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MINUTES
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN ADVISORY GROUP
Remote Participation
April 27, 2022 – 3:00 p.m.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Advisory Group meeting was held remotely on Wednesday, April 27, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Chairman Craig Niedermaier.

Members Present:

Chairman Craig Niedermaier
Stephen Sanders
Brian Lee
Peggy Reins

Staff Present:

Nathan Bruemmer, Staff Liaison
Tom Powers, Village Engineer
Nick Zakula, Police
Andrew Vitale, GIS Coordinator
Katie Schneider, Community Engagement Coordinator
Kathy Thake, Deputy Village Manager

Also Present

Tim Gustafson, Epstein
Jim Yuratovac, Thomas Engineering
Ramon Prieto, Resident

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Craig Niedermaier, seconded by Group Member Peggy Reins, moved to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022, meeting; on voice vote all concurred.

New Business

I. Police Accidents Report

Nick Zakula of the Niles Police Department presented a report of all pedestrian-involved crashes since the last BPAG meeting. They were as follows:

- March 24th, 8:36 PM at the 9100 block of Golf Rd. The vehicle was traveling westbound on Golf and a pedestrian stepped out in front of the vehicle in the roadway. The pedestrian was transported to Lutheran General with non-life

threatening injuries. The pedestrian was cited for walking on a highway, the driver was cited for a suspended registration.

- April 1, 3:30 PM at Touhy and Milwaukee. A pedal cyclist was traveling westbound on Touhy, as was the driver, the driver changed lanes and struck the cyclist. The cyclist refused any medical treatment, and the driver took off so it's technically a hit and run.
- April 18th, 7:47 AM at Caldwell and Oakton. A pedestrian was walking northbound on the sidewalk in front of Barnaby's and a driver turning left into the Barnaby's parking lot struck the pedestrian. The driver was cited for failure to yield to a pedestrian.

Group Member Steve Sanders asked if it was common to cite a pedestrian for crossing not on a sidewalk and expressed his concern for citing a pedestrian for walking. Mr. Zakula said it depends on the investigation, but in this case it's because he was walking on a four lane highway outside of a crosswalk or light. Group Member Sanders also asked if there was any way for Niles Police create an explainer guiding cyclists about what to do if they're involved in an accident. Mr. Zakula said they're obligated to follow the rules of the road, and everyone is encouraged to make a crash report. Group Member Sanders said cyclists might not be aware of the rules of the road, and that this could be a good teaching moment. He said Active Trans or Ride Illinois might have some resources he could forward to the Police Department.

Chairman Niedermaier asked if any of those accidents seem out of the ordinary. Mr. Zakula said we know about the issues on Golf Rd, which has heavy traffic and a decent amount of foot traffic. It's encouraged that everyone uses the crosswalks up there. For the Touhy accident he said people sometimes forget that bikers can take a lane. The Barnaby's one seemed like an anomaly.

II. Draft Bike and Pedestrian Plan Presentation

Tim Gustafson, Epstein, gave an overview of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan Update in its draft state, going over the highlights of the plan as well as how it is structured. The plan is broken into five main sections: overview, design guidelines, proposed pedestrian and bicycle network, policy & program recommendations and funding & implementation. Performance measures are at the very front of the plan, with seven main performance measures for the Village to track its progress. The design guidelines section is broken into three major categories: off-street, on-street and intersections. Gustafson highlighted design treatments that don't currently exist in the Village today. Next, he went over the capital program, which calls for \$43 million in total improvements. The proposed network is broken into a series of maps, showing the walking network, bicycling network, and intersection improvements. Each map has an accompanying table breaking down what is being proposed. Gustafson gave details about the proposed shared use path network encircling the majority of Maryhill cemetery. The intersection improvements are broken down into three major categories: brand new signalized intersections, improvements recommended at intersections that are already signalized, and minor improvements. The signal improvements should be swept into the scope of work for corridor improvements.

Next Gustafson went into the non-capital recommendations. These recommendations include a strengthened development review that considers bike/ped infrastructure, having a staff liaison for Safe Routes to School, applying to one SRTS grant per

cycle, fostering a general Niles bike/ped culture, getting an indoor bike recreation facility, regional coordination, updating the sidewalk ordinance, and further developing the sidewalk marking and maintenance policy. The next section covered funding and phasing. The plan recommends looking at funding in three phases, the first two being five-year phases, and the third being a nine-year period. Gustafson presented maps showing what sections of the network are recommended in each five-year phase.

Chairman Niedermaier raised a concern about bike/ped planning at Golf Mill, Gustafson confirmed that the plan includes a recommendation requiring a circulation study for large scale redevelopments. Moving on, Gustafson presented a breakdown of cost by infrastructure type and by phase. Last, he recapped where we are in the overall process. Group Member Peggy Reins asked about a final plan open house. Gustafson said the BPAG had wanted to do some sort of party or event in the spring celebrating the bike plan. Reins said that discussing the purpose of the event is important as a final plan open house is more for generating enthusiasm than receiving feedback. Gustafson envisions the event as being more for generating enthusiasm and excitement versus reviewing the merits of the recommendations themselves. There was some discussion about the Safety Town kit depicted on the last slide of the presentation, and how it could be utilized for future events. Group Member Reins asked about details for reviewing the draft plan. Gustafson said the plan will be distributed at the end of the week, and the BPAG will have two weeks to review and submit comments. At the next BPAG meeting, Gustafson is hoping to get a recommendation to approve the plan. Reins asked whether it's important for our launch party to happen before the June Village Board meeting or after. Gustafson said that would be up to BPAG. There was some discussion about finding an event to partner with for the launch party. Chairman Niedermaier suggested one of the music/movies in the park events. The group seemed to think that would be good. The group was instructed to brainstorm what would make an event successful before the next BPAG meeting.

III. Melvina Avenue Improvements

James Yuratovac of Thomas Engineering presented on the Village's proposed improvements on Melvina Avenue. The project includes the replacement of a water main, the widening of Melvina to three lanes from Touhy to Gross Point. Dual left turn lanes will be provided at Melvina and Touhy. As for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, an 8' shared-use path is being proposed on the east side of the road, and the sidewalk will be replaced along the west side of the road. Some things to note: because of the widened radii at Melvina and Touhy to make vehicle turning movements easier, about 30' will be added for the pedestrian crossing on Melvina, and the crossing at Touhy will be about 10' longer. Greenspace will also be increased along the corridor on both sides of the paths and sidewalks. Group Member Sanders noted that on the south end of the Target driveway, there is no stop sign for northbound traffic, and asked if that will be an issue for users of the shared use path. Mr. Yuratovac said based on the traffic conditions they're not able to add a stop sign on the northbound lane. Motor vehicles will still need to yield the right of way to pedestrians and cyclists, but perhaps a yield sign should be added. Village Engineer Tom Powers said we should probably add stop signs on the trail.

Intersection number 3 on the presentation will be looked at as a possible signalized intersection depending on future redevelopment in the area. Mr. Powers said he wouldn't be opposed to adding flashing beacons at that intersection until it becomes signalized. The Gross Point/Melvina intersection will largely be staying the same except for an increased radii on the southwest corner. There had been discussion about making that intersection a three-way stop. Mr. Yuratovac said they had looked at that and didn't really see a gain from a traffic perspective. Chairman Niedermaier felt that restricting parking near that intersection would be helpful. Group Member Reins said that slowing down traffic at that intersection would be helpful to pedestrians and cyclists, and noted that Gross Point Rd is included in the draft plan for bicycle improvements. Going back to the Touhy/Melvina intersection, Mr. Yuratovac noted that the three existing crosswalks will be maintained. Chairman Niedermaier said there is minimal beautification for the project. Mr. Yuratovac said specific landscaping will be shown at a later stage, but they are limited by how much they can expand into Target's parking lot.

IV. RTA Access to Transit Grant Opportunities

Village Engineer Tom Powers stated that the RTA's Access to Transit call for applications is open. The Village has been successful in getting grant money through this program before, most recently for the installation of sidewalks on Golf Rd. Key considerations for this program are that it has to connect to transit, and they look for things like sidewalk infill, improving safety, biking access to transit stations, etc. You can apply for up to \$1 million, and that money can be used for construction or engineering. The signal project at Monroe and Milwaukee could be a good contender for the grant as we have money in the budget for it currently, making it eligible for construction. The other opportunity that has some potential would be installing a sidewalk or shared use path along the south side of Dempster from Milwaukee to Cumberland. This goes from the Pace stop and connects back to the sidewalk network in the Village. We could only apply for engineering for that project. This corner will have two Pace Pulse stops with the proposed Dempster line moving forward. It also connects to Maine East High School. The draft bike plan calls for a shared use path on the south side of Dempster, and getting an easement from the cemetery could be difficult. If the Village can't get an easement or land we'd have to scale the scope back to a sidewalk. Group Member Sanders said a sidewalk would be better than having nothing. There was extended discussion about the legalities involving acquiring land from cemeteries.

Chairman Niedermaier asked Tom Powers if he was looking for a recommendation from the group for this item, and which project would provide more "bang for our buck." Mr. Powers said he felt Monroe might be a harder sell, and that Dempster might have a better chance of winning. Group Member Sanders noted that the Pulse line does not stop at Monroe, only the 270 route, which is hourly. Mr. Powers said ridership is something that is taken into account for this grant opportunity. Group Member Reins said she sees many people at the bus shelters at Dempster and Milwaukee, and that even just pedestrian improvements there would have a really big impact. Group Member Sanders agreed that the impact on Dempster would be much bigger than at Milwaukee and Monroe. Chairman Niedermaier said we have to weigh getting more money for the Monroe project, versus the higher impact of the Dempster project. Tim Gustafson said doing a capacity analysis on Dempster to see if they really need two right turn lanes could free up even more space. Group Member Reins

said she didn't feel the light at Monroe was a good fit for the program. Group Member Sanders said that value to community is more impactful for the Dempster project, and that it connects to a high school that a lot of kids in the Village go to. Mr. Powers agreed. Chairman Niedermaier says it feels like there is consensus among the group that the value lies in the Dempster project. Mr. Powers said the timing could work out where we get funding for Phase 1, and then by the time it's ready for construction we could get funding for that through the same program. After a bit more discussion, the group agreed we should pursue grant funding for a side path or sidewalk on Dempster.

Other Discussion

There was a brief conversation regarding the next meeting, which will be held in-person to discuss sidewalk infill on Jarvis and Fargo to give some residents an opportunity to discuss their concerns about the project.

Comments from the Public

None.

Next Meeting

May 23, 2022

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Group Member Sanders, seconded by Group Member Reins; all concurred and the meeting adjourned at 5:01 PM.

Nathan Bruemmer
Staff Liaison