



MEETING MINUTES

2024 Preventive Maintenance Project

City of Rochester Project Number: 22125

Subject: Public Information Meeting
Location: Hybrid Meeting: Physical location: City Hall Council Chambers and Remote via Zoom
Date: Thursday August 3, 2023
Time: 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM

The purpose of this meeting was to review the design and proposed improvements on Ford Street (South Plymouth Ave to Exchange Blvd), Exchange Boulevard (Ford St to Basin St), and State Street (Inner Loop to Lyell Avenue) that are part of the 2024 Preventive Maintenance Project.

OVERVIEW

On Thursday, August 3, 2023, a hybrid-in person/virtual public meeting was held for the City of Rochester's 2023 Preventive Maintenance project was held in person and using Zoom Webinar videoconferencing from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The meeting included a presentation on the project and a Q&A session where participants were invited to pose questions they had about the project or offer comments. The meeting was attended by 15 members of the public in person and 8 members of the public virtually including property/business owners and other residents. A full list of attendees is included in Appendix A and the presentation is availability is mentioned in Appendix B.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Ruben Escobar, City of Rochester, welcomed attendees and David Riley from the City of Rochester, provided an overview of the Zoom Webinar controls and protocols and asked attendees to electronically sign in by typing their name and address into the chat feature.

PRESENTATION

David Askinazi, C&S Companies provided an overview of the project and summarized the community engagement efforts for the project. He then continued the presentation outlined the proposed improvements that the project was exploring, including milling and resurfacing; repairs to sidewalks and curbs; ADA sidewalk ramp compliance; repairs and adjustments to manholes, catch basins, and valves; the implementation of curb bump-outs, bicycle facility improvements; improvements to streetscape and traffic signal elements. The presentation then turned to the existing conditions and proposed changes for each of the three street segments within the project limits. Bicycle network connectivity was highlighted, and updates to the curb bump outs and traffic signals were reviewed before the presentation concluded with a reminder of the project's schedule and webpage information.

Questions and Comments from Stakeholders / Neighborhoods / Business Owners

Q: I bike and drive these roads often. It's great to see pedestrian and bike facilities included in a thorough and near-continuous way! I'm glad to see the slip lanes eliminated at Ford & Exchange. First, transitions



MEETING MINUTES

from bike lanes to up-the-curb bike boulevards are often tricky and dangerous — can you talk about how they will be handled? Second, will the new traffic signals detect bikes? Many, even along bike boulevards, don't. Third, I encourage that all crosswalk counters start as soon as a pedestrian pushes the button, without delaying the countdown, so users know the button is functioning?

A: Yes, the transitions from the cycle track (on the sidewalk) over to the buffered bike lane (in the roadway) along the curb line will be marked with striping and green paint and there will be a bike lane ramp constructed to help transition the biker into the proposed bike lane. The traffic signals that contain the new traffic detection cameras will detect vehicles, bikes and pedestrians. The new push buttons for the traffic signals will provide an immediate “wait” response so that it is clear that the signal has recognized the presence of the biker or pedestrian, but the traffic phase will not immediately change due to the need to balance vehicular traffic with peds and bikes.

Q: Does planning take into account the heat crisis that is happening around the world? Many of these displays show, even under the proposed conditions, vast swaths of blacktop and sidewalk, with adjoining bike lanes. Cars and concrete generate heat as well as fumes. Cyclists aren't sitting in air-conditioned cars they are feeling that heat and breathing those fumes. We should have separated bike lanes buffered by greenery, which provides cooling services for the whole city, especially for cyclists and pedestrians.

A: The City has taken steps to make the construction materials more eco friendly such as migrating to a “warm mix” asphalt that requires lower temperatures during placement and creates less fumes during installation. Additional Green space will be incorporated into City projects whenever possible. Right of way restrictions often limit the viability of adding green space in the center city areas.

Q: When are the full designs going to be posted online?

A: The design plans on display at this public meeting will be posted to the project web site in a few days after the meeting. Future iterations of the plans will also be similarly available.

C: Separated tree-lined bike/pedestrian lanes please! Please think about pedestrians, cyclists, greenery, and lighter-colored surfaces as tools for reducing heat from sun and from vehicles.

A: Additional Green space will be incorporated into City projects whenever possible. Right of way restrictions often limit the viability of adding green space in the center city areas.

Q: Where can we find the specific federal rules you are referring to in regard to the funding of this project?

A: Please visit the NYSDOT website and search for the key words “Lafa Manual” and “R1” project which is the definition of the category of project under the State design and funding regulations.

Q: Requests use of two-phase-left-turn boxes in lieu of the full width bike boxes located at the stop bar. Many riders are less confident crossing all lanes of traffic or do not understand what needs to happen to make the left turn. What determined the use of the current treatment over Two Phase Left Turn boxes?

A: Many options were looked at and reviewed by the Consultant, City, and County. The current configuration is what came from that collaboration.

Q: How are we able to include work on sidewalk as part of a maintenance project?



MEETING MINUTES

A: Safety improvements such as the installation of bicycle facilities are an essential part of the scope of this type of project. Sidewalk work will be limited. The sidewalk will not be entirely reconstructed to create the cycle track. The cycle track will be created through the use of striping and pavement markings. A major contributor to the selection of this alternative is to continue to accommodate the highly utilized on-street parking.

Q: Are any transit amenities included in the project?

A: No additional mass transit amenities will be added under the project aside from modifying the configuration of sidewalk at bus stops. The budget and restricted use of the funding are limiting factors that prevent including transit amenities. Generally, these types of improvements are the responsibility of the RGRTA (Regional Greater Rochester Transit Authority).

Q: The project shows large widths of road and sidewalk that will generate heat. Cars also create fumes. I feel the solution would be to have separated bike lanes protected by greenery which would provide cooling. Another option would be to provide an entirely separate corridor separate from State St. Does the planning process take into account the heating crisis?

A: Part of addressing the climate crisis is in the construction materials we use. For example, asphalt material is now a warm mix, requiring less heat to place and generates less fumes. Unfortunately, this project does not have the available highway boundary widths to accommodate a landscaped buffer space. The City does have initiatives for better practices including in its roadway projects. One initiative the City has is to plant 6,000 trees over the next few years. The City is looking at improved connections on the Genesee Riverway Trail as part of the Roc the Riverway and Inner Loop removal projects.

Q: Were slip lanes looked at for cyclists at intersections like Ford and Exchange?

A: Bike slip lanes were looked at under alternate 1C. A matrix of pro's and con's was created to compare each of the alternates. One of the major limiting factors is that both Ford St and Exchange Boulevard are part of the National Highway System and need to accommodate the turning of large trucks. Accommodating the trucks limited the lane and curb configuration and created conflict and potential confusion with cyclists.

Q: Why keep parking where the study shows utilization at 0%?

A: Major pavement width changes just to minimize the pavement section or to remove parking are beyond the scope of this project. It's also hard to justify the additional cost to modify the pavement in order to remove parking, in a City that generally has insufficient parking downtown.

Q: Did you consider limiting right turn on red at heavy pedestrian intersections?

A: The accident history did not suggest that was needed. We did look at providing pedestrian leading intervals to improve pedestrian safety.

Q: When is the deadline for public comments?

A: Comments should be submitted online or by phone within the next two weeks.

Q: How can parking accommodations be changed based on a single parking study that only looked at parking during very specific times? I disagree that pedestrian safety is not a problem (based on previous turn on red restriction discussion). Cars do not look when turning corners and will use the bike lane to speed around traffic. Bike lanes will be dangerous for cyclists because cars will not be careful and will try to use the bike lane.



MEETING MINUTES

A: We want to emphasize what you see presented here is not final. These plans are a draft. The parking counts were taken at multiple times during the day and on several days of the weeks including weekends. Limiting the width of the bike lane and buffer zone to 8 feet total will discourage motorists from attempting to use this area as a vehicular travel lane.

Q: Can the lanes be kept at 10' and recessed parking be created near McGee Monuments and Spiro's Restaurant?

A: The design team will look at alternatives to try to accommodate the parking needs in this area.

Q: Please make sure you are considering the safety of wheelchair users. People that come to us (Center for Disability Rights) often have to cross State St and we've had people hit by cars. What can be done to make sure wheelchair users have better mobility and safety?

A: Making the ramps ADA compliant is a big piece, as well as making the pavement and sidewalk surfaces smoother and easier to traverse. The traffic calming measures including reducing the number of travel lanes and introducing median treatments that include adding center refuge areas where possible will help as well. The median treatments will naturally signal drivers to slow down.

C: There is an accident pattern at Vincent Street involving cyclists. Northbound cars turning right onto Vincent are able to do so at high speeds because of the skew and the radius of the corner. If anything can be done to slow cars down that are making this right turn would make this area safer.

A: Comment acknowledged, and the design team will discuss this further.

Q: How are so many changes to how the roadway operates being included in a project primarily meant to address the condition of the roadway and sidewalk?

A: The City in the past did perform maintenance projects as you described, only treating the pavement surfaces and maintaining other features with little change. Now, as part of the City's maintenance and Complete Streets policy and the recently approved Active Transportation Plan, preventative maintenance projects are treated as an opportunity to add these Complete Street elements that make things safer and better. To make these changes, many studies are performed like the parking study, traffic studies, and accident analysis. The funding source does limit what can be done under maintenance projects. Safety improvements are one of those things that the funds can be used for.

Q: How does increasing the lane width, which traditionally increases traffic speed, improve safety?

A: The accident analysis revealed a large percentage of sideswipe accidents as one of the most apparent accident patterns. A major contributing factor for these types of accidents is narrow lane widths. The existing 10 foot wide lanes are narrow for an Urban Arterial. By reducing the number of travel lanes from three to two and the conversion of the curb line travel/parking lanes to 8 foot bike lane/buffer zones or an exclusive parking lane, the remaining pavement width can be reallocated to widening the 2 travel lanes from 10 feet to 11 feet wide.

Q: What can be done to make the locations where bike lanes transition to shared-use lanes safer?

A: The City's policy on the use of sharrows (pavement marking that indicates a shared use lane) is currently under review. There have been recent studies that suggest it may be safer not to add sharrows. Unfortunately, when road width is limited, there are very few options. If there are improvements that can be made.



MEETING MINUTES

C: I would like to advocate for cyclists who rely on bikes for transportation and do not have other options available, since those users are traditionally underrepresented. The biking community supports the addition of bike lanes and would like to voice support for the protected bike turn lanes of Alt 1C. I would also like to caution against the exclusive reliance on bike boxes, since they are often ignored by motorists and can be confusing and intimidating to cyclists to properly (occupying the bike box in the path of and in front of the stopped motorists). The two-phase turn box is a better, more intuitive option.

A: After the presentation we can have further discussion with the displays in the back and talk about the pros and cons of the Ford and Exchange alternatives.

Q: Will traffic detection respond to bicyclist?

A: There are some proposed traffic detection cameras/systems that have the capacity to detect bicyclists. The design will take this into consideration.

Q: Will pedestrian push buttons respond immediately so users will know they can rely on the light and they don't have to try to cross in a dangerous way?

A: The new pedestrian buttons have audible feedback "wait" that immediately activates once pressed to let the pedestrians and cyclists know that the signal acknowledges the push button has been pressed.

Q: Regarding the concern raised earlier about cars using the bike lane to speed around traffic. One way to prevent this is to introduce bollards in the buffer space.

A: The City is currently exploring a City-wide solution to this problem. A bollard like treatment can certainly be added after the project is complete and once a solution is found. There still has to be discussion about how a treatment like bollards will be maintained and how it will affect other things like plowing and drainage as long as the buffer space is established for a future treatment.

Q: Along the Exchange Boulevard, on previous projects the intersection at Fitzhugh Place South has been improved with a raised crosswalk and a ped crosswalk. There is still desire for pedestrian treatments at the Plymouth Avenue intersections. If there's any treatment that can be provided under this project to help pedestrians at this intersection it would be appreciated.

A: The Plymouth Ave intersection was recently improved under another project. We are proposing additional bump outs between Plymouth and the 490 underpass that will improve pedestrian crossings and calm traffic.

Q: The parking on Exchange is used heavily during the Corn Hill Art Festival. Next year's festival is scheduled for July 13th and 14th

A: Comment Acknowledged. The project construction documents will include notes that alert the contractor to the Cornhill Festival and other similar events that might be disrupted by the construction. The contractor will be required to take measures to minimize this disruption.

Q: How was traffic congestion over the Ford St bridge considered during design with the removal of the slip ramps at Ford St and Exchange.

A: The design team studied the traffic volumes at the Ford Street/Exchange Blvd intersection and determined that the proposed improvements will not adversely impact the Level of Service at the intersection.

Q: When will the presentation be available online?

A: All presentation materials will be posted on the City's website. We hope to post the remaining items in the next few days.



MEETING MINUTES

Q: What are the federal rules tied to the funding of the project.

A: The NYSDOT LAFA (Locally Administered Federal Aid) manual dictates the funding use and its restrictions. This project is a “1R” (Resurfacing) project which more specifically restricts the use of the funding.

Q: What will happen at the intersection of Broad St with new tenants at the Gannett building.

A: Addressing changes to the Broad Street intersection are outside the scope of this project. The Aqueduct Street District Project and the future Broad Street Aqueduct Reimagined Project will be responsible for future improvements to this intersection.

Next Steps

Future meetings to update the public on the progress of the design process will be communicated to residents and property owners and posted on the City website at: www.cityofrochester.gov/pm2024/

For further information, please contact the City’s Project Manager, Ruben Escobar at 585-428-8600.

Appendix A - Attendees

Public Attendees

Henry Litsky, (Virtual - address not provided)
Griffin Bre'Asia, City of Rochester
Aaron Weiner, (Virtual - address not provided)
Dina Wagner, (Virtual - address not provided)
Jon Schull, Eco Restoration Alliance
Antonia Custodio, MCC Downtown Campus
Douglas Kelley(Virtual - address not provided)
Jeff Holdsworth, (Corn Hill Neighborhood Association)
Jesse Peers, Reconnect Rochester
John Schell,(Virtual - address not provided)

Dimitrios Theodorakakos, (490 State St –Spiros)
Lana Theodorakakos, (490 State St –Spiros)
Bob Lenard, (508 State St –McGee Monuments)
Michael Lanzillo, (453 State St)
Dylan Welch, (750 South Ave)
Brett Baron, (505 University Ave)
Dan Warth, (340 Averill Ave)
Bill Collins, (217 Alameda St)
Sherita Traywick, (Center for Disability Rights)
Andrew Ruffin, (Center for Disability Rights)
Zachariah Deardorff, Reconnect Rochester
John Lam, Reconnect Rochester

Project Team

City of Rochester

Ruben Escobar, P.E., Street Design Project Manager
David Riley, AICP, Manager of Special Projects

Monroe County

Henry Herdzik, P.E., MCDOT Project Liaison

Consulting Team

David Askinazi, P.E., Managing Engineer, C&S Companies
Chad Stevens, Transportation Engineer, C&S Companies
Seth Kaeuper, P.E., Service Group Manager, C&S Companies

Appendix B - Presentation

A copy of the meeting presentation is available at the project’s webpage under the Public Involvement section. City website at: www.cityofrochester.gov/pm2024/

