

**WORTHINGTON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING, MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2011**

**PUBLIC MEETING TO RECEIVE COMMENTS ON PROPOSED COLLEGEWAY
RECONSTRUCTION AND MULTI-USE PATH OPTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers by Mayor Alan E. Oberloh with the following Aldermen present: Lyle Ten Haken, Mike Kuhle, Scott Nelson, Ron Wood, Mike Woll.

Staff present: Craig Clark, City Administrator; Dwayne Haffield, Director of Engineering; Janice Oberloh, City Clerk.

Others present: Ana Anthony, Worthington Daily Globe; various interested persons.

PUBLIC COMMENT - PROPOSED COLLEGEWAY RECONSTRUCTION AND MULTI-USE PATH OPTIONS

Dwayne Haffield provided a brief background on the proposed project, noting that things have changed since the road was originally built - the time to consider accommodating those changes is at reconstruction time. The trail would, for the most part, be 10 feet wide but would only be 8 feet wide through that specific area. Mr. Haffield noted a similar path exists on First Avenue SW.

Mayor Oberloh opened the floor for public comment:

Bruce Lease - First Avenue SW is very wide - Collegeway would be narrowed under the original proposal to not allow parking - he votes for the improvement to Collegeway with no bike path or sidewalk. He would endorse the bike path the College has endorsed - on Thompson to Lexington and coming across to the College ball fields. As far as fitting sidewalks and bicycle paths to the Middle School, I believe we transport 99% of students by bus, Collegeway is very, very busy with the YMCA there, and with the College. Going across the entrance to the college would be quite dangerous. Coming across Thompson at the curve is one of the most dangerous places in town - if the path is going to come across there he would urge the City to sign it somehow to slow traffic down because they are busy streets - very dangerous situation. As President of the Fairview Condominium Association, he would not endorse going directly behind their condo - very small backyards and that would put the pedestrians and bicycles basically on their rear decks. He would urge consideration of the route that is just on the north side of Lexington Avenue.

James Ling (731 Thompson Avenue) - Lives near the crosswalk from Pershing to Thompson - Cars on that curve are doing about 25 - 30 mph, very dangerous for bicycles or strollers- they'll get hit - he doesn't want to see it in front of his place. If you have to go with this path, would urge City to consider crossing the street someplace other than on the curve. People coming from the College side would need to turn around to see the cars. If you go with the alternate 2, take it out to Thompson, I don't know what the reason is you're trying to tie on to that crosswalk between Thompson and Pershing is. If you go with alternate 1 you're putting traffic right in our back yards - if you have to

go with it I would say go with alternate 2.

Dwayne Haffield clarified that federal funds would be used for the Collegeway reconstruction costs, but would not cover those costs entirely so we would go to state aid at that point. When he posed the question to the current District State Aid Engineer at the time, he was told they could see funding any of these routes with our allocation of state aid funds - funds that could be used at another location here in town.

Jeff Harms, Facility Director for MN West - the route termed the "College preferred route" really is the College preferred route. They started this process five or six years ago talking about trails and how they could make their facility available for those trails. The narrowing of Collegeway caused them some "heartburn" because of their traffic out there to their parking lots. A narrower street with parking would make that a lot more difficult. A secondary concern is mixing pedestrian traffic with car traffic - we recognize that at certain times of the day, morning, noon and evening, traffic coming out of our facility and the YMCA is pretty heavy. We looked at alternatives of how we could egress the need for pedestrian traffic, move it away for safety, and that would release the need to narrow the street. Originally looked at option 1 because it more or less reflected the way we started thinking about a trail many years ago - through the northern part of the campus and allow access more directly to the Y facility. We recognize that, with the addition of their parking lot, to the east side it really pinched between the parking lot and the condo units on the corner. So we looked at where else we could go that wouldn't interfere with future growth of our building plan and came up with the idea of coming south, which is on your diagram as alternate number 2. This takes the route south of their living snow fence planting, which they hope to extend in the next couple of years, and brings it around and accesses the parking lots and ties into the County's trail at our athletic parking lot. It allows people to do a loop on the trail - to park in the parking lot and bike or walk or run around and get back to their starting point. It does not interfere with their master plan development of the campus and provides that separation of pedestrians and vehicle traffic. The only real crossing of any significance is their driveway to the south parking lot - that's pretty minimal traffic.

Mr. Harms noted the traffic from the Y connects to the path via the campus sidewalk system - they allow that. He also said it was more desirable to have a curve on Thompson rather than a square corner. We're trying to protect our traffic. Alternate 1 (option 3), with perhaps some modifications, would be their second choice.

Glenn Thuringer - here as a resident and one of the more avid runners - the City's been doing a great job in the community extending trails - thank you - glad to see you're looking at additional trails heading to the YMCA. They currently use the path from the back of the Y to the lake. He would hate to see dollars missed. Regarding the curve on Thompson Avenue - it's very, very minute in safety compared to a couple of others in the route around the lake. Seventh Avenue is probably your most dangerous point because the trail comes to an end and it's almost a blind curve right there - that one needs to be addressed. The other one is where you come out of Centennial Park - the vehicles

are used to 99% of the people hanging a hard left and heading back up to the Y, but if you want to continue your run or your ride under the water tower and head straight forward along Whiskey Ditch and the bike path by the ball parks - we've always anticipated that if there was at least "Pedestrian Crossing" painted there, he can't figure out why that has never been connected - that's a very dangerous one when you're trying to go straight. Those are maybe the two dangerous areas in the system versus - secondly - to being on the road, obviously running on the road is not safe. Thanks for the interest that you're putting into the trails and glad to see so many here tonight for input.

James Ling - One other comment on the alternate 1 path - they already have a minor water problem there now, if the path is an inch or two higher than what the grade is now they'll have a pond in their yard, or the college will. It could be a problem if you go in there without some way to get rid of the water. Is there a problem with staying on the east side of Thompson to cross over?

In response to a question from Alderman Woll regarding the funding, Dwayne Haffield, Director of Engineering, stated the concern is that if the state would change the direction it has on the flexibility of the state aid money - it's really our choice of where to use it as long as it's meeting standards. It can only be used on state aid routes. Currently, all these layouts meet that qualification, but it is possible there could be a switch in attitude by MnDOT as to how far they can see a route moving away from a corridor and still say it's a state aid route.

Bruce Lease - He's not unfamiliar with decision making - wanted to congratulate Council for holding this meeting.

Elizabeth Kellen - Are you going to put a path out no matter what is decided? Will we hear more from you on this and have additional opportunity to comment?

Council responded they hoped it would happen, but if alternate 2 was chosen they would probably only work with the college. The issue will need to come back to Council for approval and the Council meetings are open to anyone if they want to come, however, Council noted that if there was anyone who wished to make additional comments on the project now was the time.

Elizabeth Kellen - Originally she did not want to see it even happen but if it has to happen she knows where she wants it to go. She does not want it right behind her house because she already has people from the college and kids walking through there, and she almost has to put out a "No Trespassing" sign now. I want to be able to look out my back window without them shaking hands with me. And that's what it might come to. The two condo situations out there are almost all older retired people - we moved out there with the idea of some peace and quiet, not congestion, and we're already getting congestion because the Y's out there. Which, I don't know if that was part of the long term plan or not but I kind of like to see long term plans develop.

Rita Beecroft - I want to say that I am definitely against this alternate number 1 because when you

come around the corner here, this is my deck, I'm just a few feet from the corner of that parking lot there so they would definitely be in my backyard. If I'm sitting out on my deck, the two of us that are down on this end here are the ones that would have them, really, right in our laps. So, I'm in favor of alternate 2. When I go down the steps from my deck it's only a hop, skip and a jump over to that parking lot there that this is running right around so, I mean it would be a matter of only a couple of yards the way this looks. If there was some other way to make it run so it was more accessible to the Y and stuff I can see where that is something you would like to see but the way it's drawn out here I'm definitely not in favor of that. I like the alternate 2 path and I like the idea of maybe curving that up and around somewhere, you know, so that it could come around and be in there somewhere. And when they talked about the sidewalks at the college, I mean I've gone out walking a few times and I just realized the other day that, yeah, I could go up there and go through and there are sidewalks, like Glenn was talking about his son uses when he leaves the Y to come out of there.

Bruce Lease asked how they could find out when this will be on Council agenda - could they be notified some way. Dwayne Haffield responded that staff was looking for a decision from Council fairly soon, not tonight but probably at the next regular Council meeting on September 12th. Mayor Oberloh suggested that he contact City Hall prior to the meeting to see if the item is on the agenda. Mr. Haffield said the decision they would be looking for would be whether to reconstruct Collegeway as is and then pursue some sort of a modification to alternate 2. They will be working with the College on the actual details. Sidewalks would also be a future option instead of the path.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion was made by Alderman Wood, seconded by Alderman Woll and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Janice Oberloh, CMCM
City Clerk