

Miller Avenue – Maple to Newport Public Workshop

On July 31, 2009, the City of Ann Arbor held a Public Workshop to discuss various conceptual design options for the Miller Avenue (Maple to Newport) corridor. Participants were split up into five small groups and discussed the various options of the Miller/Newport intersection as well the corridor itself. Below is a summary of the comments and concerns that were collected during this workshop (and also include comments received via e-mail). Comments are split up between the Miller/Newport intersection and the main corridor, and have been grouped by topic.

Please note that the numbers in parenthesis after a comment indicate the number of times that comment, or a similar comments were recorded at one or more of the small group discussions. The conceptual drawings discussed at this workshop can be found on the web page under the heading “Public Workshop.”

Miller/Newport Intersection

Prior to presenting the three options for this intersection, the need for a traffic signal was discussed. However, traffic studies conducted by the City in the Spring of 2009, indicated that the intersection did not meet any of the requirements (“warrants”) needed to install a traffic signal. In addition the detailed calculations of delay showed that a signal would increase delays at the intersection, gas use, and emissions, and therefore is not beneficial for the intersection under current traffic conditions. Other options for making improvements to the intersection were discussed in the small groups and are summarized below.

General Comments

- Can residents shovel permeable sidewalks easily?
- Need comments from Newport residents
- Safety is the #1 concern
- Driveway at 1409 Miller is difficult to back out of at present
- Do not want to increase the lighting at the intersection
- Left turn off Newport (volume change with school traffic)
- Crossing guard
- Bike lane on Newport
- Elevation of Miller – needs to be considered
- Concerned about Pedestrian/Students crossing to get to schools
- Students cross Miller at Newport – 10 years ago asked for crossing guard at Wines – will never happen (dangerous)
- Would like a pedestrian count at Newport during school year

Option B – Designated Left Turn Lane

- Left turn lane – won’t it just be a passing lane – won’t it make drivers go faster
- Left turn out of city is difficult and would be exacerbated by left turn lane (2)

Option C – Round about

Vehicles

- Manage traffic at all times of the day/relieve backup
- Will I be able to back out of driveway if traffic circle is full of cars in the morning (1409 Miller SE corner)
- Large vehicles – must be accommodated (4)
- Impact of merging on roundabout capacity
- Produces noise at roundabout (accelerating)
- Circles are new to many. PSAs and public education Re: merge rules would help
- Address “hill” at this intersection
- Roundabout in icy conditions
- Roundabout best for left turn

Pedestrians/Islands

- In morning southbound Newport has right of way over eastbound Miller with roundabout
- Will pedestrians avoid using roundabout crossings?
- Refuge Islands are worthless in the snow/who cleans? (3)
- Hearing and sight impaired people – how do they navigate roundabout?
- Safety for Pedestrians improved by round about – (unbelieving will happen with roundabout) (3)
- Pedestrians don't walk on center island (2)
- How does traffic react to a pedestrian in a roundabout (never see pedestrians at Miller and Maple)
- Islands – rain garden possible?
- Crossing guards (AAPS pay) compatible at roundabout? (4)

Traffic Calming

- Cars zoom by our house – if roundabout will slow them that would be good
- Calming Effect is a positive effect of traffic circle (2)
- Left turn issue – roundabout calming feature

Cost/Value

- How would roundabout affect property values
- Residents at corner losing property value especially neighbors on North (4)
- Cost of roundabout v. no change

Bikes

- Bike navigating traffic circle
- Where is bike lane at crossing? Looks suicidal
- Bike lane merging at Miller/Newport?

Design Details

- Buffalo grass could be good vegetation on roundabout
- Roundabout's maintenance in the winter
- Design of traffic circle should be refined further
- Tree would be nice on roundabout so vision is not obscured but looks aesthetically pleasing
- Shorten concrete island to provide better access for exiting/backing out of 1409 Miller driveway
- Lighting on roundabout (Huron Parkway/Nixon too much lighting) (2)
- Recommend no planting or low planting in center of roundabout

Other

- Roundabout better for traffic, pedestrians, and environment
- Roundabout the best option (2)

Miller Ave. Main Corridor

General Comments

Left Turns

- Alternate turning lanes
- Not as concerned about the Left turn in general
- Left turn lanes are over-rated, less of a concern

Speed

- Decrease speed limit on Miller to 30 (3)
- Slower speeds
- Traffic calming is a high priority

Parking

- Why is there parking on Miller at all?
- No parking needed at 1110 Wines Dr.
- Parking needed near Saunders Cres.
- Green spaces are not worth sacrificing safety or parking
- Ask residents at Maple if they want street parking eliminated due to overuse by school traffic
- 1980 wants parking in front of house
- Parking lane used for property access, commuters and overflow
- Parking Lane important for safely leaving driveway. Very little planned just east of Saunders Cres.
- Parking needed at 1788 Miller/1115 Wines

Pedestrians

- Pedestrian bridges like in Plymouth
- Curb/turn radii – possible to reduce for benefit of pedestrians?
- Crossing street safety
- Would like a pedestrian crossing at Saunders
- No pedestrian crossing needed at Wines Dr.
- The sidewalk on Miller just East of Wines is not passable if there is a snow storm as the snow plows throw the street snow on top of the sidewalk (and residents don't clear it). Islands would get the same snow plow snow and no one is responsible to clear them
- Need pedestrian island at Hatcher Cres.

Storm Water

- Use park to handle drainage. Park is not that natural or good. It is a poor park anyway.
- 1788 Miller rain garden in yard and would like one in lawn extension
- Need storm water system from standing water in backyard – will put rain garden in side lot (1788 Miller/1115 Wines)
- Storm water capacity (concerned)
- How much salt is used? Rain gardens would be very limited to plant material tolerant of high salt levels
- Concerned about homeowner/community maintenance of rain gardens
- Rain garden can be as simple as trees. No plants low maintenance
- 1605 Miller willing to have a rain garden but hopefully no bump outs here. How do rain gardens work with swales?

Swale vs. Parking (on south side of Miller east of Wines Drive)

- Prefer swale to curb and gutter
- Lowest long term cost (maintenance) swale v. curb and gutter
- Consider ways to use swale planting that work for major street but look good integrated with park etc. opportunity for beautiful gateway to city.
- Swales from Saunders to Newport preserve natural feel of areas on this corridor and improve storm water issues. I feel strongly that this section should not be curb and gutter feeding into storm sewer.

Other

- Bike lanes need to be cleaned and plowed
- Consider rumble strips to augment zebra crossings, between traffic and bike lane (3)
- All bus stops need pull outs to sidewalk (2)
- Exiting from driveways is important
- Maintain “green” character of east end neighborhood (3)

Option 1 – Continuous Left Turn Lane

- Don't want to lose guest parking (1788 Newport). Need parking lane to pull out. Across the street is too far and dangerous.
- Continuous left turn lane will turn into a passing lane which won't be good and increase speed (2)
- Parking could alternate North and South as traffic calming
- Continuous left lane eliminates parking lane on one side.
- Pedestrian island at Hatcher Cres (2)
- #1 has the best solution for Left turn but prefer # 3
- #1 would not change the speed (feels like a highway) and #2/3 would reduce the speed. #3 would be the best option
- What happens in option 1 when AATA buses stop on north side and there is no parking lane. Concern about traffic backups behind bus.
- Winter maintenance of islands is a concern (2)
- If option #1 is used parking on North side would be better for bicycles (2)
- #1 – no traffic calming better on #3
- Refuge Islands in the winter who will keep them clear? Volunteers like highway litter? (2)

Option 2 – Bump Outs

- Bump out value?
- Pull bump outs at intersection back to increase sight distance.
- On Brooks – bump outs have not slowed the traffic
- These triangles won't change traffic speeds
- Option 2 not good for bikes where swerving around left turns
- #2 or #3 would work better for parking and backing out of driveways
- Storm Water in #2
- Concern with cars encroaching on the bike lane with the bump outs
- Street trees- bump outs more trees/larger trees?
- Plowing in the bump out option
- Can pedestrian islands be included in option 2?
- Bump outs – less parking and more maintenance issues (2)

Option 3 – Occasional Left Turn Lanes

- Left turn lane at Duncan – to get to school – worth investigating
- Left turn lane in and out of Wines Dr. (2)
- Like option 3 with fewer bump outs and more parking
- Pedestrian island at Hatcher Cres (2)
- #1 has the best solution for Left turn but prefer # 3
- #2 or #3 would work better for parking and backing out of driveways
- Pedestrian islands are a good idea. #3 seems to be the best option. Harder to cross 3 lanes than 2 – don't like option #1 for pedestrians.
- #1 would not change the speed (feels like a highway) and #2/3 would reduce the speed. #3 would be the best option
- The storm water improvements are liked in option 3
- Concerned about the encroachment of bike lanes in the area of islands with option #3
- Winter maintenance of islands is a concern
- Left turn lane not needed at Fulmer
- Maintenance of islands
- Traffic calming better on #3
- #3 left turn lane and pedestrian islands identifiable
- Refuge Islands in the winter who will keep them clear? Volunteers like highway litter? (2)