

Brooklyn Blvd Corridor Study

TAC Meeting Record

2:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 24, 2012

Brooklyn Center City Hall

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Purpose

Beth Bartz provided an overview and noted this is the second meeting of the Brooklyn Boulevard TAC. There was not a formal meeting record from the first meeting in October 2011.

2. Review Existing Conditions/Vision

The group discussed the Existing Conditions report and how the topics summarized relate to the vision for the corridor.

- Land use and trails

Joni Giese summarized the findings of the land use analysis. The City's vision for Brooklyn Boulevard includes transitioning away from single family residential uses and towards retail and office uses. The land use analysis identified 24 parcels with direct access to Brooklyn Boulevard, of which 9 could potentially be reconfigured to provide side street access and the rest likely could not be reconfigured. The transition between residential and commercial uses is also a consideration.

The group discussed several sites with redevelopment potential, including the Howe fertilizer site at 49th Avenue. The site is planned for office/warehouse space, but requires remediation. Gary Eitel indicated several additional annotations to be added to the land use map. **Action:** Additional discussion is needed offline between the City and SRF to understand the City's vision for the transition between residential and commercial uses as it relates to redevelopment.

The group discussed demographic data for the corridor and noted the Metropolitan Council data may be questionable for the magnitude of population increase predicted for the corridor.

Joni provided an overview of the existing conditions of the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the corridor. The Hennepin County Bike Plan shows Brooklyn Boulevard as a future bikeway that provides full accommodation (both on street and off street bike facilities). Bob Byers indicated that full accommodation is the ideal goal, but site conditions may impact what can be provided. Currently there are no on-street bicycle facilities in the corridor, and only one small segment of off-street trail near the park

and ride facility. Sidewalk is present along most of the corridor, but there are locations with minimal or no boulevard which makes the pedestrian environment uncomfortable and also presents snow storage and splashing problems when the road is wet.

The Twin Lakes Regional Trail is planned to cross Brooklyn Boulevard at 55th Avenue. The Twin Lakes Regional Trail Master Plan does not call for a grade-separated crossing, but the group decided grade separation should not be ruled out of the corridor study. **Action:** SRF will make a visual inspection of the area immediately north of TH 100 to determine if a trail underpass may be feasible.

The Twin Lakes Regional Trail Master Plan also shows a potential trail connection to the Shingle Creek Regional Trail along the south side of Shingle Creek Crossing. The City is working to obtain this trail easement from the developer.

There are many non-signalized intersections that make crossing Brooklyn Boulevard difficult for bikes and pedestrians. 63rd Avenue was identified as a critical bike/ped crossing since Garden City school is located nearby. The group noted that Xerxes is a good pedestrian environment and a good example of fitting bike and ped facilities together. **Action:** SRF will conduct an analysis of at-grade roadway crossing issues and sidewalk connectivity.

The group discussed streetscape design elements and design themes; design elements from the Bass Lake Road project and/or Brooklyn Boulevard north of TH 694 could be carried over, or the design theme could follow the Earle Brown Heritage Center fence style present in other areas of Brooklyn Center. It was noted City Council input is needed regarding the design theme.

- Transit

Mona Elabbady provided an overview of existing and planned transit service in the study area. The corridor is served by multiple routes which travel along segments of Brooklyn Boulevard, but do not travel along the entire length of the study area – routes travel east/west or only use Brooklyn Boulevard for portions of their routes. Brookdale Center Transit Center is a major transfer hub located approximately ¼ mile east of Brooklyn Boulevard. No transitway developments are planned for the corridor itself. Northstar Commuter Rail has a station in nearby Fridley, and the Bottineau Boulevard Transitway is studying routes near the corridor.

Mona noted the transit use along the corridor does not warrant substantial investment in station amenities. Mike Mechtenberg noted service will be increasing on routes that serve the corridor. The group discussed whether there is a desire to increase

transit use among corridor residents and employees. Transit may increase with improved pedestrian facilities. The group discussed that a 10 to 20 percent increase in transit use would be a reasonable goal.

The Existing Conditions report also summarizes the results of an environmental scan which found no major issues.

- Road operations

Pat Corkle summarized traffic operations, safety, and access issues.

The safety analysis in the Existing Conditions report is based on MnDOT data, and when the Hennepin County data is provided, the analysis will be updated. An all-inclusive look at safety issues will occur at that time to identify potential improvements.

Traffic operations analysis shows that all intersections in the corridor currently operate acceptably. The Bass Lake Road/Brooklyn Boulevard intersection will not operate acceptably in the future, and improvements are recommended.

April Crockett noted the TH 100 bridge replacement is a redecking project scheduled for 2014/2015.

3. Access Management Strategies

The corridor is subject to Hennepin County access guidelines, which call for more restricted access than what is present in the corridor today. Restricting access in the corridor could include strategies such as moving business access to the back side of some lots, changing access to right in/right out, or $\frac{3}{4}$ access. Kevin Jullie presented a initial concept sketch layout showing a potential access scenario that would follow the guidelines. The group discussed how the access strategy fits with the overall goals for the corridor, and whether a median is feasible in some locations. The access guidelines are flexible and the constraints of the corridor will be considered on a block by block basis. Between 63rd Ave and Bass Lake Road, a full median would be too restrictive. Access will need to be examined for each parcel, its planned land use, and relationship to signalized intersections.

4. Cross Section Options

The group discussed options and priorities for future concepts to make the best use of existing right of way (or easily acquirable right of way and easements). The group used cutouts representing the elements of the roadway cross section that can vary to generate

discussion about priorities for these elements. It was noted the area south of TH 100 is very constrained, but the area between TH 100 and 55th Avenue has a wider right of way.

The group discussed the potential use of 11' lanes. [Note: although not discussed at the meeting, Section 8820.9936 of the MN State Aid Rules indicate that 12' lanes minimum are required for a roadway of over 10,000 average daily traffic and/or a posted speed limit of 45 mph. Brooklyn Blvd. has 20,000+ ADT and is currently posted for 45 mph. Use of 11' lanes along this corridor may require a variance from State Aid rules. The group will discuss this further at the next TAC meeting.]

- Bike lanes

Several options were discussed to accommodate bicyclists, however an on street bike lane may not be desirable due to high traffic volumes and vehicle speeds. A wider shoulder than what is present (2 feet) is desired. It was discussed that avid bicycle commuters will be on the roadway regardless of whether a designated bike lane exists. A 3 foot or 6 foot curb gutter with a constant cross slope that could be used for bikes was an option brought forward. Another option discussed was to provide on-street facilities on a nearby parallel roadway with less traffic.

- Trails/sidewalk

If crossing Brooklyn Boulevard remains difficult, a trail on both sides of the road may be best. Easements for a trail may be less difficult to obtain on the west side of the road, and the existing portions of trail are on the west side of the road, but the location of a future trail will continue to be discussed.

- Median/boulevard landscaping

A planted median presents maintenance issues, but mowable grass or low maintenance plantings could be acceptable. The future cross section could also include a combination of median in some locations, and two-way left turn lanes in other locations. A center refuge island is another desirable option.

The group indicated more support for vegetation in the boulevard if space is limited, compared to using that space for a wider median. The minimum boulevard width of six feet is desired by the City. The City also expressed interest in paved maintenance strips. Joni stated that a six foot boulevard with a maintenance strip would not provide adequate space to conducive to the establishment of healthy trees. If maintenance strips are desired, then wider boulevards are needed to support street trees.

- Transit

If right turn lanes are also used for bus stops, adequate space should be provided to ensure busses can get back into the driving lanes.

5. Public Involvement Plan

The public involvement for the project is fairly limited, but will include one public open house as future concepts are developed.

6. Next Steps

Additional Action Items:

The desired typical section widths and building setbacks will be compared against the existing section and current and future right of way to identify potential conflicts. [Note: after the meeting, City staff indicated the next meeting should include discussion of the existing cross section before discussing potential future cross sections.] The project team will identify opportunities for additional amenities in areas with extra space, or how to minimize the roadway width in more constrained areas.

Access issues will be examined on a block by block basis and SRF will make recommendations and provide access options.

SRF and the City will follow up offline to understand land use and redevelopment opportunities not yet discussed in the Existing Conditions report.