out onto S 9th Street to head home. However, the Cycle track has turned what was a double right turn lane into a single right turn lane. The cycle track can also be quite busy after big events. Last year southbound traffic was routed to M Street at 8th, but this is still less than ideal.

Lonnie offered that FHWA is in the comment phase for the bicycle “experimental” signals right now and comments can be sent to FHWA.

Adjourned 8:18