

Union Park District Council Transportation Committee Meeting

Monday, 05.13.2024, 6:30pm - 8:30pm, Via Zoom

Committee Members Present: Lisa Nelson, April King, Barb Thoman, James Johnson, Allen Saunders, Lisa Mueller, Mary MM, Jerome Benner, Scott Berger, Lisa Mueller, Austin Wu, Amy Gage

Guests: Yasmin Hersi, Dan Elenbaas, Kelly Vinson-Taylor, Sean Ryan

Staff: Leah Timberlake Sullivan, Paul Nguyen

1. Agenda and Minutes

- May agenda and minutes approved (April moves, Barb seconds)

2. Follow-ups and UPDC updates

- UPDC Exec committee:
 - a. new offices! Woo!
 - b. Meeting with Eric, who orchestrated the sales tax forum, to do one on pathways to ownership for renters
 - c. Two new interns starting before next meeting
 - d. Caroline is doing mapping
 - e. Americorp Staff joining us for a year thanks to \$25k grant
- Microgrants for NSVC awarded, plus received \$200 donation
 - a. Allowed us to purchase larger and more hardy plants
- CLUED had zoning work around United Village
 - a. Also having meeting around zoning and cannabis stores in Saint Paul around proximity to schools, etc.
- Mayors Budget Concept coming out soon, hope to host in next month
- Trash cleanup happened
 - a. Bring your kiddos!
- Mary's presentation on the 4th was awesome
 - a. Neighbors who showed up enjoyed it
 - b. Addressed a lot of neighbor's fears

3. Saint Thomas (Jerome Benner)

- Jerome Benner talking about Saint Thomas multi-purpose arena
 - a. Planning committee denied appeals
 - b. Project is underway and we are waiting to see if there will be appeal of planning commission's decision to city council
 - c. UST starting event management plan working group
 - i. Working with Saint Paul and SPPD and transportation consulting firm
 - ii. As part of EMP process, UST would like to create working group of community members to gather input, 60-90 minutes, total of three meetings
 - iii. First two are soliciting feedback and exchanging ideas and understanding needs, final working group to produce recommendations
 - iv. Discussing traffic and parking, two from UPDC, 2 from MGCC, at least one student, one renter, and one transportation committee member from each DC, three total DC representatives
 - v. Topics: purpose of EMP, parking management, anticipated attendance, transit options, traffic control, pedestrian and bike plan routes, comms
- Questions

- a. Leah: Might be useful to have representation from folks with long-term familiarity with UST area and Cretin Avenue
- b. Scott: Learnings from Allianz Field saga, such as expectations compared to reality, preemptive parking restrictions
- c. Barb: How can we circle back to committee to think about problems and how we might address solutions to them?

4. Yasmin Hirsi (Our Streets), about Rethinking I-94

- Asking to see if UPDC transportation committee to sign onto letter, highlighting recommendations to report
- Perhaps drafting addendum about it
- Presentation on Rethinking I-94
 - a. Racial covenants, and little control over building of highway through neighborhoods
 - b. Highways were proposed as solution to improve property values, air pollution, etc.
 - c. Highways landed on all four areas of highest concentration of Black residents in the Twin Cities
 - d. Areas have been under constant waves of dispossession, expansion would affect all neighborhoods along highway
 - e. Areas around I-94 have worst air quality and lowest life expectancy in the cities
 - f. Large gaps in home ownership rates
 - g. People who support conversion to highway live along corridor
 - h. Commissioned study so that community members could consider benefit to urban boulevard
 - i. Interstate highway system was designed to bring people to cities, not go through them
 - j. Most trips on I-94 are short, limits street grid, almost as many people travel across it daily as on it
 - k. Traffic modeling should reflect changes in traffic that come from boulevard conversions, MnDOT should be asked to consider it
 - l. Showed other highways that were removed (Syracuse, Octavia Boulevard)
 - m. Showed graphics of existing conditions throughout cities and how the lanes would be replaced
 - n. Space takes up about 366 acres or 50 Allianz fields
 - o. \$18M+ additional property taxes that could be collected annually
 - p. Many gaps in MnDOT process: inadequate community engagement, not proactively planning for anti-displacement, inaccurate traffic models
 - q. Community Forum on June 5th from 6-8pm at Mixed Blood Theater
- Questions:
 - a. Barb: Would like UPDC to write a letter, and also sign onto Our Streets letter
 - b. MMM: Vote to get UPDC board to sign Our Streets letter to get MnDOT to act on engineering study's recommendations and being more public about how it was chosen (MMM moves, Austin seconds)
 - c. Amy: Do we know that our elected officials have seen the presentation?
 - d. Yasmin: We encourage residents to reach out to elected officials to have them be active on their PAC.
 - e. Allen: We need an action plan with dates and times
 - f. Leah: When MnDOT looks at "boulevard option," are they looking at the Our Streets vision?

- i. Yasmin – this is a growing attempt to address this and to get MnDOT to address these issues and to legitimately study a boulevard conversion, no ask to commit to at-grade option
- g. **Motion: Ask UPDC board to sign onto letter. Vote results:** 8 aye, 1 abstain, 0 nay

4. Random Stuff (April King)

- April is looking for someone else to step in to potentially be a co-chair
- Can talk to Leah about it, Scott and Barb have been co-chairs in the past

5. Drive Throughs in Saint Paul (April King)

- Drive through vote [coming up for planning commission](#)
- 36 restaurants (6%)
- 2 coffee shop (4%)
- 31 bank (77%)
- 17 pharmacy (47%)
- Since 2020 - 3 new drive thrus approved, 1 drivethrough removed in city
- Drive throughs present problems for pedestirans, bikes especially –
 - offsite queuing (long queues spilling over onto the street) St. Paul requires 4-vehicle queuing space per drive thru lane. Banks and pharmacies rarely exceed, restaurants regularly get up to 12, coffee shops 14-16 vehicles. Interferes with traffic, sidewalks, bike lanes etc.
 - Unsafe pedestrian access-many turning movements, places where bikes and walkers have to cross. Drivers distracted. Space taken up by drive-throughs implies importance of driving. Drive-throughs often require pedestrians to cross drive-through lanes.
 - Non-pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. Doubles amt of space needed vs. just business & parking.
 - More curb cuts, auto-oriented designs
 - Air pollution from idling–up to 1/6th gallon per hour idling. 30-50kg CO2 per drive through overall
 - Noise pollution – speakers near residential properties.
- St. Paul proposals -
 - Eliminate drive throughs in central business districts (DT st. Paul)
 - Limit T2 drive throughs to ONLY banks and pharmacies
 - Require add'l stacking space (from 4 per lane, to 6 per bank and 12 per restaurant, 14 for coffee shops)
 - Marshall Starbucks wouldn't have been approved in the first place
 - Prohibit drive throughs w/in 300 feet of transit station (currently can't on a block w/ a light rail station), would include BRT, aBRT, light rail (but not reg. bus stops)
 - Require businesses w/drive throughs to have a ped. Path that doesn't require crossing a drive through lane
 - Won't eliminate any existing drive throughs
 - Public Hearing June 7th
- Q's -
 - Is there a map of the drive throughs in the city?
 - What happens when a building changes ownership - can a new business keep using the drive through?
 - If use doesn't change could be grandfathered in

- If use goes away for 1+ year, then there would be a special nonconforming use permit process to start a drive through again
 - Some examples of this in MPLS - city has said no to a business reopening after being closed for a few years
 - Walk-up windows are nice. Pharmacy drive-throughs can be important for people—medical needs, immune compromised, etc. Support different treatment of pharmacies.
 - Restaurants also have drive-up options where someone brings out to the car, rather than drive through.
 - For drive-throughs that have more cars going through, they should have additional requirements.
 - Research-based: Rare for coffee shops to have more than 14-16 cars queueing (nationally, according to research)
 - Pharmacy and restaurant uses are very different.
 - Do all drive throughs in St paul require conditional use permits? Yes
 - Drive-thrus not serving people walking or biking? Could this be required (even retroactively)? Could there be incentives for walk-up and bike-up windows?
- April asked for Concordia updates
 - a. Public meeting wasn't well-attended, was interest in whether there would be assessments, general support for traffic calming and adding bike lanes, some concerns about use of name Rondo for the road
 - b. Finalizing design, summer concrete, autumn repaving and marking
 - c. Working on lead line replacements (all over city) people need to request

Motion - Ask UPDC board to send a letter in support of St. Paul's proposed changes to drive through. Ask for clarity about whether changes would requiring peds to have access at all times (no drive-through only businesses or times, ie late at night when inside store is closed), asking city to add incentives to encourage walk-up and bike-up windows. Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm. Motion Jerome, second barb, unanimous in favor.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting Monday June 10th, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm via videoconference.