Nixon Corridor Improvement Project
Discussion Summary

Nixon Corridor Improvement Project Public Meeting #1

Date: Thursday, June 7, 2018
Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Location: Clague Middle School, 2616 Nixon Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105
Attendees: Public present: 69; refer to Appendix A for sign-in sheet.
City staff present: 2; Nick Hutchinson, Andrea Wright
Wade Trim staff present: 8; Chris Wall, Micah Hindy, Carmelle Tremblay,
Trude Noble, Matthew Mandryk, Jeremy Curtis, Vaughn Martin,
Shawn Keough

Re: Nixon Corridor Improvement Project

SUMMARY
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’.

Frequently referenced points from the June 7 meeting discussion are synthesized below
into the following topic categories: Project Overview and Construction Impacts,
Vehicular Circulation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, and Other. Though some
comments apply to more than one category, we have attempted to group them in their
most logical fit.

Project Overview and Construction Impacts:

1. What is the distance between the first and last roundabout? (Huron Parkway to
   Barclay Way).

   A: Approximately 1 mile

2. Who decided there was a need for so many roundabouts in such a short stretch
   of roadway? This volume of roundabouts does not seem like an efficient, or safe
   way to get through Nixon Road. Will drivers be able to focus all the way through
   7 roundabouts without losing concentration, resulting in accidents? Has there
   been consideration to add only one or two roundabouts along the corridor?

   A: A traffic study was performed by a consulting engineer, and a decision
   was made based on the results. The final decision considered input from
City staff, the engineering consulting firm who performed the traffic study, and the public (through public engagement opportunities). The roundabout design addresses the three main concerns outlined by all stakeholders: Safety, Non-motorized facilities, & User-delays. The actual number of roundabouts to be included in the final design is still a point of consideration and will be discussed further in future public engagement opportunities.

3. How will the construction impact be minimized throughout the project?

   A: The design will review ways to minimize impacts to trees and properties. Post-Meeting Note: Several factors are used to determine the size of the roundabout, including traffic volumes, maximum vehicle size anticipated, right-of-way available, and desired vehicle speed through the roundabout.

4. Is the city-owned right-of-way sufficient for the concepts presented?

   A: In general, the project will be contained within the public right-of-way, however there are some areas that may fall outside the right-of-way and those agreements will be discussed once the design has progressed.

5. Since the reconstruction of Nixon Road is partially a result of the damage done by construction of the new developers along the corridor, has the City considered a cost-share agreement to repair the road?

   A: Post-Meeting Note: The development agreement included a payment of approximately $1,000,000 from the developer to the City for the construction of the Nixon-Green-Dhu Varren Roundabout but did not include additional funding from the reconstruction of Green Road.

6. The City has recently spent money on the Argonne and Nixon intersection, as well as traffic calming work on Bluett – will all of that be torn up during this project? And if so, what consideration was given to the overall planning of these construction projects in relation to each other?

   A: As the layout of all intersections progress, the impacts will be reviewed and minimized to the extent possible. The potential traffic calming project on Bluett will not be impacted by this project.

7. Will the very large trees at Argonne be protected during this project? Is it possible to move the project west to protect those trees? Please protect the trees!!

   A: The layout of the Argonne intersection is being reviewed to determine tree, grading and other impacts. These impacts will be minimized to the extent possible. (Also see #2 above)

8. Will any of the Nixon Road construction interrupt the flow to Traver Lake (i.e. dry it up)?

   A: No, the construction will not affect Traver Lake.
9. Will the tree berm between the Service Drive and Nixon Road be preserved to keep the buffer for current residents?
   
   **A:** The design will take into account the desire to preserve these trees and will strive to minimize the impacts.

10. What does “minimizing impact” mean and what cost can the average citizen expect from this project? What cost can the city expect?
   
   **A:** A construction cost estimate has not been developed yet. Minimizing impact means the design will attempt to reduce disruption or removal of features currently along the corridor. Post-Meeting Note: The majority of the construction would likely be funded by the City’s Street Millage, as well as utilizing Federal funding and grants. While there is a possibility that there could be a special assessment component for some adjacent property owners, it is too early in the process to determine this yet.

11. Has any prioritization of the different potential intersections for roundabout construction been considered? Is there potential for less than the proposed number of roundabouts?
   
   **A:** A validation of the previous study was recently completed and based on projected volumes the roundabouts identified previously are needed. As the design process moves forward and impacts are reviewed, alternatives will be considered to reduce impacts, while still achieving the goals of the corridor improvement. (Also see #2 above)

12. Has work been done to consider both the existing and proposed utilities that lie underground?
   
   **A:** Existing utilities will be considered throughout the design process. Post-Meeting Note: At each phase of the design, the private utility owners are coordinated with to determine if there are impacts to their facilities and how best to mitigate those impacts (i.e. revision of the design or relocation of utilities).

**Vehicular Circulation:**

1. The roundabouts seem too small – how is the size of the roundabout determined?
   
   **A:** Several factors are used to determine the size of the roundabout, including traffic volumes, maximum vehicle size anticipated, right-of-way available, desired vehicle speed through the roundabout.

2. Will there be more traffic along side streets as a result of drivers trying to avoid all of the roundabouts along Nixon Road? In addition, will the speed limit along Nixon Road be reduced, further encouraging drivers to use side streets?
A: The roundabout concept along Nixon is intended to reduce delays and slow traffic. It will still be more efficient to drive through Nixon Road than to encounter the multiple stop signs and lower speeds along smaller, residential roads. It is unknown at this time whether the speed limit through Nixon Road will be reduced, however the typical speed that is used to design a roundabout ranges between 15 to 25 mph for vehicles traveling through the roundabout.

3. Currently, it appears that all traffic from the new developments along Nixon Road ends up on Plymouth Road and other adjacent roads. Will the design of this corridor help to reduce overall traffic congestion and volume? Has there been a global traffic plan to analyze how to better exit and enter the area, overall?

A: The previous Nixon corridor traffic study analyzed intersections from Plymouth Road to Barclay Way. Based on the results of the study, the roundabout corridor improves operations for motorized vehicles and provides safety benefits and facilities for non-motorized traffic.

4. Bus transit is a very desirable attraction for this neighborhood. How will bus transit be integrated into the design? Will buses be able to pull over without interfering with traffic flow? A roundabout at Barclay Way would provide a bus turn-around and allow convenient bus stops to be placed for the Barclay Way Condos, the new Woodbury Club Apartments and the Toll Brothers Villa Condos.

A: There will not be a loss of bus service along Nixon Road. Bus stops are being reviewed as part of the design process.

5. Could the Barclay Way roundabout be shifted north toward the entrance to the Woodbury Club Apartments and Toll Brothers Villa Condos? This would maximize bus stop options and allow residents to avoid a left turn onto Nixon Road, which is often congested.

A: The final layout of the intersections has not been completed. Final location of the roundabouts will consider bus stop locations, utility impacts, right-of-way, trees, etc.

6. Is the existing north access to the Service Drive going to be closed?

A: Based on the previous corridor study, the north access to the service drive will be closed. The design team will review this intersection prior to finalizing the layout of the corridor.

7. Has this project considered the potential need for more lanes on Nixon Road?

A: Yes, per the traffic study, the roundabout configuration accommodates for future vehicle growth.

8. Could slowing traffic along Nixon Road with the roundabouts hurt its current use as a through corridor? Has any consideration been given to how this change in efficiency could affect the surrounding roads?
A: The roundabouts assist in regulating speeds. Post-Meeting Note: As part of our safety goal, the intent is to reduce speeding through the corridor. The side road vehicle queues and delays will be greatly reduced.

9. Has any consideration been given to using the Barclay Way roundabout as a possible bus turn-about and bus stop location? Has public transit been considered in this project?

A: Bus service will be considered as part of the overall design of the corridor. The design team will work with The Ride to finalize bus stop locations and routing.

10. Turing left onto Nixon from Argonne is incredibly difficult because of its proximity to roundabouts that already exist. Due to the fact cars can flow quickly through roundabouts, there are few breaks in traffic for cars on the surrounding streets to utilize to enter Nixon road. Wouldn’t adding more roundabouts only increase this problem?

A: Based on the results of the traffic study, level of service for the side roads is anticipated to improve upon completion of the corridor. Post-Meeting Note: As well, roundabouts give equal priority to all traffic streams at an intersection, which implies that local traffic will not have to compete with the high traffic flows on Nixon Road for safe entry and exit to residential and commercial property.

11. The cross-street Aurora leads directly into Thurston School. Removing the option to make left turns onto Aurora is concerning. Could a simpler solution solve the projects objectives, such as a traffic light?

A: Post-Meeting Note: The proximity of the Aurora intersection to the Huron Parkway roundabout makes it not suitable for a traffic signal.

12. Due to the high volume of cars during school drop off times, and the multiple schools along this corridor, is it possible to stagger the school start times to accommodate better traffic flow?

A: The Ann Arbor Public Schools would be the appropriate agency to respond on this question. This question will be passed on to them.

13. Did the initial traffic study for the project take into account the 1,000+ new families that will live in the new housing development just north of Argonne? At rush hour, there is already traffic congestion along Nixon Road and Huron Parkway, all the way to Plymouth Road. Will the new roundabouts and population from the new development make this congestion even worse?

A: The traffic study included the current developments to the north. Post-Meeting Note: The study also projected traffic volumes to year 2035.

14. To alleviate traffic, is it possible to extend Georgetown Blvd. to Green Road and Tuebingen Parkway to Omlesaad Drive to alleviate the volume of traffic on Nixon Road?
A: Post-Meeting Note: It is possible that such road extension projects could be considered in the future, however both would require roads to be constructed on what is currently Park land.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation:

1. How has children’s safety been considered during this process? For example, crossing the roundabouts with strollers, or small children walking or biking to school?

   A: Crosswalk placement is important for pedestrian safety, and while the final design has not been completed, this has been considered throughout the entire process. The use of a boulevard, if this option is used, will also allow for splitter islands (pedestrian refuge islands) between lanes of traffic.

2. The Westbury intersection is currently very difficult to cross due to the road grade and sight distance issue for cars coming over the hill. Will this be resolved as a result of this project?

   A: While the detailed design has not been started yet, sight distance issues will be analyzed and resolved to the degree possible to improve the safety of pedestrians and drivers.

3. Are the current “safe routes” to and from school being considered together with this project?

   A: Yes, the City is coordinating with Ann Arbor Public Schools on the design of this project and will take school walking routes into consideration.

4. There are Township-owned properties along the west side of Nixon Road. Will these present difficulties in construction, particularly the continuation of sidewalk along the whole corridor? Can these Township propertied be transferred to the City?

   A: As the design progresses, impacts to these parcels are being considered. In general, sufficient right-of-way already exists to construct the project. Post-Meeting Note: Additional easements from these properties may be desirable, they will likely not be required, and should not be a barrier to an eventual construction project. The City can annex these “Township islands”, but that is a process that is being managed separately.

5. Is there any way to expedite the sidewalk installation on the west side of Nixon Road, where there are currently gaps in the path?

   A: Post-Meeting Note: The sidewalk on the west side of Nixon will be constructed as part of the overall project construction. The design team
will review the need to construct this sidewalk early in the project if it will help to maintain pedestrian movements throughout construction.

6. Walkability is a desirable part of living in the neighborhoods adjacent to this project. Is there any technology or education that can be provided to the younger pedestrians, our students, who are walking to school?

A: The use of crossing guards should still be implemented at crosswalks adjacent to roundabouts near schools. As well, we can coordinate with the Ann Arbor Public Schools to provide roundabout and crosswalk information to parents and students.

7. Has full separation of bike lanes from traffic lanes been considered through boulevard or curb separation?

A: The use of a 4-foot buffer separating vehicle lane and bike lane is being pursued along this corridor. Post-Meeting Note: The design team will also consider a separated bicycle facility.

8. Has full separation of bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic been considered through alternative routes with light auto traffic or available public land? For example: improve Traver Road through the Leslie Park golf course and repurpose Tuebingen Parkway and Omlesaad Drive to allow for a safer bicycle route from downtown to the northeast side of the City.

A: Post-Meeting Note: These alternatives were not considered as part of this project. However, these concepts will be passed on for consideration as the City works on updating the Transportation Plan.

Other:

1. Is the firm who was awarded the design contract for the project the same firm who performed the traffic study? And if so, isn’t that a conflict of interest?

A: OHM Advisors performed the traffic study, while Wade Trim has confirmed the conclusions of the study and is completing the engineering design.

2. To represent the diversity of the community (in particular Barclay Park), can you consider engaging the public in languages other than English (signs and meetings, for example)?

A: Post-Meeting Note: This suggestion is being shared with the City’s Communications Department. The City does offer translation services when requested.

3. Is it possible to have a representative of the project attend board meetings?

A: Yes. Please contact Chris Wall or Nick Hutchinson with requests to attend a board meeting.
4. At the Aurora intersection, the vegetation in the medians is often unkept. Are there plans from the city to better maintain the medians, should a boulevard be constructed along the entire Nixon corridor?

A: If the boulevard option becomes the preferred design option, further discussion on how to maintain the landscaping will occur. This option will not be pursued unless a maintenance plan has been developed.

5. Are there any examples of this many roundabouts in such a similar distance?

A: Other similar locations have not been researched but can be. Each roundabout along the corridor acts as an independent intersection, similar to signalized intersections and as such, driver behavior will primarily focus on maneuvering through each intersection. Post-Meeting Note: Carmel, Indiana, Avon, Colorado, Golden, Colorado, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, and Sedona, Arizona are example Cities where multiple roundabouts have been constructed in a relatively small area.

6. Has a global study been done of the proposed changes to Ann Arbor roadways? There are multiple initiatives happening simultaneously and there seems to be no discussion of total integration of the different efforts.

A: Post-Meeting Note: The City is currently beginning to work on an update of the Transportation Plan. More information on this effort will be available soon.

7. Has a consistent standard for signs at roundabouts been considered? The inconsistency at the existing ones is confusing. At the Huron Parkway and Nixon Road roundabout, the volume of signage is often confusing and distracting for drivers. The reduced signage at the Dhu Varren and Green intersections are much easier to understand.

A: This will be reviewed by City staff, and the signage include in the proposed roundabouts will be consistent.

8. Is the City adequately recognizing the stream of tax revenue it should receive from the developers in the area? This revenue should be used for relevant infrastructure in the area (sewer, storm water, water main, etc).

9. As a pedestrian who walks from Aurora to Kroger, I have seen great improvement in accessibility and motorist concern for pedestrians after the installation of the existing roundabouts. Aurora to Nixon turning left is a difficult lane to cross, so I use Prairie instead for the more convenient time in traffic breaks.
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Feedback Forms & Email Summary
June 7th to June 20th, 2018

Note: The following text has been prepared from feedback forms and emails provided by attendees and other participants of the June 7th, 2018 Public Meeting #1. Text in italics represents writing that was unclear.

Feedback Forms:

1. Dear Planners,
   The roundabouts being considered at Argonne should not be built if it would require the destruction of the land mark trees on the east side of Nixon. This is very important.
   Please consider a stop light or other signal at the entrance to Clague from Nixon. Thank you
2. I realize this is early on. However, would like to see bus transit is integrated into the schematics now. It’s really hard to visualize where a bus would stop on what I have seen tonight. PLEASE don’t make bus access worse. I live at the Traver Lakes Condos and made that decision partially on the bus service.
3. - Please no more “roundabouts”
   - Use traffic lights and stop signs.
   - “Minimum impact”
   - Long term maintenance consideration… too expensive.
4. - There is a great deal of traffic entering and exiting Aurora (Thurston Elementary) is at the end of this street. If one cannot make a left turn, then there needs to be a roundabout. Re-routing to Bluett will not work due to large volume of traffic that pre-exists there during same timeframes.
   - Please make sure that any changes are congruent with, and take into consideration, the other changes in the neighborhood- including safe routes to schools and the Bluett traffic calming measures (if approved).
   - I am not opposed to roundabouts; however, I do think there are too many proposed for this short space and especially considered the ‘rise’ in traffic when all the houses and condos are filled with people. People in this town don’t typically yield and take turns at/in roundabouts. They approach as if they have a green light.
   - P.s. I agree that Green and Plymouth are already nightmares.
5. – Great to see the plan for sidewalk on west side of Nixon.
   - Seven roundabouts seems too many.
   - Overall, I do like the current two roundabouts.
6. Particularly for boulevard option, Consider YIELD signs at minor entry points, the signage would say “YIELD” “Right Turn Only”
7. Important to consider a roundabout at Aurora street as well! Huge amount of traffic because of Thurston Elementary School. Parents dropping off or picking up kids. Traffic volumes create huge problems for us as we try to enter Nixon (turn left on it) from Aurora.
8. Consider the impact of Toll Brothers!!!! 7 roundabouts in a mile? Has ANY other city EVER done … a “pollution”? 
   Need to have bike lane along entire corridor. Without bike lanes, bikes will impede traffic on roadway and and/or will endanger pedestrians on sidewalk.
9. If not a roundabout, we need something at Argonne. Very busy and unsafe now. Roundabout is great- works well.
10. I strongly favor the boulevard approach with an additional five roundabouts. Don’t Please/Never use slope as Nixon moves down toward Argonne.
11. Boulevard option is great! Also: need bus shelters at Nixon and Dhu Varren, lots of freezing people. AATA should be brought in at planning phase so shelters can be planned in the design phase.
12. This is not related to the traffic sheet design- but I hope it will be passes along to the appropriate department: is there any way the trees planted alongside the streets can be more mature (i.e. larger) –the spindly little saplings that are usually planted will not yield any shade for decades and they will not with stand drought.
13. PSA video on how to use roundabouts
14. Show us another place where there are 7 roundabouts within 1.2 miles corridor- how does it work?
15. - Please work with Logan School. Clague middle school and Future daycare center staff to stagger when schools begin and end.
   - Please consider restricting parents to where and when they can drop off children. We’re all encouraged to “walk” these days to school. Children don’t have to be delivered door to door.
   - Are there any thoughts of incorporating those houses on the west side of Nixon still under township into Ann Arbor City?
   - Ant consideration to connect Woodbury, Barday and Northstar housing units so that Nixon will not be the only way to go north and south?
   - There is no way for the people to go through aurora to go to Thurston as it stands. Would there be possible to cut through the greenery to have access the service drive on Nixon across the street from Sandalwoods.
   - Please put the greenway between the bike lane and the auto lane on both ways so that the bike lane would be next to the pedestrian path. This is to protect bikes from the cars.
16. I’m curious about how the traffic study was done from Nixon when there is still an unknown amount of traffic that will be added to Nixon from the Toll bros construction at green/ Dhu Varren and Nixon and smallest construction north of M-14 Bridge. How can this take into consideration? Smaller concern: I see nothing describing the signage that each roundabout would need or have. Are there any plans showing this?
17. -5 oak trees at Argonne/Nixon have to be spaced. How? 
   -Why no circle at Aurora, perhaps instead of Sandalwood north? 
   -Can Clague drive be integrated into Traver circle?
- Improve speed and spacing controls: Move or add reduced speed sign closer to circle entrance, include signs to create space between cars to enable merging, Add speed humps to encourage speed at circle entrance

18. - Boulevard option WAY better!!!- looks classy and safer.
- Overall great project- much needed for safety, as people are SPEEDING through this area.

19. I live off the residential “service road” of Nixon road. Just wanted to voice residential concerns:
  - [Group] of trees separating residential and traffic Nixon road provides us with visual and sound shield from traffic. Wanted to make sure no plan to level this out.
  - Expect more traffic on residential Nixon road coming off Aurora to get to roundabout. Currently our road has no speed limit sign, will need a speed limit sign +/- speed humps.

20. The roundabout proposed for Argonne should not be built if it requires impacting the 5 large landmark oak trees north and south of Argonne/Nixon interchange. Since this is only a “T” and not a cross- south bound traffic is not affected. North bound traffic requires cars exiting Argonne wait for a brake. Loss of these trees would be devastating to the entire Ward I and II residents.

21. Sidewalks on north side of Dhu Varren? Why not do now?

Emails:

1. Three comments on the planned Nixon Corridor Improvements:

   **First**, current traffic studies may not have taken into account the 1,000 new families that will be living in the new housing developments off Nixon Rd. north of Argonne Ct.

   My wife, who works in town for the University, tells me that, even with current traffic loads, during evening rush hour Nixon Rd. gets backed up all along Huron Pkwy. south of the Nixon Rd./Huron Pkwy. roundabout all the way back to Plymouth Rd. The seven roundabouts will slow traffic even more, and with more vehicles.

   **Second**, part of a solution (but probably politically impractical) would be to open up Georgetown Blvd. at the north end to Green Rd. and to open up Tuebingen Pkwy. to Omlesaad Dr. to access Dhu Varren Rd. By providing north-south corridors through these subdivisions, pressure would be taken off Nixon Rd.

   **Third**, I would urge that signage be limited in the new roundabouts. The country of France has extensive experience with roundabouts, as you likely are aware. The only roundabout signage in France are, first, a circular diagram naming all the spokes off the roundabout, and second, a “Yield” sign stating either “Vous n’avez pas la priorite” or “Cedez le passage.” That is all that is needed, and all a driver has time to absorb.
The Huron Pkwy./Nixon Rd. roundabout has way too much signage, so that drivers are distracted.

The roundabout at Dhu Varren and Green Roads is much better.

2. The attached was focused on pedestrian and bicycles. While I suggest that items such as the Tuebingen Parkway and Omlesaad Drive interconnection and the connection of the North end of Georgetown Blvd to Cedarbrook would not be considered, I think as a part of an overall plan the might well be things to consider. However, I think just the biking and pedestrian improvements I suggest would be a great supplement to the Nixon road plans discussed yesterday.

In any event, I think it is extremely difficult to efficiently address the traffic issues while constraining yourself to the Nixon Corridor.

3. The idea of seven roundabouts on Nixon Rd should be reconsidered and abandoned unless the goal is to get in the Guinness Book of Records for the maximum number of roundabouts in a one-mile segment of road. Although each roundabout may be justifiable on an individual basis, they are not from a systems standpoint. Understand that a completed project of this type would get a lot of public and press attention -- but not in a good way.

Consider human factors from a driver's standpoint in navigating this section of road. Comments were made on how a good driver would handle each roundabout separately; however, not everyone is a good driver. The focus and concentration required to navigate seven roundabouts in succession will likely prove difficult for a substantial number of drivers. The dreaded Roundabout Corridor may cause many drivers to seek alternative routes, straining traffic systems elsewhere.

Prioritize the need for roundabouts. Consider the effect of adding only one (or two at the maximum).

When evaluating the Barclay Way roundabout, factor in the effect on public transportation. Such a roundabout would provide a bus turn-around and allow placement of bus stops convenient to the Barclay Way Condos, the new Woodbury Club Apartments, and the new Toll Brothers Villa Condos. This would help get traffic off busy roads in the area.

If feasible, explore the possibility of moving the Barclay Way roundabout north near the entrance to the Woodbury Club Apartments and the planned (Phase 2) north entrance of the Toll Brothers Villa Condos on Nixon Rd. This would maximize bus stop options and allow ways for both Woodbury Club Apartment residents and Barclay Way Condo residents to avoid a left turn onto a congested Nixon Rd in the morning.