

Brooklyn Blvd Corridor Study

TAC Meeting Record

2:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 13, 2012

Brooklyn Center City Hall

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to review the first TAC meeting discussion, continue discussion of existing conditions, and continue discussion of future vision for the corridor.

2. Review discussion from TAC meeting on Jan. 24th.

The Existing Conditions report will be recirculated and finalized after traffic operations and safety information (see below) is included.

3. Review Summary Traffic Memo

Pat Corkle provided an overview of the summary traffic memo. The long term vision layout (discussed later in the meeting) reflects the recommendations in the memo. The updated analysis is based on discussion between City, County, and SRF staff regarding available data, methodology, and goals for the corridor. A fundamental question about the goal of the roadway is whether to design and sign the road as a high speed roadway (45 mph or more) or lower speed roadway (40 mph or less). The study team previously understood the existing roadway to be signed for 45mph. It was confirmed during the meeting that the existing roadway is signed for 40 mph from TH 694 to 53rd Avenue, and 35 mph south of 53rd Avenue. The 40 mph speed allows for narrower lanes.

Pat noted the existing ADT is in the 20,000 range, and is predicted to grow to the mid-20,000 ADT range.

4. Define Existing Conditions

Kevin Jullie provided an overview of the existing conditions along the Brooklyn Blvd corridor. The existing right of way is inconsistent according to available mapping. The width is approximately 200 feet near the former Brookdale site, but becomes narrower to the north with the existing sidewalk is on easement in many locations. Multiple access points along the corridor serve a mix of residences and businesses. The overall roadway width includes 12 foot lanes plus two foot curbs. The boulevard width varies throughout corridor from 0' to 8' plus.

It was noted the CSAH (152) designation extends into Minneapolis. The group then discussed specific portions of the roadway based on changes in the cross section throughout the corridor. Below are listed highlights of each portion:

49th Avenue to 51st Avenue:

The cross section in this area consists of four thru lanes, two foot shoulders, a six foot walk with no boulevard, and no turn lanes. Driveways access Brooklyn Blvd. directly.

Residents in this area asked the City about future plans for this area after receiving the first project newsletter. Steve Lillehaug reported the residents were told no major right of way changes are anticipated, and that in their area, the City may need sidewalk easements. It was noted Minneapolis plans to convert 49th Avenue to accommodate a regional trail.

51st Avenue to TH 100:

The cross section includes a striped/raised median, turn lane onto Lilac Drive (west side) and variable width boulevards. The northbound free right onto TH 100 northbound likely presents issues for pedestrians, however no existing problem is evident based on collected data. The location of the bus stop at the southwest corner of the Brooklyn Boulevard/51st Avenue intersection should be looked at more closely.

TH 100 to Bass Lake Road:

The cross section in this area is wider and includes a raised median. The median width varies from six feet (concrete) to 18-20 feet (grass). The northbound TH 100 off ramp/loop becomes an auxiliary lane which terminates at 56th Avenue. A three-quarter access at 56th Ave. is provided.

55th Ave provides access to a large sub-area to the west of Brooklyn Blvd and bounded by Twin Lakes, TH 100 and the railroad. Operational problems have been documented at this intersection due to the close proximity of the service road.

The ADT for the TH 100 off ramp/loop is about 650 vehicles. Pat noted the skew is an issue for drivers seeing pedestrians. It was also noted the TH 100 bridge section drawing should be added to the layout as well. MnDOT has delayed the re-decking project for one year to accommodate the findings of the current study.

Bass Lake Road area:

This area was recently reconstructed as part of the Bass Lake Road reconstruction project. Left and right turn lanes at the intersection make pedestrian crossings long, although existing median areas provide refuge areas for pedestrians crossing the intersections. The existing signal system provides pedestrian crossing indication.

The Boulevard width varies from six to eight feet with streetscaping in the southeast and northeast quadrants. Pedestrian crossing facilities are in place. The existing right-in to CVS produces a potential for pedestrian conflicts, however data does not suggest an existing problem.

Bass Lake Road to 63rd Ave:

The cross section for this portion includes continuous, side by side left turn lanes along with four through lanes with overall roadway widths of approximately 80'. Boulevard widths vary from 0' to 8' with walk on either side.

63rd Ave Area

Existing raised medians provide channelization at the intersection. Significant pedestrian traffic occurs at this intersection with the various stores (Walgreens and Sun Foods) on the east side of the intersection.

63rd Ave to I-694

The cross section for this portion includes raised median to channelize the traffic and control access from I-694 to south of 65th. The boulevard width varies along the west side and is fairly consistent at 8' on the east side.

The free right turn lane from I-694 onto southbound Brooklyn Boulevard becomes an auxiliary lane which terminates at 65th Ave. This free move allows for a vehicle which was previously traveling on a high speed corridor to enter the Brooklyn Blvd. corridor unimpeded. The free right turn also makes it difficult for vehicles to weave to turn left onto 65th Avenue.

Existing Trails and Walks

Joni Giese provided a general overview of the existing bike and pedestrian network, and identified deficient areas on a map. Sidewalk exists throughout the corridor, with a trail on the west side of the roadway in the area near the park and ride. Hennepin County identifies Xerxes and Bass Lake Roads for bike facilities. She noted the Victory Neighborhood in Minneapolis wants a trail along Ryan Lake (just south of the project boundaries).

The group discussed whether the goal is to have a shared use trail on both sides or only one. A shared use path is 10 feet, while a sidewalk is six feet. No decision was reached. (SRF to discuss further and provide recommendations to the TAC)

Joni noted 63rd Avenue connects to a potential future station for the Bottineau Transitway. Possible other connections to improve the bike and pedestrian network are a potential underpass at TH 100 and an additional trail connection on the south side of the Brookdale site. The main deficiencies are lacking crossings and boulevards.

5. Review initial 'Long Term Concept' layout and proposed features including:

- Design speed
- Roadway geometrics including lane widths. (12' vs. 11')
- Bike/pedestrian facilities
- Landscaping/streetscaping features including:
 - Medians
 - Boulevard widths
 - Area beyond trail and sidewalk
- Preliminary right-of-way impacts

The group discussed the long term future concept for the roadway. The implementation of the concept is to be determined, and SRF suggested interim improvements in some areas noted on the layout using insets.

Kutty asked about the storm sewer capacity. Steve indicated the facilities are adequate and that the project is not expected to substantially increase the impervious surface.

49th Avenue to 51st Street:

Kevin presented two alternatives for this area: a three-lane section with a shared center turn lane, or leaving it as a four lane undivided road. The ADT in this section is lower (18,000 vehicles) than other sections of Brooklyn Boulevard and traffic is less concentrated at the peaks since most properties are residential. SRF recommends leaving the private accesses in this area. The City of Minneapolis is studying converting Osseo Road (Brooklyn Boulevard south of 49th Avenue) to a three lane road. Bob Byers asked about the curb widths shown on the typical section drawing; SRF will follow up for clarification on curb width needed for the lane widths. A wider shoulder allows space for stopping, turning, delivery vehicles, etc. Several items were noted on the hard copy layout. It was noted Minneapolis owns Xerxes Avenue North (one way intersecting 49th Avenue). Building setbacks would still be acceptable with sidewalk reconstruction to provide a boulevard.

51st Avenue to TH 100:

The primary issue in this area is the 51st Avenue intersection. The shared left onto 51st from Brooklyn Boulevard provides access to the residential neighborhood to the east of Brooklyn Boulevard, which is within the Minneapolis boundaries. Pat noted the church and garden center on the west side of the 51st Avenue/Brooklyn Boulevard intersection have event-like traffic patterns. Steve noted the access from these properties should be shifted slightly north to discourage access across Brooklyn Boulevard. The group discussed converting the church access road into a public street.

The group discussed the TH 100 off ramp and the need to slow down traffic merging onto Brooklyn Boulevard. Kutty will need to discuss this issue with other MnDOT staff. SRF will provide several larger scale drawings to Kutty for discussion at MnDOT. This will occur prior to sharing potential design changes with the public.

TH 100 to Bass Lake Road:

SRF recommends removing the auxiliary lane north of the TH 100 bridge and lengthening the southbound TH 100 on ramp turn lane. Where possible, Pat indicated lengthening turn lanes is preferable, but minimized turn lanes provide additional space for medians with landscaping. The group indicated free right turns should be considered and possibly removed at 56th Avenue.

The group discussed the SRF suggestion of turning the frontage road on the west side into a cul de sac just north of 55th Avenue. This solution attempts to fix the problem of the throat between the frontage road/55th Avenue intersection located close to the Brooklyn Boulevard/55th Avenue intersection. City staff noted a possibility would be to relocate the North Memorial clinic to reconfigure the intersection. The main access to the school should not be changed to Northport Drive.

Bass Lake Road north:

SRF recommends removing the free right turn onto Bass Lake Road. CVS currently has a right in access in the southbound right turn lane onto Bass Lake Road. The group discussed the possibility of a shared access with the dental clinic to the north.

The crosswalks in this section of the road need improvement and are very wide.

The free right turn from the TH 694 off ramp onto Brooklyn Boulevard should be removed. Additional discussion of the future concept for the north section of Brooklyn Boulevard is needed. The layout presented did not include transit improvements or bus stop locations and the relationship to pedestrian access. Streetscaping will be discussed with City staff over the next few weeks and will include coordination with Metro Transit regarding bus stops and Three Rivers regarding the 55th Avenue crossing.

6. Next Steps

The next steps will include public involvement activities, including a City Council update and open house meeting. SRF and the City will coordinate offline and share the proposed schedule with the TAC.