

APPROVED Meeting Minutes
Transportation Commission
Tuesday, November 8, 2022 – 7:00 PM
Remote Participation Meeting

1. Call to Order

Staff Liaison Jill Juliano called the remote participation meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

Staff Liaison Juliano read the following statement into the record:

"The Village President has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent due to the COVID-19 outbreak during Governor J.B. Pritzker's current disaster proclamation. It is also not feasible to have persons present at the regular meeting location due to public safety concerns related to the COVID-19 outbreak."

Roll Call

Present: Camille Fink, Julie Johnston-Ahlen, Garth Katner, Brian Straw, Ron Burke

Absent: None

Staff: Parking & Mobility Services Manager Sean Keane, Village Engineer Bill McKenna,
Staff Liaison Jill Juliano

2. Agenda Approval

Commissioner Straw made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Commissioner Katner.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: Straw, Katner, Fink, Johnston-Ahlen, Burke

Nays: None

The motion passed unanimously 5 to 0.

3. Approval of the Draft October 11, 2022 Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Fink made a motion to approve the draft October 11, 2022 Transportation Commission meeting minutes. It was seconded by Commissioner Straw.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: Fink, Straw, Katner, Burke

Nays: None

Abstain: Johnston-Ahlen

The motion passed 4 to 0, with one abstention.

4. Non-Agenda Public Comment

Colleen Stroiman spoke about the issues she experiences with parking on the 700 block of Erie St. She thinks that the daytime parking restrictions in the Y1 Zone should be modified due to a lack of available parking in the area and street sweeping only occurring eight times a year based on information she received from a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. She also believes there isn't enough overnight on-street permit parking available in the Y1 Zone and hopes that the zone might be expanded in the same way that others were.

Parking & Mobility Services Manager Sean Keane responded that the Commission recently put forth some recommendations that will hopefully be reviewed by the Village Board in early 2023. The Y1 Zone was not one of the zones that was recommended for expansion in the initial round of changes, but there was interest during discussions with the Commission to look at other zones in the future. The issues with daytime parking restrictions are unfortunately not unique to this area, but they are in place for street sweeping and snow removal.

Chair Burke urged staff to work with Colleen directly about her concerns and noted that if based on her comments, further review of the Y1 Zone is warranted, the Commission would be open to a discussion.

5. New Business

Commissioner Straw suggested adding a discussion of the stretch of Chicago Ave from N Oak Park Ave to N Ridgeland Ave to a future agenda. It would ideally include a short presentation of crash data on that stretch for the past several years to see if there are any patterns that merit further traffic studies to determine if any traffic calming measures should be affirmatively taken to slow traffic down and prevent anti-social driving behaviors. He shared that he often sees cars driving in the parking lane and based on the speed radar signs, going five to ten miles over the posted speed limit. He also shared that he spoke to an individual who has had three cars end up going through their fence, front yard, and most recently, their front porch. That pattern indicates that there may be some unsafe conditions in that stretch that need to be considered.

Chair Burke mentioned that staff previously discussed updating and assembling more recent crash data that would be used as part of the screening process. He asked staff where they stand with that because it would be nice to not only review the crash data for this stretch, but also more broadly to see if there are hot-spots. Village Engineer Bill McKenna responded that

the state compiles all of the accident data that is provided by the Police Department and that data is disseminated through a GIS-based system. That system doesn't provide the most up-to-date accident data and staff did recently request 2021 data from the state, which was not available until the summer of 2022. It doesn't show the most up-to-date data, but it is good information and you can look at past years to see if there are any patterns or outliers. He mentioned that staff could provide some additional information for the December meeting to allow for a discussion but would not have the capacity to review each crash report and make crash diagrams in that timeframe. He recommended a discussion at the December meeting, and noted that if the Commissioners are interested in pursuing this, they could add it to their 2023 Work Plan.

Commissioner Straw agreed with Chair Burke that there needs to be a better way to identify hot-spots and bring them to the attention of the Commission without necessarily going through a petition process, which is an inefficient and inequitable way of doing public policy.

Commissioner Straw made a motion to put on the agenda for the December 2022 meeting a discussion of whether further study is necessary for the stretch of Chicago Ave from N Oak Park Ave to N Ridgeland Ave. It was seconded by Commissioner Fink.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: Straw, Fink, Johnston-Ahlen, Katner, Burke

Nays: None

The motion passed unanimously 5 to 0.

Old Business

6a) FORMALIZE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OAK PARK BICYCLE PLAN AND NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAYS SYSTEM STUDY TO BE SENT TO THE VILLAGE BOARD FOR CONSIDERATION AND ACTION (WORK PLAN) [CONTINUATION FROM THE AUGUST 9, 2022 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING]

Chair Burke summarized his recollection of the previous discussion on the item.

Village Engineer McKenna provided additional background information and explained that even though staff and the Commission previously didn't see any convenient opportunities to add protected or dedicated bike lanes, staff brought the item back to the Commission for another look because of the Village Board's specific request. He also presented a map showing staff's three recommendations for modifications to the orientation of the network. When designing the 2023 Division St resurfacing project, staff looked at the three bike boulevard crossings on Division St and based on recommended treatments and making use of existing four-way stops, staff recommends shifting the bike boulevard 1)

from Fair Oaks Ave to N Elmwood Ave for the section that extends from Thomas St to North Ave and 2) from N Lombard Ave to Hayes Ave for the section that extends from Thomas St to Berkshire Ave. Staff's third recommended modification is to shift the bike boulevard from S Kenilworth Ave to Home Ave for the section that extends from Harrison St to Adams St to make use of the four-way stop at Home Ave and Jackson Blvd. He also provided an update on the design process for the first and second phases of implementation.

Following the presentation, the Commission asked questions regarding the item. Below is a summary of the questions and staff responses.

Q: The proposed section on Hayes Ave near Andersen Park might be less utilized than a simpler route because it requires bicyclists to jog over from N Lombard Ave for two blocks before jogging back to N Lombard Ave. Did staff take that into consideration? A: Yes, we did. The park would be a destination for the boulevard system, so it makes more sense for it to be along the park for that section. Also, because of the existing stop sign at Hayes Ave and Division St, it doesn't make sense to have another one half a block away at N Lombard Ave. Instead of having back-to-back stop signs on Division St, it makes more sense from a traffic standpoint to consolidate them. Those two reasons outweighed having to jog for half a block on Berkshire St, a relatively low-volume street.

Q: Does N Lombard Ave connect to any bike lanes to the north or would it make more sense to just continue up Hayes Ave instead of jogging back to N Lombard Ave? A: You could. The one reason I showed jogging it back was because there's a four-way stop at N Lombard Ave and Le Moyne Pkwy where the two boulevard systems intersect, allowing for easier connection of the boulevards and safer crossing. At Hayes Ave and Le Moyne Pkwy, it's only a two-way stop on Hayes Ave.

Q: Back-to-back four-way stop signs on Le Moyne Pkwy, a quieter and more residential street, wouldn't seem to present the same concerns as on Division St, correct? A: Correct. Back-to-back stop signs are not abnormal in residential neighborhoods in the Village.

Q: Did staff look at whether moving the boulevard off of Fair Oaks Ave and to the east would back up traffic turning left from N Ridgeland Ave onto Division St? That's a really busy intersection and you're also coming up a hill there so it's not that easy to see on the southwest corner of the park. That doesn't seem to be a very safe place to put it and it doesn't seem like an efficient place for traffic if you're backing up people at the light. A: We did look at those concerns. You would hit the portion of the hill where there would be any sight line concerns basically at the alley that's between N Elmwood Ave and N Ridgeland Ave. That leaves about a couple hundred feet between that crossing and the crest of the hill, which we thought would be adequate for a driver to see a bike or pedestrian crossing at that location. We were already looking at enhancing a pedestrian crossing there, so if we were going to do a beacon to help pedestrians cross, we were

going to have those same visibility concerns for line of sight and the same potential traffic concerns for back-ups on Division St. There's really no other place to enhance the crossing to that park because that's where the entry to the park is, but we would put advance signage up to warn drivers of the crossing.

Q: After you cross Division St, would it continue on the same street? A: Yes, we kept it on N Elmwood Ave all the way to North Ave because it runs along the park and takes you to Wonder Works. We thought that if we're trying to design a network that is intended for families or people less confident in bicycling, those might be destinations for them.

Q: A lot of people use N Elmwood Ave to bypass traffic on N Ridgeland Ave. I don't know if you've received complaints about that, but is that compatible with having children riding their bikes? A: That's a valid concern and that may be why the original route was west of where we're recommending because as you move farther from the arterial, the less bypass traffic you're going to get. Since we're already planning to make an enhancement at that intersection for pedestrians, it doesn't make sense to have another one.

Q: In general, greenways are most effective when you don't jog. Did you look at going straight up N Harvey Ave instead and cutting over to N Lombard Ave at Berkshire St? A: We could look into that, but N Harvey Ave itself is not a straight shot.

Q: Did continuing up N Harvey Ave get you a four-way stop at Division St? A: No, there are no other four-ways stops on Division St in that stretch. Hayes Ave is the only one between N Ridgeland Ave and N Austin Blvd.

Q: You want to have the crossings at Hayes Ave and Division St and at N Elmwood Ave and Division St? A: Yes.

Q: Is it not possible to have the four-way stop at Fair Oaks Ave instead? Or to do both? A: The recommended treatment at N Elmwood Ave and Division St is not a four-way stop. It is a bike and pedestrian activated beacon.

Q: Couldn't you do that at Fair Oaks Ave and Division St? A: You could, but you'd have back-to-back flashing beacons and there are pros and cons to that. You don't want to overuse them and have drivers ignore them. I do understand the concerns about riding on N Elmwood Ave, especially south of Division St.

Q: Instead of jogging west, could you jog east to N East Ave, where there is a four-way stop at Division St? A: We did consider that, but it has a much higher volume of traffic in general than N Elmwood Ave. From a cyclist's standpoint, it would probably feel more comfortable on N Elmwood Ave.

Chair Burke commented that one of the most successful design elements for these greenways based on what's happened in other communities, is traffic diversion, meaning

that cars are diverted off the street every few blocks so it's not a through street for cars, it's a through street for people on foot or on bikes. That would probably be more difficult to do if you have people jogging back and forth. He recommended that it be kept a straight shot as much as possible, but understood staff trying to utilize existing four-way stops. He suggested the possibility of moving existing four-way stops if that might help.

Village Engineer McKenna explained that the immediate need is to look at the crossings at Division St so that staff can finalize designs for the resurfacing project. If the Commission wants to look more in depth at changes to the route, that would be fine, but staff would want some initial direction on those couple of crossings at Division St. He noted that he didn't think the four-way stop at Hayes Ave would be eliminated at Division St and moved to N Lombard for this because the stop was put in for pedestrian enhancement around the park. He also cautioned that the traffic diversion component that Chair Burke referred to was not planned for as part of the boulevard system. If you look at what the recommendations are intersection by intersection, there is not a consistent diversion of traffic off of the streets. There are many areas of the Village where that would be problematic, especially near schools, where there aren't too many opportunities to redirect traffic. The boulevard system already went through the public planning process and if we start diverting traffic to adjacent blocks, we would be veering off a publicly planned document.

Chair Burke disagreed with Village Engineer McKenna and stated that the plan absolutely entertains diverters. The potential treatments at different intersections were just concepts, so you can't use the plan as an excuse to not consider these types of approaches. He encouraged staff and any future consultants to at least consider these types of approaches. Village Engineer McKenna responded that they can look at it, but it would be problematic during the design phase and change the scope of the work a consultant would be doing. It would go from taking a conceptual design and bringing it to fruition to potentially going back to square one if you're looking at where the traffic would be diverted.

Chair Burke commented that every single street in the village is prioritized to cars and he'd like to see at least a few blocks prioritized to other vehicles and pedestrians. Village Engineer McKenna responded that if the Commission wants to make a recommendation that you've reviewed the boulevard system and don't see any opportunities for conversion to dedicated or protected bike lanes but would like to include potential diversions to reduce vehicle traffic on these routes during the design of the system, you could do that.

Village Engineer McKenna noted that staff will proceed with the 2023 Division St Resurfacing project design with the understanding that the Commission is ok with staff's recommended crossings at Hayes Ave and N Elmwood Ave. There is no real immediacy to the remainder of that section and staff could look at eliminating jogs in the future.

6b) FINALIZE DRAFT 2023 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION WORK PLAN [CONTINUATION FROM THE OCTOBER 11, 2022 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING]

Staff Liaison Juliano provided background information and presented the most recent draft of the 2023 Work Plan to the Commissioners for final modifications. She explained which items on the work plan are new for 2023 and which are being carried over from this year. She also highlighted the outcomes and time frame sections of the work plan, which were updated based on comments received from the Commissioners at the previous meeting.

Chair Burke provided additional background information for Commissioner Johnston-Ahlen about the intent and use of the work plan.

Based on the anticipated effort required from both staff and the Commission, staff suggested adding an item to the work plan regarding Commissioner Straw's earlier recommendation of looking at traffic safety and calming options on Chicago Ave, between N Oak Park Ave and N Ridgeland Ave.

Chair Burke suggested making it broader to allow the Commission to look at other hot-spots as well instead of being limited to that one section. Commissioner Fink agreed.

The Commissioners discussed the following items:

- If a hot-spot assessment/analysis would fall under the Vision Zero process or should be its own item
- What level of severity would qualify an area or intersection as a hot-spot
- How frequently the Commission should receive accident data from staff to help inform their work
- What the process might look like for the Commission to proactively address areas identified as hot-spots
- How a hot-spot analysis might help capture issues on blocks that might otherwise be missed due to equity issues with the petition process

Chair Burke asked if it would be helpful for the Commission to review hot-spots because if that is something staff already does, it might lead to a redundancy. Village Engineer McKenna responded that this is already done as part of daily business. Staff are informed by the Police Department of accidents involving bikes, pedestrians, or anything else that they consider serious enough to share. Staff has the ability to do traffic studies and make recommendations for traffic changes completely outside of a petition process. A work plan item wouldn't be needed to address concerns that staff see, but it could be added if the Commission wants to play more of an active role in that process.

Chair Burke asked when staff would be able to provide the most recent accident data. Staff responded that an exhibit could be prepared using readily available information for the Chicago Ave item for the December meeting. The 2021 data from the state is expected anytime now, so an initial review of the overall network and accidents could come in the first quarter of 2023.

The Commissioners agreed to add an annual review of accident data to identify any areas for further study to the work plan with a first quarter time frame.

Commissioner Straw made a motion to approve the Draft 2023 Work Plan as presented, with the understanding that the annual review of accident data item will be added and reviewed via email. It was seconded by Commissioner Katner.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: Straw, Katner, Fink, Johnston-Ahlen, Burke

Nays: None

The motion passed unanimously 5 to 0.

6. Adjourn

With no further business, Commissioner Straw made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Commissioner Fink.

The roll call vote was as follows:

Ayes: Straw, Fink, Johnston-Ahlen, Katner, Burke

Nays: None

The motion passed unanimously 5 to 0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.

Submitted by:

Anna Muench

Administrative Assistant- Engineering