

## Lower Town Mobility Study – Public Meeting 4

9/23/21

### Meeting Notes

#### Attendees

- Eric Dryer (OHM)
- Steve Loveland (OHM)
- Steve Dearing (OHM)
- Luke Liu (Ann Arbor)
- Amelia
- Anne Bannister
- Barbara Lucas
- Glenn Hieber
- Jan Adams-Watson
- Jeff Hayner
- John
- Katherine
- KJMC
- Lester Wyborny
- Molly Boren
- Sadira
- Tom Stulberg
- Robert Klingler
- Lidia Pomana
- Chris F
- Ann Lund

#### Questions or Comments with Team Responses

- There is a need to differentiate between local traffic and commuter traffic. Changes in mode are need not just for local traffic.
  - Thanks for the comment, Councilmember. Data shows that approximately 55% of overall traffic in the study area are from 'pass by' trips. Travel demand management strategies including this group are important.
- Is the ramp area by the Bridge ROW or DTE owned property?
  - Not sure who exactly owns this property, but the project team will look into it.
- You looked at bike lanes, but did you consider upgrading the bike lanes that are there? I'm thinking of the treatment the city did on Plymouth.
  - Some area where buffered bike lanes have been added in the study area. Plan is also recommending additional bike lane connections.
- Being that lots of traffic is Pass-through, and incentives are being considered for things like reduced parking, how about incentives for grocery stores/hardware stores, etc. to locate in Lower Town so people can walk or bike to them instead of drive out of the area?
  - We've heard the discussion that people would like to see more walkable businesses. More than half of all trips are pass through trips from commuters. Some new parking assets in the new developments as well.
  - No detailed recommendation related to land use changes and engineering staff will have continued conversations with planning staff.
- I have serious concerns about a roundabout at Pontiac trail -Barton. I'm 3 houses from Barton on Pontiac trail. I'll never be able to back out of driveway if no red light. Everyone near me would have same problem.
  - The mini roundabout is the recommendation of the consultant team, but is not the recommendation of the City.
- Speed limits for Division
  - Speed is only part of the equation and other design changes are needed to reduce conflict points and use geometry to control speeds. This will help reduce the number of crashes.

- What's the timing around rethinking the Barton/M-14 interchange?
  - Not sure when construction would happen, but the study of the interchange is happening now.
  - MDOIT has not released timing but they have released drawings for it.
- Have you thought about encouraging Barton traffic to travel down Pontiac Trail instead of traveling further down Barton rd past the school to reduce the congestion by the school?
  - Part of this study included a travel demand model. This showed that a large portion of M-14 traffic is going to Plymouth along Barton to access UM North Campus. It would be very difficult to change this travel pattern for these trips.
- Could the biking lanes be close to the curb (at Pontiac Trail/Moore/Longshore roundabout), separated from traffic by parking spaces, instead of having parking be close to the curb?
  - It's an option but it has not been explored in detail.
- With respect to vehicle speeds on Traver, I think that a speed table just west of Barton near the intersection of Barton to reduce vehicle speed near the school would be a good idea. The idea of one sidewalk in the roadway which narrows the roadway, but still allows car parking on the non-sidewalk would also help to reduce vehicle speed. Finally, the use of student drop-off on Traver near Barton should be eliminated somehow.
  - A speed table at John R Woods would be difficult due to the grade changes. Enhanced ped crossings at this intersection are recommended.
- Has another access point from the highway been considered, towards Pontiac Tr/Dhu Varren, to divert some of that heavy highway traffic away from Barton Dr?
  - Some years ago the Northeast Study was completed that looked at freeway access to the northern arc of Ann Arbor. Looked at the existing interchanges and should there be others. There was no recommendation for a new interchange to M-14 due to the challenges with M-14/US-23 junction.
  - MDOIT has said that the geometry of adding a new on/off ramp - say to allow traffic on/off Nixon/M14 - will not work.
- You were going to mention buffered bike lanes. My specific question was about possibly making the bike lanes on Pontiac buffered, to make some room for when people put trash cans there, as well as narrowing those very wide lanes on Pontiac.
  - Currently not room to add buffered bike lanes; would require the roadway to be widened per the city standards.
- What happens next now that you have identified the solutions you want?
  - When the city receives the final set of recommendations, they will be screened for their feasibility for construction. Final recommendations will be looking at opportunities to fund and implement each project.
  - Smaller projects can be implemented quicker, larger projects will need more time to design and construct.
- Have you considered forcing student drop-off on Traver near Barton to elsewhere?
  - Recommendation to add a loading and unloading zone to the school on the north side of the property and an upgrade the staff parking lot with defined aisles and stalls. This is an idea that was floated to the school but was not accepted by the school or the city.
    - To Lester's point, at the last meeting didn't we talk about student pick-up and drop-off moving to AAPS property off Taylor Street?
    - Oh my... please! Do not encourage any new drop off circle, that is out of control. This is not a magnet school, it's a neighborhood school. If parents don't like the

- drop off they can remain in their AAPS districted school. [Actually it is a K-8 magnet school.]
- Many students who attend STEAM are from out of the neighborhood!
  - There's no way that proposed drop off loop would ever work in the mornings with the rest of the traffic in this intersection area.
  - AAPS told the public that drop off loop would be too close to the Pontiac Trail and Barton intersection.
    - Actually, the proposed driveway to Pontiac Trail is further from Barton than the existing intersection of Starwick is to Barton.
  - Does this team think it is practical at that location? It is definitely needed.
    - The OHM team believes that the location is practical.
  - Well, rather than create another drop-off, just eliminate drop-off at Traver to eliminate congestion at that intersection of Traver and Barton.
- Are considerations given to the effect these road geometry changes potentially have on storm water management?
    - Not at this point, but there will be space for treatments that will be explored in the implementation phase.
  - Can you share all the recommendations that you made to the school district?
    - There is a section in the Road Safety Audit and a powerpoint presentation that contains all of the recommendations related to the school.
  - Parking and drop off at STEAM school is split by grades. What does AAPS like if they do not like proposed loading zone?
    - We will need to revisit our recommendations for the school and provide a priority recommendation for them to implement.
    - Some recommendations were on site for school while others deal with drop offs and picks up, signage, and the loading zone.
  - Issues with stormwater runoff from school due to limited storm drains. Some areas with ADA ramps around town have had stormwater issues recently due to changes in geometry. Are we creating harmful conditions for stormwater to address mobility concerns?
    - Thank you OHM and City Staff - Luke Liu and all. CM Hayner is making an excellent point about the stormwater impact of the geometry changes. Solving one problem and creating another. Unintended consequences.
  - There is currently a left turn prohibition for south bound Pontiac turning onto Starwick, except for buses. Any chance we could consider allowing cyclists make that turn?
    - According to the vehicle code, cyclists on street must follow traffic rules of vehicles. The traffic control order would need to be edited to allow for that movement legally.
    - Idea is to allow cyclists to have a safer route through the area to North Campus.
      - Ken, you are one of the few who would notice or follow that rule, that's why I love you. I agree we should exempt bikes from that it's a safer route.
  - Did we come up with a better solution to the S bound bike lanes that end at Pontiac Trail/Longshore?
    - Looking at changing Moore/Swift to one lane and turning the other lane into a protected bike lane.

## Comments from Community Members

- Great presentation! In the future, it would be helpful to have approximate costs vs. public safety priority of these recommendations. I love the under the south side of the Broadway Bridge connector!
- Concur: "I love the under the south side of the Broadway Bridge connector!" Not a Question, just a comment.
- Continuing on the question above, the old gas station next to the Cafe could be an amenity that the community could use instead of having to drive out of town.
- Please advocate for removal of obstructions to developing spaces such as that old gas station!
- The stores has to go somewhere or be more honest about pedestrian choices for those who live here. This is entirely too aggressive.
- Remember the Lowertown "Mixed Use Urban Village" that was taken from us when the current plan was approved. Let that memory inform us at the polls next year.
- I would add Traver and Barton as a high congestion intersection, because of the nearby school which adds kids into the mix and the general practice now to allow Traver road as a drop-off for out-of-neighborhood kids.
- The bump out has been fantastic for slowing cars across the turn and stopping them from jumping the curb. So much safer to cross. Cars actually stop before turning right now.
- I worry it would be very dangerous for residents to back out of their driveways with a roundabout.
- As a cyclist who's biked a lot in Europe and through the roundabouts in Ann Arbor, there's no problem with cyclists in roundabouts that isn't worse with the existing layout. People need to remember that roundabouts force everyone to slow to a safe speed that's very comfortable for biking.
- In general, I would love to see us shift away from painted on bike lanes and move towards dedicated biking paths for riders of all abilities/ages.
- Speed limit down Division is too high. People tend to go ~5 mph faster than the speed limit. Please add the "This is your speed" signs that give people feedback on their speed. I agree that changing the geometry will help, but until then, we need the lower speed limit with biofeedback signs there.
  - In a subsequent part of the presentation, a proposed location on Division for a radar speed sign was pointed out.
- As you're pointing out, the problem is the high speeds at Broadway/Beakes/Division. But that's a general problem in Ann Arbor - so much dangerous speeding.
- As long as these geometries (bump outs etc) don't have a negative influence on the streets function of storm water management. I have been observing this around town lately with all the rain.
- If you are congesting the bridge, Division should be more addressed more honestly. Crashes happen. The issue is City Hall glutting known speed zones. Retain Ward 1 assets. People are watching this.
- I would like to see the lights timed on Plymouth into town so you don't have to stop at Moore and Pontiac Trail. Plymouth Road from Barton to Moore is very rough. You need a lot of space for parking lane and bike lane on Pontiac Trail going North to put the snow.
- The red light to turn right onto Broadway from Pontiac Trail (Swift St?) is extremely long. I would like to see it cycle faster for short times so traffic can get through.
- I'd second Robert's point here. For a time we had a shorter cycle there, but it's gone back to the really long cycle times again, even though there are usually sizable gaps most of the time. Maybe a cycle timing that changes at peak times?
- The timing does need to be revisited, I agree. The No Turn On Red at midnight is a challenge for folks, can that be automated?
- Please keep left turn from Division to Beakes. Sidewalk could be contoured better.

- Mini roundabout on Pontiac Trail. My God
- I favor roundabouts but get the construction done before Sept 1.
- The city seems to have removed that south-bound radar speed sign (formerly at Manor).
- BTW, the staff at Rudolph Steiner High School, on Pontiac North of Barton, has started the process to get a school speed zone put in there.
- Boondoggles like this are supposed to be expensive.
- I hope AAATA might help pay for the reinstallation of the bus stop amenities on Plymouth Road.
- I hear you Glenn Hieber! City staff insisted on hiring OHM Advisors for this ~\$600,000 analysis of all the possibilities.
- This is culpable overkill, seemingly for the purposes of enabling the know showroom kleptocrats caught on their mark. I have not heard one issue commensurate with any of these ambitions. Not one.
- Respect the area. Bring a plan that is in the City's interest. Do we need to recharter Lower-town? The City merged it during the last civil war. Respect the ancient hallowed area and enable metropolate somewhere else. You will feel better about yourselves. Seriously.
- A recurring question from the Arrowwood co-ops is whether they need or can have a traffic signal at Arrowwood Trail and Pontiac Trail?
- I greatly support your efforts to make this a safer, less stressful area for pedestrians and bicyclists. THANK YOU! I hope much of it can happen soon—it is so badly needed.
- That is currently a dangerous location for bikes that want to go either destination thank you.