



## Minutes for the Community Meeting

Tuesday, June 25, 2024, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Arlington Hills Recreation Center, 1200 Payne Avenue

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**Welcome:** Introductions and Review of the Agenda

**6:00 pm**

Attendance:

Board Members – Sidney Pisano, Jessica Haley, Rebecca Nelson, Seanne Thomas, Lynette Harris, Emma De Vera, Anna-Marie Foster, Janey Atchison, Patricia Enstad, Damian Schaab, Marci Exsted

PPCC Staff – Jack Byers (Executive Director) & Robin Horkey (Outreach & Admin Assistant)

Community Members – Mai V, John M, Audrey M, Randy P, Gabby M, Winona Y, Presenters – Liz J, Sara, Stephen S (Purple Line)

### The Payne-Phalen District Plan:

1. The Purple Line: Route interface at Johnson Parkway interface:

Liz J & Sara, MetroTransit

6:10 pm

- Audrey – when do public receive notification of updates? We're directly affected and haven't heard anything.
- Liz – we just started reviewing these options this month, we've been canvassing & sending out flyers in the last few weeks.
- Liz - How we connect to Johnson parkway is different. B/c we're looking at going up Maryland, we started looking at some crossing options [covered in presentation]
- Sara – this bridge has been in plans for some time. When we started looking at turning on Maryland & stopping at Clarence, we're losing a lot of effectiveness. Thinking it wouldn't be cost-effective to keep it on the bridge. Talked to church on intersection & where their membership comes from – 90% come in & out on Magnolia & Johnson Pkwy. So any at-grade option, they wanted to make sure still worked. Didn't want to send traffic up to Burnquist due to apts there and kids playing in the street.
- Audrey – so the church traffic will be routed to Cook? ○ Sara – depending on the option

Sara went over the 1<sup>st</sup> option & details (see presentation)

- Audrey – mentioned that the road for the Cook Ave extension layout goes through their yard ○ Sara – said that it goes through St. Paul Regional Water-owned land ○ Audrey – disagreed
  - Sara – talked with St. Paul Regional Water & they said selling the land wouldn't be fatal flaw
  - Audrey – if you had your photo more to the West, Atlantic is right there ○ Sara – we were asked to not send more traffic through streets
  - Audrey – it's too tight there, you can't turn long vehicles (e.g. school buses) ○ Sara – we're using the turning radiuses that the city requires
  - Audrey – part of this is redirecting traffic down Burnquist, so they'll need to stop at a stop sign, take a left, then take another turn
- Patricia – so you would close the lane then?
  - Sara – Magnolia would get a cul-de-sac; Johnson parkway is where the majority of that church traffic comes right now & that route doesn't have enough room for a lane and a bus
- Audrey – if you're closing the access to Magnolia – both of these options result in this heavier traffic to Burnquist ○ Liz – traffic engineers come up with how they think things will go but it's helpful to hear from folks how things exist day-to-day in the space. These are options we're looking at and that we're getting feedback about.
- Damian – can you tell us how traffic currently flows throughout the area?
  - Sara – a lot of this area is very low-volume residential streets, so we would look at if these options were to happen issues like people on Cook experiencing cut-through traffic. Would slide station platforms to line-up with the new roadway (with the Cook Ave extension). Mentioned that Hmong Village asked for signals added to another entrance. They will be getting more traffic, as well – since they applied to be able to have a licensing (DMV) office.
  - Damian – a DMV doesn't strike me as low-volume residential
- Patricia – seeing the creek daylight, this photo shows it stopping but I don't think it stops there ○ Sara – believes it stops there
  - Gabby – the new roadway goes through where we are proposing the daylighting continue through to reach 7, has told this to their team
  - Liz – definitely want to continue to work w/the daylighting if this option is chosen
  - Sara – what we're showing is wider than it needs to be, as it includes what the city wants regarding parking requirements (that wouldn't be necessary)
- Patricia – asked about the creek ○ Gabby– feasibility study would have the creek go through that, yes
- Patricia – mentioned that every time we bring up the creek, it seems like new information. We always ask how it's being taken into consideration and it's always treated like it's new. ○ Sara – this isn't new, the plans were just not developed yet
- Lynette – these 3 options are the final 3?

- Sara – these are concepts, we would have to choose 1 and then the designs will change as they progress. If there are flaws that come up, then we change them again. 2-3 year process
- Lynette – I think what would be helpful would be to do a series of bus tours to show people the actual spaces, in-person
  - Liz – haven't considered this, have done something like that. If the council would like that, we can coordinate that. Sara – detailed 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> options (see presentation)
- Lynette – a year ago, Dayton's Bluff – a couple board members went to tour that spot & the changes. Not that the Purple Line has anything to do with Hillcrest, but we went to that area & talking about the changes.
  - Liz – agreed that this is a good idea, we can set something up
- Damian – asked about projected ridership depending on day of the week; can you speak to ridership across the week?
  - Stephen – Mentioned that it's typically projected for weekdays. Less destinations along the Bruce-Vento trail, so a lot more commuter traffic compared to short-rider traffic. Weekdays tend to be the highest.
  - Damian – seems like a lot of focus on 4 services on Sundays, when bus traffic would seemingly be less busy/present
  - Stephen – that's why we're considering 3 concepts. The church has expressed concerns about sending traffic up Burnquist, but we're trying to gather different perspectives about the different options. We don't have 1 we're recommending right now.
    - Sara – the order of these is from biggest change to smallest change
- Jack – if the Purple Line is successful, is there one option that would be best?
  - Sara – we have the traffic data, they have some services on Tuesdays/Thursdays
    - Jack – the PPCC is in the process of our district plan. Thinking about the future, where we hope to have less surface parking...it seems like you're designing around a lot for 122 cars (for the church). Ironic to me that transit is being designed around this lot.
      - Sara – we were directed to consult with the church & come up with options. These incorporate things that Elim (the church) wants, the city wants (e.g. the cul-de-sac).
      - Liz – these are conceptual, and can change. Hoping to hone in on one & getting everyone's comments & feedback.
- Patricia – what's the target timing? Any place where a bus is going 45mph makes me a little nervous. Originally it was to start downtown and then to downtown White Bear Lake, where are the end points now?
  - Sara – two options are Maplewood Mall or a layover just North of St. Johns.
  - Patricia – when I hear one of the major considerations is how fast you get from here to there, I think concern about speed has really changed across this project. From our perspective, this is our community, but for you all to be focused on getting from A to B...prioritization of location & ridership seems to be taking a sideline to speed.
  - Sara – it's still bus rapid transit and we have to meet the guidelines for the Federal grant program, but it's still a significant piece. Our ridership is very dependent on that travel time & reliability of the transit. We're trying to design

the entire line to minimize those conflicts & give ppl a ride where they're guaranteed & on-time. Our new alignment has 12 stations, where the old one had 4.

- Janey – what are the cost differentials between each option?
  - Sara – pretty negligible...they all have different pieces of rebuilding. It's not really a factor that is a differentiator.
- Janey – asked whether these take out any properties
  - Sara – no, one option may need right-of-way from an apartment building
  - Audrey – would we be compensated for the impact on our property value?
    - Sara – if we're not building on property, no.
  - Audrey – would we need to pay for the maintenance of the new street?
    - Sara – would have to look into this, whether it's Park Board or City
- Lynette – asked a clarifying question about the location
  - Liz – showed a slide of what the location currently looks like & the changes
- Jack – do you have a slide that shows Atlantic Ave coming in from the South?
  - Sara – we don't
- Patricia – how essential is the new road from Magnolia to Cook in this plan, when that may be needed for the Creek access, you have an apt building & I bet the kids play in that green space as well. Doesn't make sense to me other than the church's ask.
  - Stephen – also the city mentioned that sending traffic down the street from the church is a concern. We set up cameras for weekday & weekend services & saw a real spike. Reiterated that they're not advocating for one concept.
  - Patricia – not saying we shouldn't be concerned about the church, but we have a problem too of how precious our green space is. To sacrifice that for a little street is a concern. We have concerns as a heat island, air pollution, etc – so that's important. When we worked on the Maryland Ave conversion, there was a lot of consideration about cars and it took a lot to address some of the pedestrian concerns.
- Randy – wondered about the projections
  - Sara – traffic projections from Magnolia & Johnson placed onto these other options – it's a negligible amount of traffic
- Gabby – asked if option 1 was the preferred one for the city and the church
  - Liz – the city is asked for the cul-de-sac but don't have a full preference, the church liked the option with more traffic let-out
- Audrey – Thursdays meeting is being held at the church at the parking lot, seems like there is some lobbying happening with them. People who don't agree that a new road should be put in, should attend. It's from 6-8 pm.
  - Liz – it's not a lobbying event, it's just a partnership with a community space.
  - Sara – their preference is for the mixed traffic, but they aren't lobbying for a specific option
- Emma – we are grateful as a board that you're engaging with us but it sounds like the church & city have been spoken to & businesses' concerns taken into consideration. It would be better to speak to individual community members ahead of time before bringing plans that are already wrought to us.

- Janey – why can't traffic go to two sides of the road and the buses take the other two lanes.
  - Sara – I don't think it's 4 lanes once you get to Hmong Village
- Damian – wondered if, with adequate pullouts could exist in one lane?
  - Sara – Metro Transit doesn't have any single tracks and doesn't want any. Previously talked about this on Maryland.
- Janey – was wondering about the use of the whole of Phalen Blvd ◦ Sara – we would lose ~4 miles of our guideway, which pulls us out of consideration for our funding
- Patricia – having the stop at the entrance to Hmong Village would be helpful...but if there's another way of doing it. Plus there's the concern of no traffic light there.
- Jack – when I look at this there's a lot of craziness to get vehicles through the intersection. We know further West there's a lot to get vehicles on that right-of-way. Seems like a lot to get those vehicles on the right-of-way and, to Janey's point, not sure why we can't keep vehicles doing that.
- Gabby – experience thus far has been low to minimal communication so far, wondering about engagement further South of the line.
  - Sara – engagement was done 2017-2019. We're halfway to 60% design, that alignment is pretty set. Our understanding was that the daylighting couldn't daylight there.
  - Liz – we want to connect with you more, ensure we're touching base ◦ Rebecca – agrees, b/c we've been saying that from the beginning.
  - Jack – in 2021 PPCC made a decision on the Environmental Decision worksheet for simultaneous design & planning w/the daylighting with the rush line. Jack read the board's letter supporting coordination on these plans.
  - Stephen – we want to have closer communication as well, talked about Johnson Pkwy crossing. There will be continued coordination. Talked about timing as well & difficulty of coordination if you're at different stages of design.
  - Jack – it's in the record that the PPCC called for following the technical memorandum, not just coordinating here and there sometimes
  - Sara – technical memorandum showed the creek in a pipe, the intention was to carry forward some of the plans through the rest of the daylighting project. I didn't know there was additional consideration for trying to daylight it. ◦ Gabby – the plan is long term but is for daylighting all of it
  - Rebecca – you did know that and it's frustrating b/c we've been telling you
- Audrey – you're already soliciting proposals on plans that people disagree with
- Stephen – we met with Wakan Tipi [two weeks ago] to coordinate on this, talked with others around the same time (e.g. Hmong Village, the church, street canvassing). ◦ Audrey – no one on our block has been canvassed
- Jack – asked what canvassing has looked like ◦ Liz – knocking on doors, sometimes we miss people who aren't home
- Patricia – if that dotted line went right up to my house, I would be nervous

- Sara – we use the Ramsey County database, which we use
  - Audrey – I’ve used the database & it doesn’t go through our house, I’ve looked at the property lines and it doesn’t look like that.
  - Rebecca – you’re asking for community feedback & instead of saying “you’re wrong” they’re just asking you to look into it.
  - Sara – said they will look further into it
- Jessica – I move that we as a board reject the Cook Ave extension (new roadway between Cook and Magnolia)
  - Emma seconded
  - Passed unanimously
- Liz – we can talk more about tours in the area as well & talk more
- Jack – asked for a timeline
- Liz – mentioned July would work well but we can work around your schedule
- Jack – previously heard there was no further comment after 7/16, asked if we can be sure that we won’t be cut off
- Liz – agreed
- Janey – even if we don’t agree w/the Cook Ave extension, can we have a motion for the dedicated crosswalk w/double zebra stripes that’s in that plan?
  - Sara – we would definitely have a crosswalk
  - Janey made a motion to support a dedicated crosswalk for wherever the station is placed, I motion we add increased & dedicated paint & signage in the street.
    - Emma seconded.
    - One vote against, 10 votes in favor. Motion passed.

**Discussion:**

**6:40 pm**

~~2. The Purple Line: Arcade Street Station and TOD Study at Seeger Square, Update and Next Steps, Rebecca Nelson and Jack Byers [see discussion, above] \*\*\*Will be moved to next month!~~

3. Northern Iron and Machine: Update and Next Steps, Sidney Pisano and Patricia Enstad

- Patricia – a lot of people went to the most recent event, hard to hear. A lot of it was overwhelming, talked about how we can get information & power back into the community.
- Sidney – mediation between Northern Iron went to a settlement. We can use this permitting process to figure out what we want as a community. Thinking of hosting a meeting at the Eastside Freedom Library on July 9<sup>th</sup> 6-7:30 pm.
- Patricia – this would be a first meeting. It’s not overly planned b/c we want ppl from other orgs we’d love to have represented. There are also limits to PPCC’s capacity regarding “advocacy”. Good kick in the butt to get together w/others. Northern Iron gives us some focus but this keeps happening & we can focus our energies together to address environmental injustice with a strong, collective voice. There’s the potential for a community org to be an intervener during the permitting process. This is a great opportunity to put ourselves at the table & we have support from Melanie (an environmental lawyer) and Rachel Rivard (a health outcome researcher).

- Sidney – it's supposed to be a base-building event around environmental issues, including getting at some of the basic information people can use. Also engaging around ppl's concerns regarding environmental issues.
- Patricia – in the meeting at the Y, ppl were asking whether they should get tested. While this is useful, it doesn't do anything to prevent exposure. All the monitoring & testing around the foundry, nothing was said about how to reduce exposure.
- Jack – MPCA didn't give public notice when we asked for it, then we did it ourselves. It took them a long time to put up monitors. We also wanted the fines to be redistributed to the community & the city gave the PPCC a slap on the wrist for 'lobbying'. This event & a potential coalition gives greater ability & capacity for these conversations & actions. Would be good for PPCC can support the new coalition & also be advised by them going forward.
- Lynette – will shoot Sid an email about this, has thoughts to add.

4. ~~District Plan: Quick update and moving forward, Jack Byers~~

**Business items:**

**7:50 pm**

5. Approval of minutes from the April 2024 meeting (Marci Exsted, Secretary)
6. Approval of minutes from the May 2024 meeting (Marci Exsted, Secretary)
  - Patricia moved to approve the minutes from April & May
  - Anna-Marie seconded
  - Passed unanimously

**ADJOURN**

**8:00 pm**

- Janey made the motion to wrap-up, Jessica seconded, passed unanimously.

○ **Next PPCC Community Meeting:** Tuesday, July 23, 2024  
Arlington Hills Recreation Center, 1200 Payne Avenue