

Newport and Sunset Sidewalk Gap Project Discussion Summary

Newport and Sunset Sidewalk Gap Project Public Meeting #1

Date: Wednesday, August 11th, 2021

Time: 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Public present: 23.

Council members present: 0

City staff present: 2; Nick Hutchinson, Kayla Coleman

Wade Trim staff present: 4; Chris Wall, Breanna Anderson, Martin Hoemke, Carmelle Tremblay

Re: Newport and Sunset Sidewalk Gap Project

Questions and Answers

Note: The following is not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion. This summary has been prepared from notes taken during the meeting; comments are paraphrased. Where staff responses or clarification were provided at the meeting, they are marked with an '**A**' and denoted in italics. Where clarifications or responses have been added after the meeting, these are denoted as '**Post-Meeting Note**'.

1. Will the project team reach out to property owners about specific issues impacting their properties (tree removals, landscaping changes, property encroachment, etc)?
 - A. The project team plans to coordinate with every affected property owner on an individual basis to discuss specific property impacts.*

2. Understanding that Concept 2 already weaves to avoid as many trees as possible, is there flexibility to curve the sidewalk even more at the property owner's request (for the purpose of saving trees)?
 - A. The project team will discuss the feasibility of further avoiding certain trees on a case-by-case basis and will tailor the sidewalk to property owner preferences to the extent possible.*

3. What is the purpose of the sidewalk, and what problem are you trying to solve by installing it?
 - A. One of the City's long-term goals is to fill all sidewalk gaps. Any section of road that does not have sidewalk on both sides is considered to have a*

sidewalk gap. Each sidewalk gap is prioritized based on several criteria including, but not limited to:

- *Citizen requests*
- *Proximity to schools*
- *Proximity to parks*
- *Public transit access*
- *Major street vs. local street*

This prioritization system is used to add sidewalk gap projects to the City's Capital Improvement Plan, which begins the project planning, design and implementation process. The Newport and Sunset sidewalk gap was placed on the high priority list because it scores well in many of the above referenced criteria.

Post Meeting Note: *The portion of sidewalk along Newport Road is in the "highest" prioritization category. The portion of sidewalk along Sunset Road is in the "high" prioritization category.*

4. *Is the sidewalk meant to provide access to the park (Bird Hill's Nature Area; Sunset Brooks Nature Area)? If so, why can't a crosswalk just be installed at the parks to provide access from the sidewalk on the other side of the road?*

A. *This project will provide access to the parks in the area, however that is not the only objective of filling the sidewalk gap. Installing a crosswalk **only** will not meet the City's goals of filling sidewalk gaps.*

Post Meeting Note: *Please see response to Question 3 for the purpose and prioritization of filling the sidewalk gap.*

5. *What is this project going to cost the City and how will it be funded?*

A. *The planning level cost estimate established for this project is just over \$1 Million which includes administration, design and construction costs of installing the sidewalk. The project will be funded partially by federal STP (Surface Transportation Program) funds and the City's New Sidewalk Millage, with a contribution from City Parks and Recreation for the section in front of Bird Hill's.*

6. *What percentage of the \$1 Million project cost will come from federal funds?*

A. *An exact percentage will not be determined until the project has been fully designed. From a planning level, federal funds cover approximately 50% of project costs, with the New Sidewalk Millage and City Parks and Recreation covering the other 50%.*

7. What is the expected construction timeframe?
- A. Construction is anticipated to take approximately 3-4 months.*
8. When will the property owners know exactly what the impact is on their properties?
- A. The project team will take feedback from this meeting and compare/review against the proposed concepts. In the very near future, before the design progresses much further, the project team will meet on-site with property owners to discuss specific impacts, priorities, and concerns. Each meeting will help inform our design and intent moving forward. Finally, once the updates are included, the project team will present the final plans to the property owners so they understand the impact to their properties and frontages.*
9. Have you studied the noise impact to residents if trees are removed in front of properties? Residents in the area must deal with noise from M-14 to the north, as well as the Water Treatment Plant on the south side of the road.
- A. Noise impacts are not something the City would typically evaluate for a sidewalk project.*
10. Can the federal funding be used to build a sound barrier instead to address the noise from M-14?
- A. Funding cannot be redirected for a sound barrier. Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds are programmed as part of an entire regional process through Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS). In addition, City funds would not be used to build a sound barrier for M-14. A project like that would likely be funded and constructed by the State.*
11. Is there a forum where the method of prioritization of sidewalk gaps can be challenged? It seems like any road without a sidewalk on either side should be the highest priority.
- A. The prioritization criteria has been reviewed and revised a few times based on feedback from the public as well as City Council. In the past, we have received this comment and that criterion has been added as a result. The presence of sidewalk on one side of the street versus none at all is one of the criteria in the system, but it is not the only one. The project team would be*

happy to meet with individuals who would like to learn more about the prioritization process.

12. Usually a project like this requires a cost-benefit analysis. Has that been performed?
 - A. *The sidewalk gap prioritization process helps to gain an understanding of the benefit of this project. Based on criteria defined by the Complete Streets Policy, the Non-motorized Transportation Plan and the sidewalk gap prioritization process, this project is being implemented because of its high priority. The cost of the project will certainly be evaluated, however it will not change the priority of the project.*

13. Is there any way to stop this project moving forward other than City Council voting against it?
 - A. *The purpose of the public meeting is to collect input from residents. We will take the public feedback and meet with Councilmembers to determine the most beneficial path forward.*

14. Residents in the area have summarized concerns about this project. Where should this summary be submitted?
 - A. *The established summary of concerns should be submitted to City Project Manager Chris Wall at cwall@a2gov.org. The project team will review and consider all concerns throughout the design process and discuss further with the impacted and concerned residents.*

15. How will this project address competing City of Ann Arbor initiatives? For example, the A2Zero Climate Action Plan prioritizes preserving and enhancing local tree canopy. Cutting this many trees down seems to conflict with that priority.
 - A. *A2Zero initiatives also include creating a more walkable community, which filling sidewalk gaps helps to accomplish. There may be a point where preserving trees outweighs the goal of a walkable community, however in the past the Office of Environment and Sustainability has generally supported the addition of sidewalks.*

16. As a part of the A2Zero Plan, fees are imposed on developers who cause the loss of tree canopy. Will those fees also apply to this project, and has that been accounted for in the budget?

A. The project team will work with the City Forrester to implement the formula for mitigating tree canopy loss. The implementation of this project will go through all of the proper procedures in accordance with City standards.

17. Why will the sidewalk gap stop at Vesper/Brooks on Sunset? The sidewalk gap on the lower side of Sunset (closer to downtown) seems like it should be a higher priority to fill.

A. The remainder of the sidewalk gap Vesper/Brooks is certainly important to connect to downtown. The project team will confirm the priority of this section of sidewalk, and it will be considered for a future capital project.

Post Meeting Note: Please see the prioritizations below of the sidewalk gaps along Newport and Sunset Road in the area in question:

- *Newport Road from Downup Circle to M-14: **6.00 (Highest)***
- *Newport Road from M-14 to Sunset: **6.78 (Highest)***
- *Newport to Vesper/Brooks: **4.48-4.72 (High)***
- *Vesper/Brooks to Beechwood: **3.70 (Mid-High)***
- *Beechwood to Wildt: **3.07 (Mid-Low)***
- *Wildt St from Sunset to Summit: **3.70 (Mid-High)***

18. Do you have data on pedestrian use of these roads?

A. Pedestrian count data is not used in the prioritization process for sidewalk gaps since there is no existing sidewalk to count pedestrian use.

19. Is it possible to narrow Sunset Road to fit the sidewalk in without such an impact to vegetation in the area?

A. The project team considered the option of narrowing the road in the beginning conceptual stages of the project. However, the Water Treatment Plant (located on the south side of Sunset) staff expressed that narrowing the road will hinder truck/equipment accessibility to the plant. Therefore, this option was removed from consideration.

20. There is currently a drainage problem on Sunset Road near the Vesper/Brooks intersection. How will adding an impervious sidewalk and potential retaining walls affect this drainage issue?

A. The project team will meet with any residents who have site specific drainage issues to ensure the project does not make the issue any worse. Depending

on the nature of the drainage issue, the scope of the project may allow for improvements to be made to help mitigate the problem. If there are further issues beyond the scope of the project, the project team can look for other avenues within the City to make improvements.

21. For those properties on Sunset whose value will be reduced by the landscape changes, will the City reassess those properties and make a corresponding reduction in the property taxes for those locations?

Post Meeting Note: *The project team will consult with the City Assessor and provide an update on this question and response.*

22. Has there been any involvement from the Safe Routes to School group? How about Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS)?

Post Meeting Note: *The project team has already reached out to AAPS to discuss the project and the potential for a crosswalk on Newport Road to provide access to Wines Elementary School from Cooley Street. AAPS expressed interest and support for the sidewalk and of a new crosswalk in this location. Safe Routes to School groups are organized through the public school system.*

23. When is the City Council vote happening?

Post Meeting Note: *City Council will vote on the agreement between the City and the State for the administration of federal funds. This vote will occur after the project has been bid and awarded sometime in the later Winter/early Spring of 2022. This date will be communicated to property owners in the area, public meeting attendees, and anyone who has signed up for project updates.*

24. Can you provide locations where sidewalk gaps have been recently eliminated?

Post Meeting Note:

The following sidewalk gaps have been filled as standalone projects:

- *South side of Barton Drive from Longshore to Chandler (2015)*
- *South side of Scio Church from Maple to Delaware (2015)*
- *East side of Nixon Road from Clague to Haverhill (2015)*
- *West side of Stone School Road from Birch Hollow to Packard (2017)*
- *West side of N Maple from Maple Village Court to Miller Ave (2017)*
- *North side of Miller Ave from Keuhnle to N Maple (2017)*
- *North side of Commerce and Federal Blvds (2018)*
- *East side of Green Road from Burbank to Burbank (2018)*
- *Both sides of Dhu Varren Road from Omlesaad east (2019)*

- *South side of Washtenaw Avenue from Huron Parkway to Pittsfield (2020)*
- *Southwest side of Fuller Court from Huron Towers to Huron River Flats (2021)*

The following sidewalk gaps have been filled as part of other projects:

- *West side of Stone School Road from Champaigne to Pheasant Run (2015)*
- *Geddes Avenue from Riverview to Huron Parkway (2016)*
- *South side of Stadium Boulevard adjacent to Ann Arbor Golf and Outing (2017)*
- *South side of Scio Church from Audubon to Main (2018)*
- *North side of Scio Church from Seventh to Main (2018)*
- *North and east sides of Barton Drive at the Barton and Starwick intersection (2020)*
- *East side of First Street from William to Railroad (2020)*

Additional sidewalk gaps throughout the City have also been filled as part of private development projects.

Verbal Public Comments

Note: The following comments are not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion, comments have been paraphrased based on notes taken by project staff.

- I live on the opposite side of the road (south side of Sunset) and this project will be very disruptive to me.
- A million dollars seems like a lot of money for not very much benefit. I don't see very many people walking in this area and I am home every day.
- I walk this street frequently and I am also a resident. Taking out all of these trees will dramatically change the character of the street. A crosswalk on Newport for the Bird Hill's entrance will be useful, but I do not see the rationale for the sidewalk on Sunset Road.
- If the City wants to lower emissions, this sidewalk gap does not address this. You need to spend some time to survey the area to measure car travel. Maybe traffic calming would be a better solution.
- One mile of impervious ground and 80 trees removed, is that really in line with Ann Arbor's future plans?
- Noise from M-14 is an issue.

- A buffer from the bus traffic on Sunset is important for residents.
- ADA compliance is important.
- I would support the City being responsible for future sidewalk maintenance (snow removal).
- A straighter sidewalk would be better.
- I am an impacted resident. I frequent both parks, I live on the opposite side of the street. Crossing the street is not a problem whatsoever. I work from home and I think there is a lack of understanding of the demand on Sunset Road. It is not a busy road to begin with even on summer weekends. I don't see real benefits in using this funding for the project, beyond the impact to residents. This is a misread on what is needed. A sound barrier would be a better use of the STP funding. Noise from M-14 encourages residents to use front yards instead of backyards. Less trees will encourage more sound. We don't want our front yards to be smaller.
- Even residents on the south side of the street will be affected because of the reduction of the tree barrier.
- I may pay an environmental lawyer to do a study on the area.
- It is redundant to put a sidewalk on Newport when there are two safe crossings, from Sunset to Newport and Wines.
- I am very angry, disappointed, concerned about environment and loss of trees.
- Plantings have been done because of the water treatment plant issue (noise and views). Creates a barrier.
- Trees "impacted" means they will be cut - please use correct language.
- We have many newcomers to the neighborhood, increasingly younger with families who would be impacted. Even those families are against it.
- People are data hungry. It would be to our benefit if there is a list somewhere that would tell us where we can come up with data. For instance, how do you prioritize sidewalks?
- I don't believe we need this project. I am a transportation planner.
- (rhetorical questions) Have you walked this site? Have you been here for more than a few minutes? Are you willing to listen (this is for Council)? This is about quality of life and is meaningful to the residents. Do you know this area as well as the residents do? There is an effective sidewalk on the south side of the street.
- Sunset Brooks Park isn't a park, more of a nature area with no existing ADA access.

- Don't let the idea of a perfect and complete street blind you to the idea of a street that is already perfectly adequate.

Written Public Comments

Note: The following comments are a direct transcription of the meeting discussion, in the order it was received, from the virtual (Zoom) chat box.

- Hi - I have to go soon but I live at ----- . A property highly impacted by this project. Please contact me at ----- . Thanks for hosting this meeting.
- Very disappointing that there isn't any council members at this meeting
- Why not put a crossing in at the entrance to the woods?
- I would like to understand why this section of Sunset is prioritized over nearby areas without an existing sidewalk on either side? i.e. where is the need?
- There is already sidewalk along one side of Sunset and part of Newport. Why are we adding sidewalk along those sections?
- Is there a way to redo the survey. Now that I have more information I would like to change a few responses. How is putting in an unnecessary sidewalk improving transportation?
- Why can't you consider the sidewalk across the street on Sunset as a completion of the sidewalk gap? How hard is it for someone to cross Sunset to the other side and walk down that sidewalk?
- Sunset is very noisy due to M-14. While I really hope that tree removal could be minimized (Concept 2), I think it's unrealistic to expect those "saved" trees to survive, leaving a wonky sidewalk over time. A straighter sidewalk would be better, I think, but buffers are needed to protect pedestrians from the buses and large water treatment plant trucks. ADA compliance is paramount. Also, I think it's unrealistic to expect property owners to fling snow up over the taller retaining walls in the winter, and it's illegal to put the snow into the street, so it's time for the city to maintain the sidewalks.
- What defines a sidewalk gap, particularly where there is already a sidewalk along one side of the road?
- And how do you justify taking down 40 plus trees to create a walk way to a nature area???
- That money would be better spent on a sound wall

- I would prefer the money be spent on a sound wall. Or a sidewalk in a location where one is needed.
- I agree with [other attendee] that a sidewalk along Newport Road to Sunset would be beneficial since Newport is a busy road and crossing the street to the other side of Newport could be challenging, but this is not the case on Sunsest.
- Ditto to the sound wall! That would provide a much greater benefit to the neighborhood.
- I think [other attendee] made a great point. The Cemetery which does receive a significant amount of foot fall has zero sidewalks.
- There is a much greater need down by the cemetery and Hunt park!
- Who can I speak with about cancelling the project? my council person?
- For those Sunset properties whose value will be reduced by the landscape changes, will the city reassess those properties and make a corresponding reduction in the property taxes for those locations?
- I agree with [other attendee] and question the use of city tax funds for this project. There are so many other needs this city has that could use this funding
- Question: Is there a forum in which the priority formula can be challenged? The definition of a side wall gap that was mentioned misses the point of connectivity. All 0 sidewalk street projects should be priority over streets with 1 sidewalk.
- Has there been any involvement from the Safe Routes to Schools folks? How about AAPS?
- Is an exception possible?
- I feel as this is a tick box exercise. Now you have started this consultation you can proceed further. I WHOLY OBJECT TO THIS PROPOSAL.
- Why is every habitat considered the same, the outskirts of something is not the same as its center. Criteria based on public feedback seems off message as those living in these different enviroments differ. What is the net gain here really?
- While I agree with others questioning the need for a sidewalk on the north side of Sunset, if this needs to move forward is it possible to narrow the street to gain the space required?
- Hi All. I'm a Discord novice, but we can try to use this to communicate and lobby city council.
<https://discord.gg/GpN24rws>
 Copy and paste into a browser
 Actually, click on it, not copy-paste

- Where is the data
- Should we be bringing concerns directly to Erica Briggs?
- its all redundant the only use for these side walks will be the citys ability to plow them with snow, which we will then need to maintain as the city does not even do that, the waterhill residents already provide a snow removal service on the cities behalf, “snow buddy”
- We have started a petition opposed to this
- Screw the cost benefit...implement the plan!!!
- Great question re narrow the street. the empty busses, buy minivans
- Correct— it’s more than just for aesthetics. We need that cover.
- Agreed
- Good luck to people on the opposite side of the street picking up Dog mess!!!
- When is the vote happening? Is there a date scheduled?
- Great points [other attendee]
- Can you provide some locations where sidewalk gaps have been recently eliminated?
- Check the side walk opposite this flood concern site, the sidewalk step south around the flood area I assume this was a retro fit
- great point to end on [other attendee]!
- I would like to thank you for bringing the Neighbours together. It's nice to hear I am not alone in my opposition.
- We want the project to not move forward.
- You have to visit each of these sites to take a objective view of this. Spend the money on road surface repair they are discussing in the waterhill neighbourhood

Pre and Post-Meeting Emails

Email 1:

Dear Councilmembers:

I'm writing to voice my support for the sidewalk gap project being proposed on Sunset and Newport, and express concern over the local NIMBY group that has apparently organized to oppose the effort.

Living in a city like Ann Arbor should mean access to sidewalks. Not sidewalks with gaps, not sidewalks on only one side of the street, but complete, gap-free, well-maintained sidewalks on both sides of every residential street. I believe that's what Ann Arbor voted for when it overwhelmingly passed the sidewalk millage last year. And yet, at the public hearing last night, there were familiar calls from local homeowners for additional process: we cannot know, they claim, whether a sidewalk on this street should have priority or whether it is worth the cost, in dollars and in trees, unless we conduct additional studies, analyses, and public hearings.

Nonsense. We don't need additional study or debate on the safety merits of sidewalks, any more than we need to hold a town hall to debate the pros and cons of bike helmets, gun locks, or seatbelts. If we have to relitigate, with data and interminable public meetings, the effort's safety merits every time we try to fill a sidewalk gap; if we cannot fill a gap that would require the cutting down of a single old-growth tree; if the priority of every gap must be precisely rank ordered and filled in exactly that order, then this project will grind to a crawl or a halt, and preventable crashes between cars and pedestrians could occur. That's the inevitable, undeniable price of the process these folks are demanding, and it's an unconscionable price for the city to choose to pay.

I urge you to continue to support this effort and help staff push forward to expediently fill these sidewalk gaps: On Sunset, Newport, and everywhere else in the city.

Email 2:

Mr. Wall,

I live on Pomona Road not far from Sunset. I drive on Sunset a lot; it's my best way to Main Street. I often see pedestrians walking on the north side of Sunset, beside the curb. Additionally, people using the bus stop as Sunset ends at Newport usually walk to it on the north side of Sunset where the bus stop is. Further, without a sidewalk that bus stop in the winter is under a foot of snow.

Thank you for your interest in feedback.

Email 3:

Mr. Wall:

My wife and I live on Daniel St. and regularly use the Sunset/Newport road corridor to access the Sunset Brooks Nature Area, Bird Hills, and other recreation assets in the area. We strongly, strongly support this sidewalk project and believe that it will make the neighborhood much safer for us and our children. I'm emailing you because we may not be

able to call in tomorrow night, and wanted our support for the project to be included in the public record.

We think that living in an American city means having and enjoying gap-free sidewalks on both sides of every street, and that homeownership in such a city comes with the expectation that sidewalks will be built--at your personal expense, in most cases--on your property. We also think that, as between the goals of preserving trees and preventing kids from mingling in automobile traffic, our children should be the public policy priority.

Email 4:

Raymond and Nick,

Thanks so much for this information. I put a post on nextdoor the other day to see what some neighbors' thoughts were on the matter. A link is below, in case some of the ideas might be helpful for thinking about things. It has gotten a number of comments that may be useful to those planning, which I summarize below.

https://nextdoor.com/news_feed/?post=186130023&comment=587681937&is=notification_center

Summarizing:

- Considerable skepticism of the need for a sidewalk on the N side of Sunset and no suggestions that people would prefer one. In contrast, there does seem to be a strong desire to fill the few small gaps at Hunt Park and at Wildt in the existing S side sidewalk.
- There seems to be lots of desire for a sidewalk rounding the corner on Wildt connecting to the east end of Sunset. This is a major safety concern as that is a blind curve with drivers, bikers, and walkers. Also, some suggesting that there should be no parking around that curve as it is steep and adds to the danger there.
- Generally positive views on traffic calming measures on Sunset more generally
- Mixed views on two-way bike lanes in general, though a sense that the road could use some more biking infrastructure.
- Multiple people have noted that there are streets in the neighborhood that lack a traversable sidewalk network that should be higher priority, but which are not in the current plan (notably: Wildt, Fountain, & Brooks is in the plan, but was also mentioned).
- Also, perhaps unrelated, but one of the concerns raised for why Northside residents use Sunset to commute rather than Newport->Miller is the lack of a traffic light at the intersection of Newport and Miller. This might be worth looking into.

Sorry to have missed the opportunity to engage yesterday. I am happy to help in whatever ways I can in the future. I assume it would be better to work directly with those of you on the transportation commission rather than taking these sorts of concerns to the city council meetings, but let me know if I am wrong in that belief.

The draft Transportation Plan (aka Moving Together Towards Vision Zero) identifies Sunset as a “Proposed All Ages and Abilities [bike] Route” (p34) as well as a critical sidewalk gap (p 30). The “All Ages” route refers to a high comfort facility similar to what you are suggesting – though the exact configuration is not prescribed in the Plan.

The document is still draft and will be discussed by Council tonight at a work session and then will be up for adoption in June. We don’t have an implementation strategy for Sunset (or many other aspects of the Plan) just yet as we are awaiting approval. Once approved, we will look for high impact projects (e.g. projects that mitigate crashes) and low hanging fruit projects (e.g. projects that can leverage other work in the area). Admittedly, I don’t know where Sunset would fit on either of those spectrums.

I hope this gives helpful context of what is planned for Sunset. Let me know if you have any other questions.

Cheers,

Raymond

Raymond Hess, AICP-CTP (he, him, his) | Transportation Manager | Public Services
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Deb wrote the following response to you (see below), but it looks like she forgot to actually copy you on it.

The sidewalk project is currently scheduled for construction in 2022, and we are now in the very early stages of the planning and design. In the next couple of months we will be looking at scheduling a public meeting with the neighborhood to discuss the project in more detail. Being that your property is within the project limits, you will directly receive a notice for this meeting in the mail.

I believe the potential need for a two-way bike track on Sunset is a separate issue from that of the sidewalk, as it serves a different purpose. I will leave it to Raymond Hess to respond further to this item.

Nick Hutchinson

Nicholas S. Hutchinson, P.E.
City Engineer
Public Services Area - Engineering
City of Ann Arbor

Phone: (734) 794-6000 ext. 43633

Fax: (734) 994-1744

Thank you for your thoughtful and detailed feedback. Yes, there is presently a project in the active transportation portion of the City's Capital Improvements Plan to install sidewalks on the north side of Sunset although it is not slated until calendar 2023. Because the issues you raise are design considerations, I am passing this along to City Engineer Nick Hutchinson and Transportation Manager Raymond Hess for further review and response.

Thanks again for your feedback.

Deb

Deborah Gosselin, Systems Planning Engineer, Systems Planning Unit

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Hi Deborah,

I had a contractor on my property looking at the possibility of putting a sidewalk on the north side of the road, which I have come to learn is part of the current active transportation strategy plan. While the person seemed doubtful of the feasibility even before I got there, I tend to think it is the wrong capital improvement project for the street. Instead, can I suggest that it would make far more sense to put in a 2-way bike lane down the entirety of Sunset, which I think would obviate the need for a sidewalk there.

If it is helpful, here is my thinking on the matter:

- 1) Although the city classifies sunset as having a sidewalk gap, it does not really. The entire south side of sunset has a sidewalk with the sole (easy to remedy) exception of Hunt park. It is not clear who would need to use a sidewalk on the N side of the street that could not do so on the S side, especially when there are very few streets that intersect with the north side and many that intersect with the south side.
- 2) Sunset is a very heavily biked street, and will likely only become more so when the connection is made to the treelike/b2b trail. On weekends in particular, there is more bike traffic than pedestrian traffic.
- 3) The current width of sunset encourages higher speeds, this would be alleviated by painting a double bike lane.
- 4) A sidewalk on the N side of the road would require considerable regrading and would necessitate removing a sizable number of trees.
- 5) The presence of a double bike lane on the N side would move all parking to the S side,

providing protection for the sidewalk, which currently lacks a berm.

6) The few locations where people might arrive on the N side of sunset (where there is not a sidewalk) could be easily remedied with crosswalks, which are not currently in place. These would include:

- Beechwood Drive
- The entrance to Sunset Brooks park
- The cemetery/entrance to Bluffs nature area

7) The other roads that intersect Sunset (Newport, Fountain, and Orkney) do not have sidewalks at all (or in the case of Newport, do not have it on the Side that intersects with Sunset).

8) A double bike lane, however, would achieve the same benefits as the healthy streets initiative, would connect to the bike lane on Newport and would provide a safer route to and from both Wines and Forsythe.

Hope these help as you think about what to do with Sunset.

Email 5:

We will certainly include you in the outreach efforts.

In terms of the prioritization system, I've attached the list of criteria and how they are scored. While it is currently under revision to version 3.0, this is the most recent official version. It is a lot of detail, but it still gives you an idea of what factors go into the prioritization process.

The results of this scoring system can be seen on our Sidewalk Gaps Dashboard. (Click on the Sidewalk Gap Prioritization tabs at the bottom of the screen once you're in in there)

Nick

Hi Craig and Mr. Hutchinson,

Thank you both for your prompt and helpful responses.

We look forward to learning more about the sidewalk gap projects, and the prioritization process that has been used to date. Would it be possible to receive a copy/description of the actual sidewalk gap prioritization process?

As you move forward gathering information about the Sunset project and work with the neighbors, please feel free to include us in your outreach efforts. Thank you again for insights and information

I think Craig has covered the main points pretty thoroughly. The sidewalk gaps in this area rank high in our prioritization, which is why this project was created in the Capital Improvements Plan. If you are interested in more information the topic of new sidewalk construction, you can visit our website at: <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/engineering/Pages/New-Sidewalks-FAQ.aspx>

To add a little more detail about this project specifically, we are only in the early stages currently (collecting the topographic survey information). The next steps will involve public engagement with the neighborhood to discuss more details of the project. Information on that will be forthcoming soon.

As Craig mentions, the primary goal would be to place the sidewalk in the public right-of-way. However, we also want to be sensitive to natural features in the area, and will try to layout the sidewalk in such a way to avoid as many of them as possible, which could include obtaining easements from adjacent property owners to allow the sidewalk to meander around such features.

I am copying a couple of our engineers that are managing the project, as they will ultimately be serving as the main points of contact.

Nick Hutchinson

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I am cc'ing Mr. Hutchinson, the city engineer, on this response. He will be able to direct you to more detailed consideration. The presence of a water main, raw or otherwise, has virtually no impact on whether a sidewalk is built on not. Roads, sidewalks and other structures interact with utility lines all over town. Nearly every street and sidewalk are constructed over infrastructure such as water mains. I will be blunt, the presence of a water main is not a reason to not construct a water main. As you are aware the property on the north side of Sunset is heavily encumbered with easements and ROW. The purpose of the ROW along Sunset is to accommodate public improvements, such as sidewalks. I do not know the specifics of the proposed Sunset sidewalk, but generally the sidewalk is

designed to stay in the public ROW unless there is a topographic reason (trees or elevation) that would require constructing outside of the public ROW. Our sidewalk projects are undertaken following a priority based listing. City Council is aware of the prioritization process.

Craig Hupy, P.E.

Public Services Area Administrator

City of Ann Arbor, Guy C. Larcom City Hall, 301 E. Huron St., 6th Floor, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734.794.6000 (O) 734.994.1816 (F) Internal Extension 43777

chupy@a2gov.org www.a2gov.org

Hi Craig,

I hope all is well with you these days. I don't want to combine personal business with our Treeline working relationship, but I'd like your advice on something that relates to our meeting 3 years ago – the ruptured raw water line in front of our home across from the Water Plant. Can I ask for a bit of your advice or re-direction to another City official?

We're now aware of the plan to install a new sidewalk on our/north side of the street along Sunset between Brooks and Newport. A surveyor was out today, beginning to gather "existing conditions" information. As you know, there's a major raw waterline under that part of our front curbstrip area, and continuing eastward to the pipes coming from the Huron River/pumping station.

Existing Conditions

1. Do you have a sense if the presence of this raw water line and its maintenance/enhancement was considered as the new sidewalk priorities were created? Is it wise to place a new sidewalk on top of/near this essential waterline?
2. Besides the waterline, as I'm sure you hear with all new sidewalks' areas, there are lots of mature trees along Sunset in the potential sidewalk right-of-way, as well as some significant grades/hills and other property improvements (within and just outside the City's street ROW). Many of these elements would be disrupted/destroyed in the process of installing this second sidewalk along Sunset.

Can you give me/us a sense of the priority of this new sidewalk along Sunset? Is it going to happen "no matter what"? Or will there be both fact finding and neighborhood discussions about the potential project with City staff and Council listening to the pros and cons of the project? Is there any chance it might be delayed for years or possibly taken off the list?

Craig, if you're able to address these questions, we would be very grateful. Perhaps a short phone call can answer our questions. Or, if we should contact Mr. Hutchinson or another City staff person, please let us know. Many thanks for your thoughtful consideration.

Email 6

Councilmember Disch,

Thank you for sharing this concern. There are several different issues raised in this post so the issues are broken out to address the concerns raised individually:

- Sidewalk on the south side of the street with no lawn extension – staff agrees that it is desirable to have a lawn extension that buffers the sidewalk from the roadway and this is the City's current practice whenever possible. A lawn extension allows for: separation of the sidewalk from the street; street trees to be planted; snow storage; and placement of underground utilities. This sidewalk predates any of existing staff's time at the City and we are unable to discern why the sidewalk was placed immediately adjacent to the road the way it was.
- Sidewalk on the north side of Sunset – the north side of Sunset is a known gap in the sidewalk network. It's prioritization ranges from highest to mid-low depending on several factors that influence these prioritization rankings. There is a project currently scheduled for construction in 2022 to build sidewalk on the north side from Newport to Brooks. As this project is designed and discussed with the public, the City will look to include a lawn extension in the design wherever possible, while still accounting for other factors such as impact on trees.
- Distracted driving – it is hard to know exactly what caused the motorist to drive onto the sidewalk, though it stands to reason that they were not fully paying attention. Distracted driving is an increasing concern on our roadways across the country and in our community. Infotainment systems on vehicles and smart phones are making us less attentive drivers. This is a difficult thing to correct and enforce and is something that communities and states are struggling with across the country.
- Healthy Streets – City Council amended the fiscal year 2022 budget on May 17, 2021 and included funding for a 2021 Healthy Streets Deployment. This contract for implementation will be brought before Council on June 21, 2021 and, if awarded, a 'neighborhood slow street' will be re-deployed on Sunset some time after July 1.
- Bike lane on Sunset – the newly adopted Transportation Master Plan (aka "Moving Together Towards Vision Zero") identifies Sunset as a proposed "all ages and abilities" bike facility. While this facility has not yet been designed (and may not for a while yet), the idea is to provide a high comfort bicycling facility along Sunset.

I hope you find this information helpful. Feel free to contact staff should you have any follow-up questions.

Thank you,

Venita Harrison, Office Manager

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Dear Mr. Delacourt,

_____ posted this on NextDoor, which I normally don't read and normally wouldn't forward to you, but I'm thinking her concern about the current road-sidewalk configuration may have merit and maybe there is something that can be done about it.

Last weekend there was a very close call at my house [location]. I was working on my fairy garden, on the house side of our retaining wall, my husband and 6 year old grandson were helping me from the sidewalk. We have no extension, so the street is right there. My husband saw a car come to a complete stop at the sign (heading east on Sunset). As she accelerated, the car gained speed rapidly and jumped the curb in the front of my house and continued for down our sidewalk until she regained control over it and missed hitting my grandson by an estimated 2-3 feet!!! She rolled to a stop just beyond my husband. She was clearly surprised by this and answered that she was ok after my husband asked. And then she drove away. She was ok, but we are not! It was horrifying. Honestly, I did not move from my perch for quite some time. I am not writing this to shame the driver, as I'm sure it was a mistake. Although I think it would have been appropriate, and appreciated, if she had stopped to apologize, explain or to see if we were ok. I am writing this to say that a sidewalk on the other side of the street would be a terrible mistake, another one without an extension? Truthfully, I was in favor of last year's Healthy Streets program and had hoped it would continue!! (No debates needed here as it was hashed out last year with many people telling me that they would continue to drive down Sunset to miss the traffic on Miller to get to work) [other resident] has proposed a bike lane on Sunset and I agree with that proposal. I would hope that it would make Sunset safer for bicycles AND pedestrians by creating a bit of a barrier. While I realize that last weekend's near accident was likely not from a driver being in a hurry to get somewhere, the speeding and running through the stop signs is an hourly occurrence in front of my house. (I used to yell at cars as they committed these offenses, but in this day and age, it is not a good idea to do so.) Any suggestions as to who I should call at the city to help get this problem under control?

Lisa Disch | Ward One City Council Representative

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Email 7:

Hello Chris,

My name is [resident], and my family lives on the north side of Sunset. Unfortunately I was unable to make the public meeting last week, but have reviewed the presentation online. I was wondering how open the City is to changing the current sidewalk plan, and was hoping

you could address a few of my issues with the proposed sidewalk on the north side of Sunset:

- The sidewalk doesn't serve anyone but the people who are impacted by construction, who do not want it. It may save people east of Brooks who live on the north side of Sunset from crossing the street (25 mph).
- Has consideration been given to narrowing Sunset to better accommodate a walk without so much impact to residents? It's 25 mph and does not require/utilize the current width for residential parking. New catch basins along the new curb line would be expensive, but so is all the retaining wall required by the walk location at the edge of ROW. In addition, the road is oversized in this area, particularly across the street from the water treatment plant. Very little residential on street parking, certainly not enough to mandate a street with a parking lane on each side. In addition, Sunset was closed last year as part of COVID Healthy Streets; I noticed little to no effect on surrounding traffic volume (this, admittedly, is anecdotal, I'd be interested in seeing the City's data).
- The plans shown in the presentation show a cut retaining wall example. My house, and many on the north side, are located quite a bit below the existing road grade and would require either filling in the entire front yard, or a fill wall with a railing to prevent pedestrians from falling into our front yard. What is the anticipated typical section for yards below existing road elevations?
- Will homeowners be compensated in any way for any plantings, trees, or improvements to their yards that will be lost due to construction? We've put quite a bit of time, energy, and money into flowers/bushes/plantings in our front yard that are slated to be replaced with concrete walk.
- I realize that the goal of the City is 100% sidewalks, but if the City is going to continue in this area please consider placing the walk adjacent to the back of curb to minimize the impact to residents. You can stripe the road if necessary with a parking lane to maintain a preferred clear distance from edge of traveled way. If you put the walk at the edge or 5' off the edge of ROW the impact to existing front yards is immense, and quite negative to families' experience of living in Ann Arbor. Our backyards are already unusable due to how loud M-14 traffic is, but at least we knew that going in. Losing half our front yard would be disappointing.
- You could even stripe a bike/walk lane on the north side of Sunset and save a million dollars. That's a long shot, but I promise you'd get more community support.

Please don't hesitate to call or contact me, I'd be happy to walk the site or discuss my concerns on the phone and am interested in the City's goal and position.

Thank you.