Attendees

1. CJ Fernandez, AFLA  
2. Justin Otsea, City Planner, ARDC  
3. Joseph Rein, City Engineer  
4. Bryan Anderson, MnDOT  
5. Derek Fredrickson, MnDOT  
6. John McDonald, MnDOT  
7. Chris Swanson, Mayor  
8. Derek Passe, Trees & Trails Chair  
9. Marsh Snowden, Business owner  
10. Tracy Gilsvik, SHIP

Meeting Summary

The Two Harbors Comprehensive Transportation Plan Kick-off meeting began at 2:00 p.m., June 28th, 2018 at the City Council Chambers in the Two Harbors City Hall. Justin Otsea, started the meeting by asking everyone in attendance to give an introduction of themselves and provide their connection to the project and what (if any) organization they represent.

Project History, Organization, Goals

Justin described the process will create a long-term plan and vision that will guide the city in prioritizing investment decisions, making strategic decisions, and position the City and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) to apply for or access available funding. He and Bryan Anderson, Planner-MnDOT followed by providing a brief history that led up to the collaboration planning process. A summarized listed has been provided below:

- 2016 MnDOT approaches City with road reconstruction project for 2018.
- Through discussions and new political leadership, 2018 project shifts to smaller scope, with possible full reconstruction targeted somewhere between 2023-25.
- With new opportunity, also arises Transportation plan process which can serve as vision for future investments in transportation both related to the highway 61 corridor and the general transportation system throughout the community.

Justin followed by briefly describing the planning project scope, supporting funding, and goals of the process. The project process includes four meetings with Carlos (CJ) Fernandez (Aune-Fernandez Landscape Architects) the project has 4 phases listed below:

Phase 1: Process Organization (Meeting #1-Today)

Phase 2: Conditions and Opportunities Assessment (Meeting #2)

Phase 3: Plan Draft Development and Review (Meeting #3)

Phase 4: Finalize Plan (Meeting #4)

One of the main goals of the first meeting was to outline the process and shape how much public involvement would correspond as part of the planning work. After some discussion, it was decided that the best way to move forward was to incorporate public input as much as possible into the process, to arrive at a ‘grass roots’ vision for the corridor and community. CJ outlined what the process would look like with public involvement throughout the process.
**Meeting #1** - A similar first meeting would be held, beginning with outlining the planning process. AFLA would then lead meeting attendees through a series of exercises focused on gathering information to inform the goals and vision of the 7th Avenue corridor and associated locations.

**Meeting #2** - AFLA will utilize the input gathered at the first meeting to inform a few design concepts created back at their studio. These concepts would be presented to the public and steering committee at the 2nd meeting to gather additional feedback on elements to include in the final design. A charrette style ‘designing on the fly’ option could also be integrated into this meeting.

**Meeting #3** - AFLA, ARDC, and the City of Two Harbors will host an open house style meeting for the public and steering committee members to review near final designs. A formal presentation, as well as informal discussions would be expected to be a part of this meeting. Feedback will be sought for any final revisions needed to be made to the design.

**Meeting #4** - Depending on the need for additional revisions, this meeting could be more of a final open house style meeting with the previous more of a ‘workshop’ focus. The final meeting could also be linked to a City Council meeting focused on adopting the Comprehensive Transportation plan update being developed by ARDC as part of the planning process. This meeting could be directly with the established Steering Committee.

CJ followed by providing a summary of a similar corridor planning project he was involved with in Grand Marais. Posed with a similar situation as Two Harbors, CJ outlined the steps taken to achieve a vision for the corridor, which put the City in a position to leverage Transportation Alternatives grant funds to pay for many of the amenities (i.e. multi-use path, street trees, benches, tables, etc.) incorporated into the design in connection with the road reconstruction project. CJ provided a 3-D video generated during the process which showcased the corridor vision and described the design elements incorporated.

**Dialogue with Meeting Attendees**

After the formal presentation, CJ facilitated a conversation with meeting attendees gain feedback on the proposed process and gather additional context about the corridor. A summarized list of this conversation has been provided below:

- **Defining what MnDOT, the County, and the City would like to see regarding connectivity between bicycles, pedestrians, and automobiles to and from the corridor.**
  - Do we want an alternate bike/pedestrian route? If not, how do we accommodate all users into design?

- **Safety concerns, primarily between 8th street and 4th street, specifically regarding bicyclists and pedestrians.**
  - Some concerns raised about the corner of 7th and 7th specifically.
  - So many businesses, parking, and other ‘distractions’ add to the danger of the segment.
• Kwik trip seemed to be the safest crossing. 15th street doesn’t have sidewalk to connect to. Highway 2 intersection has similar issues (limited existing sidewalk segments).
• Leaving parking on street or finding a nearby off-street parking facility to many businesses has been an issue discussed in community for some time.
  o Expectation that if off street location was strategic to existing businesses, there would be a willingness to remove the parking on street.
• City has a goal of driving people down to the waterfront to spend time in Two Harbors.
• ROW width is variable throughout corridor.
• Utility issues will be a significant issue regarding the reconstruction opportunity.
• “Business front to business front- what is every inch going to be used for?”-Consideration for this upcoming planning project.
• Land use along 7th avenue is very disjointed that it becomes difficult. Something that should be considered.
• Historically, two harbors used to have very large trees which framed the corridor and naturally slowed people down.
• The viability of a bypass route to reduce congestion and provide a more adequate ‘through route’ was discussed briefly.
• Trucks don’t make the turn on 7th avenue in front of Dairy Queen often without going on top of the curb which eats up the corner.
• Major topics/issues identified from the conversation seemed to be:
  o Bypass / no bypass
  o Parking on 7th Ave / no parking on 7th Avenue
  o How to accommodate bicycles/peds safely.

Next Steps:

CJ will continue to acquire/analyze data and prepare exercises for the upcoming public ‘visioning session’. Otsea will coordinate with the steering committee to identify a good date and will then work to promote the meeting for good attendance. A meeting summary will be developed and distributed to the steering committee and uploaded to the project website which will act as a resource for all materials related to this planning project:
www.ardc.org/TwoHarborsTransportation

Meeting Notes Compiled by:
Justin Otsea, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)

For Project Questions or Comments:
Justin Otsea, Senior Planner, ARDC
(218) 529-7529
jotsea@ardc.org