



HDC Transportation Committee Meeting March 9, 2021, via Zoom meeting

Transportation members seated: Chair: Kevin Gallatin; Vice Chair: Lynn Varco; Secretary: Peter Butler; Committee Members: Michelle Doyle, Mat Hollinshead, Jim Winterer, Sally Bauer, Chico Hathaway & Kevin Pittelko. **Absent:** none

Others present (excluding presenters): HDC Executive Director Kathy Carruth, Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega, Ken Iosso (Aide to Commissioner Ortega), Andy Flamm (alternate not seated), Jennifer Froth and Nick Peterson.

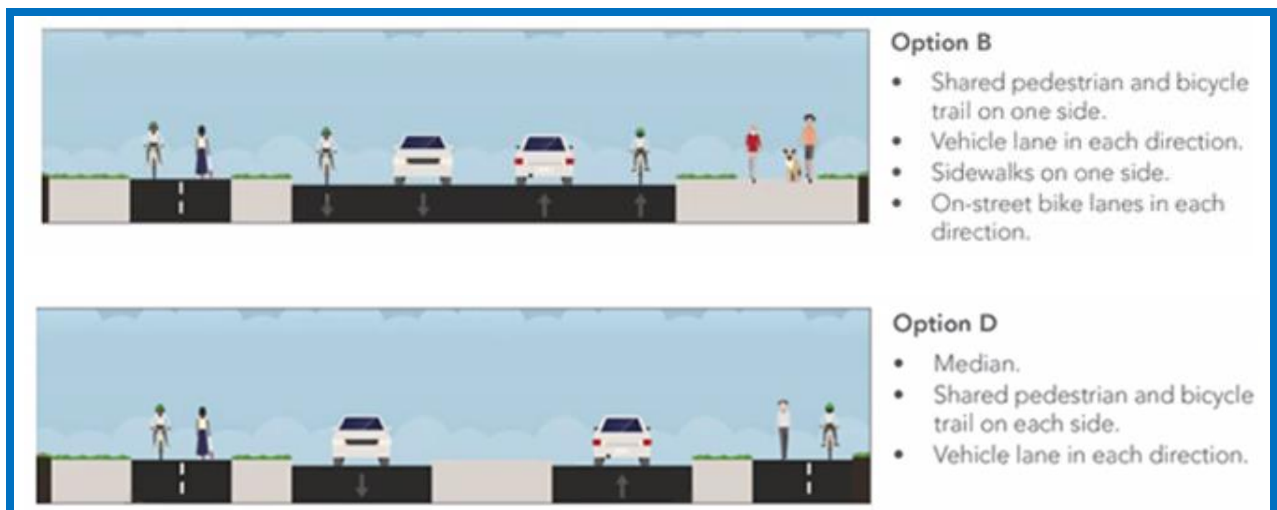
Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Prior Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2021, meeting minutes approved with a reference to 2020 corrected to 2021.

Lexington Parkway Phase II – Tom Holmes (Design Engineer – Ramsey County Public Works), Nick Fischer (Project Manager – Ramsey County Public Works), Larry Poppler (Project Engineer – TKDA, Inc.) & Kevin Pittelko (Registered Engineer – TKDA, Inc.)

The presentation focused mostly on design options for the new Montreal & Elway intersection but began with a brief update:

- No change in construction schedule, which begins this time next year.
- The survey with 196 respondents showed 80% support for the project's overall design criteria and strong support for a single traffic lane in each direction.
- No single option received a majority, but Option B (30%) and Option D (45%) offer off-road bike & pedestrian facilities:



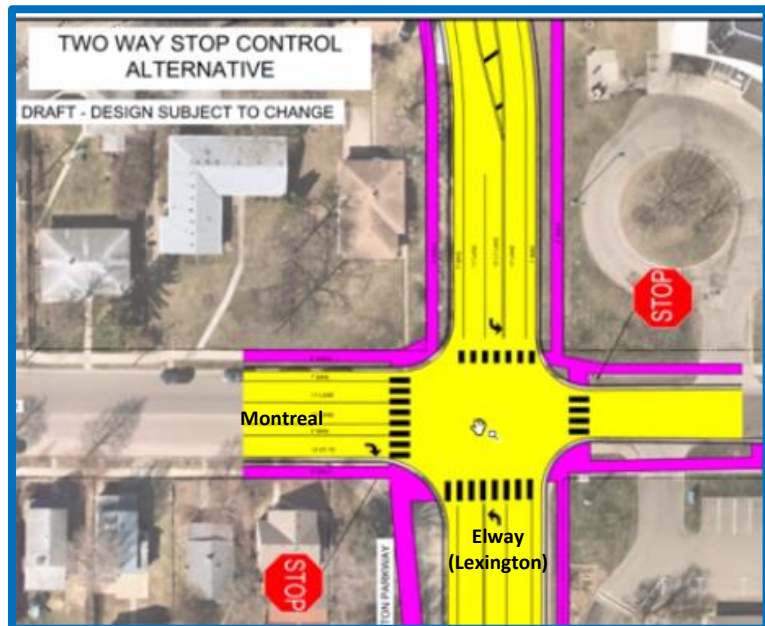


The project team developed five intersection designs for Montreal & Elway but only three – two-way stop, roundabout and mini-roundabout – are under consideration given projected traffic levels and safety issues.

Intersection	Tradeoffs	Carried forward?
Traffic signal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected traffic levels do not call for a traffic signal 	✗
Four-way stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates safe bicycle and pedestrian connections Minimal intersection footprint Will result in inefficient traffic operations 	✗
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate traffic flow 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal intersection footprint Uncontrolled east-west crossings 	
Roundabout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates safe bicycle and pedestrian connections Adequate traffic flow Larger intersection footprint has additional property impacts 	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates safe bicycle and pedestrian connections 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller intersection footprint than the roundabout May present traffic flow issues for trucks 	
Mini roundabout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller intersection footprint than the roundabout May present traffic flow issues for trucks 	✓

Key points:

- Traffic volume is too low to warrant a traffic signal and a four-way stop reduces traffic flow unnecessarily.
- A roundabout is safer for bicyclists and pedestrians due to better sight lines for drivers and safety islands but requires removing one house.
- The mini-roundabout’s smaller safety islands cannot shelter a bike lengthwise and large trucks will have difficulty turning.



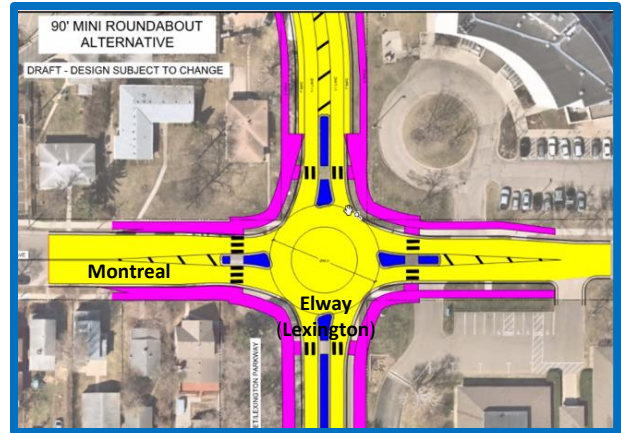
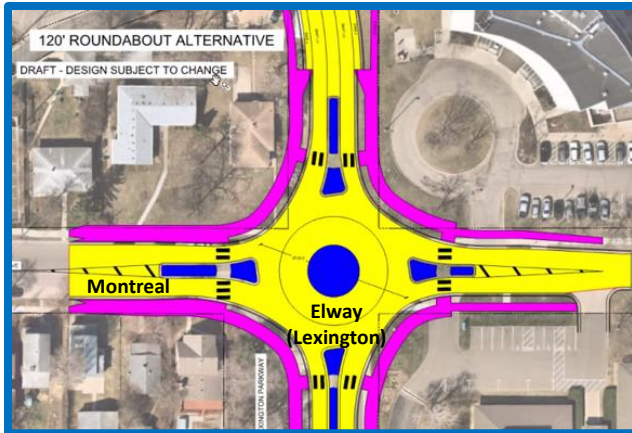
Purple = bike & pedestrian facilities.



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Purple = bike & pedestrian facilities | Blue = safety islands

ROUNDABOUTS

Roundabouts keep traffic flowing and offer safety benefits by:

- slowing driver speeds
- reducing conflict points
- allowing easy decision-making

Mini roundabouts have a painted or slightly raised center that are meant to be driven over by trucks, buses, and emergency vehicles



County Road 79 and Vierling Drive in Shakopee, MN

Questions & Answers

1. Has the affected property owner been engaged for possible acquisition (under the roundabout option)? *Not yet because we haven't decided on a design and won't approach the owner until we are more certain that we need the property. The mini roundabout may result in the County reselling the house rather than demolition.* Committee member: the homeowner may want to sell anyway with major road next door.



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2. Have you sent mailers to the neighbors about the next open house (March 25) ? *Yes, we mail to all homes within a two-block radius and to all units in the apartment complex next to the planned road extension.*
3. The larger roundabout seems overkill and the mini won't allow trucks to turn easily. I don't like the possibility of removing the house.
4. How will this trail connection with other facilities? How does this segment participate in the county bike plan? *A bike lane or path fits into the County's plan,¹ which requires at least one bike lane on one side of every county road. We want to extend Lexington's bike lane down to Shepard Road.*
5. How would a biker coming down Montreal get to Shepard? Would the biker take old Lexington to the new Elway? *Yes, that is the likely route.* Will this encourage extending the Montreal bike lane [from West 7th to Elway]?
6. What is the expected traffic from Montreal and the impact with the two-way stop [Montreal traffic is stopped under the two-way stop option]? *Today's traffic volume is 3,600 cars, but we expect that to increase to 8,800 vehicles once connected as vehicles come from the north down Lexington to Elway. This traffic volume doesn't warrant a traffic signal, which cause more accidents with drivers trying to rush through yellow lights.*
7. Are you worried about traffic backing up to West 7th with a roundabout? *No, the traffic is always flowing with a roundabout.*
8. How will cars from the apartment complex on Shepard & Elway exit that property? *We'll have a gravel road connecting the complex to Shepard and signed for local traffic only.*
9. I'm concern that the two-way stop is the least expensive but not pedestrian friendly and experiences more crashes than a roundabout.
10. Roundabouts are safer for pedestrians, provide better traffic calming and don't require electricity to function.
11. How much truck traffic in that area? *Generally trucks are five percent of traffic. But Lexington is a truck route [so higher percentage likely].*
12. How is continuous traffic on roundabout safer for pedestrians? *Studies show that cars must slow down going around the roundabout. Also, the roundabout has medians for pedestrians and drivers can see them better before the vehicles reach the roundabout.*
13. Roundabouts have moved the pedestrians away, also all traffic comes from one direction. While with intersections the driver is looking one direction and pulling out in the other.

¹ <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/roads-transportation/multi-modal-planning/countywide-bicycle-pedestrian-plan>



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14. Should we offer a resolution? *This input is very helpful but please come to open house and indicate which option you support.*

15. Flashing pedestrian sign is an option with two-way stop.

Chair Gallatin: The feedback that this committee has heard mostly concerns the possible increase in traffic with the connection. We'd love to see improvements at Trader Joe's, too. Most comments have been about other segments of Lexington.

Mr. Hollingshead: I hope the county takes a comprehensive view with this project, the Riverview Corridor and along west 7th to improve pedestrian safety. These three projects are a golden opportunity to improve pedestrian safety. Commissioner Ortega: We are doing just that and making sure everyone is cognizant of these issues and appointing community members to the Riverview Corridor Advisory Committee to look at how we can make pedestrian safety better.

Register for the March 25th open house:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcqde6vrjspGdKwSk9ieUyUyerwZNUWYAJC>

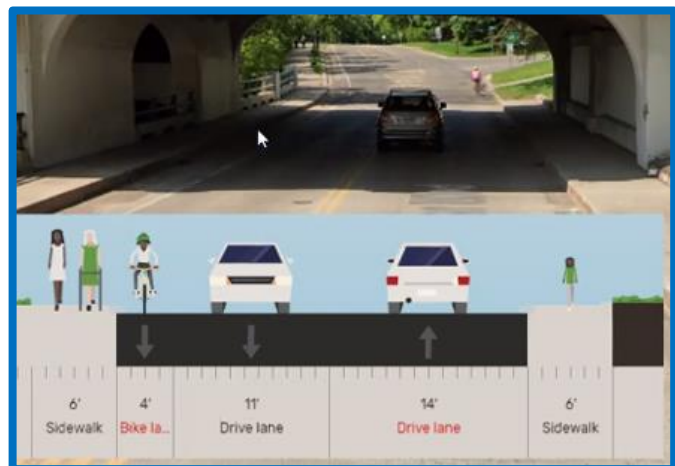
A comment map with the intersection options is available starting March 25th through April 31st at <https://www.ramseycounty.us/lexingtonextension>

MRB Path Width Under Ford Bridge – Kevin Gallatin, Transportation Committee Chair & Ellen Stewart, Landscape Architect, St Paul Department of Parks & Recreation

Chair Gallatin asks the Committee to consider how the shared trail under the Ford Parkway Bridge could be widen. The sidewalk's high curb and the vaulted bridge and sloping deck create a challenging situation for widening the path by shifting the traffic lanes east. Chair Gallatin provided the following graphics:

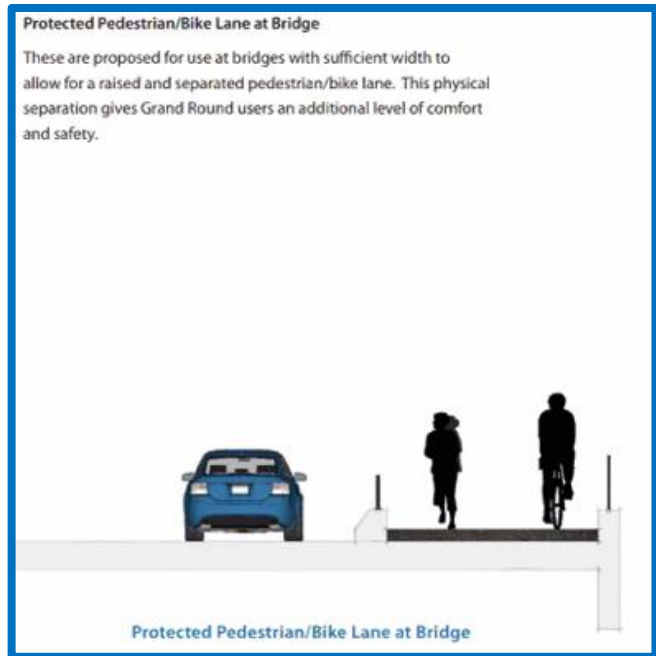
Questions & Answers

1. Can you remove the curb and sidewalk? *Ms. Stewart will ask Traffic Engineers if that is possible.*
2. I like the idea of leveling out on the west side. As we build out the Ford site, would it be better to connect that east sidewalk to handle increased foot traffic? *Sidewalk facilities do not exist after the bridge going north, which is private property.*





3. There's a crosswalk on the north side [after passing under the bridge]. There'd be a purpose to have the east sidewalk even just to connect to the cross walk.
4. That section under the Ford bridge is a bridge for Mississippi River Blvd, too. A big gap exists below MRB and the sidewalks are part of the MRB bridge deck.
5. Remove the sidewalk, though spring flooding is notorious sometimes. The Ford trucks could fit under the bridge. I've never seen anyone walking on the east sidewalk. A clean slate with taking out the sidewalks.



6. Alternatively raise the on street bike lane up to the sidewalk's level? *Yes, you could do an elevated bike lane and sidewalk. Good idea and shave off the east sidewalk of the Troll tunnel.*
7. Will Highland Bridge have a sidewalk on east side? Yes. So it could connect to the east sidewalk. Ellen: plan is to connect back up to Ford Parkway. Will there be a crossing? No, not at Ford and MRB angle because no additional trail connection. People usually don't stop for you on that stretch. It may change once development is there and slow down traffic.

Car-Crime Resolution

Mr. Hollingshead introduced his resolution to address both catalytic converter thefts and carjacking. The motion was seconded. Mr. Hollingshead's motivation regarding the converters is that scrap dealers are opposed to a Legislative bill, causing a deadlock so why not take the initiative as a local group. Mr. Hollinshead explained that two violent car jackings happened near his house and while Highland may be the safest place in the City, these incidents change people's behavior about not wanting to go out, so that issue is also appropriate for this group.

Ms. Doyle moved to split the resolution because the converter issue is a legislative issue and the carjacking issue is directed at local authorities, so two different audiences. Ms. Doyle recommended waiting until the HDC Board meets with Ramsey County Attorney John Choi before approving the carjacking resolution. send resolutions on juvenile justice. Mr. Hollinshead supporting splitting the two issues and waiting on the carjacking one.



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Committee members offered their perspectives:

- This is an odd fit for us to take on state-level issues and we need to keep our focus narrow and we're diluting our focus with this issue. I would prioritize other issues before this one.
- I like the idea of this committee speaking up of issues of urgent concern. I agree with the prior sentiment but not sure where you stop. I'm outraged that this bill is held up by scrap dealers.
- Relatively easily solution and supporting the bill does benefit Highland residents.
- Representative David Pinto suggested we support the legislation generally but not specific bills. I agree prior comments that this is a state issue but persuadable because this issue impacts us and can be addressed.
- People are afraid of where to park and fearful of car jacking, so I'd support a general comment to state legislators.
- This is a real issue and while there are other issues we can or can't weigh in, this one has come to the forefront. Very difficult dynamic at Legislature so better to generally support than back a specific bill.

Chair Gallatin began revising Mr. Hollingshead's resolution to focus on the converter piece with Committee member input. The final resolution passed 8 to 1.

Whereas the rate of catalytic converter thefts in Saint Paul has increased 208% in the first month of 2021;

Whereas these challenges are not just national, but also intensely local;

Whereas catalytic converter theft creates significant hardship, loss, and transportation difficulties for the vehicle owner compounding hardship at a time of pandemic unemployment;

Whereas there is insufficient deterrence for this crime;

Whereas fencing for cash is common among those who steal catalytic converters;

Whereas relevant legislation is being considered to reduce this crime;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, the Highland District Council supports in principle legislation to limit the sale, purchase, or possession of stolen catalytic converters, including such measures as:

1. Banning scrap dealer purchase of detached catalytic converters;
2. All levels of government require engraving vehicle VINS on catalytic converters;
3. St. Paul Police Department form a unit dedicated to addressing this crime;
4. Creation of training materials and means of resisting or avoiding this crime;
5. Reform of punishment to fit the seriousness of this crime;
6. Budgetary allocations and appropriations sufficient to pay for the above.



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Resolution to Restrict e-Scooters from the MRB Shared Trail

Mr. Butler moved his resolution, which was seconded. After some discussion, the question was called and the motion failed 4 to 5. Key comments regarded why scooters were being targeted and why not focus on addressing the larger problem on the MRB Shared Trail being inadequate for the number and type of uses.

Farewell to the Chair

Mr. Hollinshead stated that this Committee expresses its appreciation for Chair Gallatin's great leadership. Other committee members echoed the sentiment. Chair Gallatin stated that it has been his pleasure. He recalled that he knew nothing about transportation when he started but has acquired a collection of traffic and road engineering books, which he offered to anyone interested in them. Chair Gallatin was proud that more Board members wanted to join this Committee than were seats available, which had not been the case when he started.

Adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Minutes submitted by Committee Secretary Peter Butler

The Transportation Committee's next meeting is May 11, 2021.