

## **2016-03-08 North Avenue Task Force Meeting #12 at BPD**

### **NATF Attendance**

Paul Sisson - Co-chair, Ward 4 Council Appointee  
Rich Nadworny - Ward 4 NPA Appointee  
Patrick Kearney - Ward 4 NPA Alternate  
RJ Lalumiere - Ward 7 NPA Appointee  
Nicole Losch - Dept. of Public Works (DPW, not Task Force member)  
Marshall Distal - Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)  
Chris Dubin - Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC)  
Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro - Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO)  
Andrea Todd - Ward 3 NPA Appointee

### **City Attendance**

Kurt Wright - Ward 4  
Tom Ayres - Ward 7  
Mayor Weinberger

### **Community Attendance**

Approximately 12 persons

## **Agenda**

### **Housekeeping**

- Next meeting is April 9, 2016 6-8PM at the Miller Center.
- North Avenue Task Force (NATF) introduction by Paul Sisson.
- Task Force members and public introduced themselves.
- Thank co-chair Jason L'Ecuyer for his year of service. Paul Sisson asked that other Task Force members consider stepping up to the co-chair role to fill this vacancy.
- ACTION: Approved agenda with modification of moving mayor/councillor comments to the front of the line.
- ACTION: Approved February minutes without modification.
- RJ Lalumiere volunteered to take notes.

### **Mayor and Councilor Comments / Public Comment**

- Mayor Miro Weinberger thanks the Task Force for service to the city. Believes there is great potential in the project to make North Ave a safer street and better places than they are today. Promise and potential for this is way the effort has been sustained over such a long time. Perhaps the potential cannot be realized, but does not want to see us fail to take advantage of the opportunity. One thing that needs to happen is to have a good conversation on what the metrics for this project are. Metrics will define in a sense an eject button for this project. People want to know if there are dramatic negative

impacts will we pull a plug on this quickly? Define what we will see as success as well. Another point that is clear to him is that in cities where there has been dissatisfaction we need to make sure we have the outreach and communication resources to do this right. It is reasonable to expect that the city should resource that effort. The value that the Task Force can bring is guidance and feedback. We need to make sure we are not biting off too much at one time. Does a phased approach make sense? To make sure poor implementation does not impair things.

- Jim Carrier - In view of revisiting the rollout would desire to see the pilot run for a long period of time to get a true sense of how it will operate. The transition time will take time for folks to get used to the new configuration.
  - Chapin Spencer would like to have this run for a significant period of time so as to get good data. Have talked about running for at least a year. Looking for those ejection metrics and a revisiting in the fall to ensure there are multiple chances.
- Woman has lived in the NNE for over 50 years, has never seen a lot of accidents. Does not trust the metrics, trusts her experience. Those who oppose the pilot think there has been too much political manipulation and dishonesty. There is a high level of mistrust in City Hall and the task force.
- Opinion; no one knows if it will work or not. Disrespectful to call people bizarre.
  - Rich Nadworny I've been here for the last 9 months asking folks to show up and give their opinions. We've tried to create a dialogue between both sides. All the things described in the opinion piece are out there in the media.
- Man has spoken at City Hall and NPA meetings. Did not start with a ballot measure or poll of do we want to do it.
- Woman it's one thing to disrespect those who live in the NNE. How do you describe the last meetings quote "city attorney's law for dummies".
  - Rich Nadworny dealt with many attorneys; they give their opinion.
- Man thinks Rich Nadworny is going against the operating guidelines (VII).
  - Rich Nadworny written as a private citizen.
- Karen Rowell how come at the public input meeting at St Mark's people were so disgusted with the process that they got up and left? People gave up going to meetings. You're not listened to, at city council as well. Thinks there is much deception going on. Where do we go from there? Thinks the city butchered the ballot question.
- Tony Bell would like someone to sit down with him to go over the crash data. Does not believe there is significant traffic problem.
  - Nicole Losch wanted contact info so they could discuss that.
- Rod Perez Ward 5 - Rich Nadworny you have a responsibility to the people and the process. Mayor if you want bicycles on the road send them to school so they know the rules of the road.
- Jason Van driesche would like to hear more about the "eject button". The accepted best practice for pilots is that you run it through to its conclusion so that

you can get the data you need to evaluate. There should be options for revision, but not cancellation. What is intended by that and why?

- Rod Perez folks don't want it.
- Kurt Wright thanks the Task Force members for serving. The language that is now in the pilot is that if the pilot happens the people of the NNE. In the past there has needed to be consensus of neighbors for projects. Gave opponents caution that the ballot measure is no guarantee. NNE is most affected. Going forward needs to be changes to the process. Message needs to be that the people who are in favor of 4 lanes need to be more at the table. There is the metrics and the will of the NNE as in the amendment. You have a clearly skeptical public. There needs to be respect for both opinions and a civil discourse. Ultimately thinks that the councillors of the NNE need to be more in charge of the public input process; they are accountable at the end of the day.
- Tony Bell believes vote would have been different in the whole city had it not been politicized. All of the sudden for P, D's to come out for it in the papers.
- Karen Rowell would like to propose as opponents have their own meetings and gather together to come up ideas for how to make the process could be made more fair to present to mayor and council. It would give the opponents a voice. Council not staying neutral but still won in the NNE.
  - Rich Nadworny Tony had a question about buses. It has come up from both sides. Gary Dion has been at meetings and given input that has been incorporated. The diverse opinions have been listened to throughout the process.
- Woman it has been noted that the bike path construction will be in the fall during the pilot period. Between North 40 and Leddy Park. Is the city going to stand up and say "we built it and they came". Are those people going to be included in surveys. Has a home right on North Ave, does not believe that all of the future plans can fit in the ROW. Believes the reason this pilot is taking place is that North Ave is going to become a major corridor.
- Woman initially was not involved. Become involved when there were lies and politicization. Wishes folk would stop manipulating words so much.
- Ron McGarvey experience is that North Ave is not safe. Does not feel safe as ped, would not let kids ride bikes there or do it himself. Encourages the city to give it a try.
- Gus Buchanan Ward 4 appreciates that people involved in the process are here. Believes bikes have a legal right to the roadway system in this country, they are a designated vehicle. There is a deep and rich history. So glad that the rest of the city supported this initiative as it shows that perhaps the rest of the city will bike to the NNE to enjoy our economic opportunities. Regardless of how they want to get there. Did not allow kids to nike on North Ave so they gravitated to driving and it was scary. PArt of his frustration with the process, glad that the petition happened, but wants to know what is the process to decide that this is working or

not working? Is it a city council meeting? Is a town meeting style meeting? What is the process?

- Katelin Brewer-Collie wanted to respond to some of the points made early on about North Ave not being a dangerous road. Lives in ONE, daughter's friend lives in NNE. Would love to bike, but not safe. There are two HCL in the four lane section. What you see is not always everything that happens. Road redesigns like the proposed are proven to reduce crashes so it seems crazy to be against something that will make the street safer.
- David Lines from Ward St has travelled North Ave much of his life. Drives, rides, has lived in the south end, now lives in ONE. More for sanity than safety. Thankful for service of people putting time in. Bewildered why this has become political. Allow for a corridor that people can travel how they want.
- Woman it is about much deeper issues than a bit of road. It's about mistrust of city hall, etc. Many opposed to the pilot want one side of the road paved like Dorset/Riverside.
- Mayor Weinberg first of all, fair question, why go forward after the vote? I don't think we'd be doing our job if we did not. The charter makes very clear that things that deal with the streets where decisions are to be made are with the administration. For better or worse a decision was made to pursue this direction; through city staff, citizens and then to city council. Fast fwd to today, "Why did you take an advisory ballot item if not following?" we took the position that basically if citizens meet the signature threshold the question goes on the ballot. I think there is a lot of clarity at the time and through the process that ballot would be unlikely to to change direction. e.g, taxes need a  $\frac{2}{3}$  referendum. Transportation decisions are different, ballot not a good way to make those decisions. Concerned by the results, which is why I am here tonight. Concerned that we do it well and not exacerbate mistrust. He finds it painful that there is so much distrust. We have a responsibility as decision makers to see if the potential benefits can be had. I hear the Q "How are we supposed to trust this process" will sit down with NNE councillors to see what can be done to broaden the trust. There are some months ahead of us and would welcome the input of opponents in how to move forward. Let me be clear the Task Force are not the deciders, they give feedback and guidance. Fair question from Jason Van Dreische; the intent behind eject button is that if there is a dramatic failure quickly no need to put the NNE through a year of it. There would be a period of revision before that. I think we can meet both those goals. Re: Bike Path construction, we've been trying to do it for years, goal is rebuild the whole 8 miles. We have the funding to get to North Beach. From Moran to Texaco Beach this summer. From Texaco Beach on there is no way to rebuild it in parallel. Understanding closed stretch is from Texaco Beach to North Beach. Will need to examine how it affects the statistics; should be addressed explicitly. MUP has been a persistent question. Compelling answer he has heard is that.

- Corridor Study looked at many design alternatives. The pilot is a lower cost solution. The longer term vision is for protected bike lanes on either side. The number of driveways is higher than Riverside. Design guidelines have changed since Riverside was implemented. If we find through this process that the pilot does not work we will have to look at further design alternatives.
- Mayor Weinberg will be back out at the Bagel Cafe tomorrow morning ~8-9am for those who want to chat with him further.
- Rod thinks that bicycle should be registered, licensed and insured. Let riders use the sidewalk.
- Woman watched a Task Force meeting on CCTV 17. You were putting out questions to folks about different things.
  - PS we were trying to get the sentiment of the crowd.
  - Rich Nadworny we think that the people who show up have valuable opinions that help inform our views. That's one of the reasons we want people to show up.
- Woman has been to all the meetings. It was very clear that Task Force is taking opinions.

### CCRPC Updates

- n/a

### Update and Discussion of DPW Implementation and Outreach Plans

- Nicole Losch first update relates to the work of the Task Force over the last year. Hired a designer for the pilot, came in under budget so we can reallocate some of those resources for outreach efforts.
  - Man opponents have to resource themselves?
  - Andrea Todd outreach was the word. Explaining not advocating. Crash data, road rules.
  - Tony Bell, yes like the buses.
  - Andrea Todd looking forward to PR pros to help explain these things.
  - Nicole Losch we're trying to find a way to take the tech info and make it digestible, let ppl know how they can be involved.
  - Jim Carrier design is decided. Feedback is going to be about how ppl like it, outreach is what changing.
- Woman will that address the paving?
  - Nicole Losch paving the eastern section from 127 to Shore Rd, April-May, Pilot is June+.
- Will storm drains be addressed?
  - Will be made level as possible and replaced if "wheel catchers" but otherwise no.
- Nicole Losch will be repaving of ramps off the beltline at the same time.

- Gus red marks/paving will happen before the pilot? Nicole Losch replied yes. Gus noted there's a lot of terminology bandied about. A bike path is not the same thing as a multi-use path.
- Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro make sure that everyone has the same understanding of the same terms. Can work on getting a definition sheet so everyone is on the same page.
- Tom Ayres would like to provide a little context for discussion for public outreach Task Force was charged to do just that. Has been suggested that Task Force is biased in favor of pilot, well they were charged with working with city to oversee the implementation.
  - Karen Rowell very hard to stomach when watch the Task Force on 17 surrounded by signs to promote the project.
- Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro is hopeful tonight that we can get through our agenda and move through in a way that makes a better outcome.
  
- Nicole Losch quantitative metrics and schedule - metrics are intended to help everyone understand what we are measuring. Going to talk mostly about data, next month will be more focused on public input.
- Question about cards, is that the task force website?
  - Rich Nadworny yes, intent is to get all the info in one place to collect all the materials.
- Nicole Losch presentation - will be on website, still a WIP. Definitely looking to take more input. Over the last year Task Force has worked to define the metrics that will be used. This is breaking it out in more detail and defining thresholds. First three things (sidestreets delays/intersection ops, travel times and crashes) are those "eject button" issues. Column H starts talking about potential thresholds. Existing data is still being filled in.
  - Intersection ops / side street delays - LOS is a standard measure. Predictions from modeling s/w have been made of what it should be. Has it gotten worse within 2 grades of what we're predicting or is it worse than LOS F. If that happens we need to look at what is happening.
    - Gus are any A today? Nicole Losch some yes. Each approach can be different. 127 overall LOS is A. AM peak does have one approach a F. Intersection improvements should see overall C with no F; bringing to middle ground.
    - Rich Nadworny shoot for C now? Nicole Losch F can actually be desired in urban areas. But what we're looking at here is magnitude of change.
    - Jason Van Driesche when you start taking look at the data after the transition period? Nicole Losch have not pinned down those dates yet. During construction does not apply.
    - Man are you recon 127 intersection? Nicole Losch as part of the project slip lanes will be closed. Picture of it is not on website yet. Just got 1st draft of designs, once they are finalized they can shared on the website.

- Nicole Losch travel times - have collected 4 lane sections already Shore -> 127. both AM and pm peak times. Doing same after. CCRPC drove 35 if unimpeded.
- Nicole Losch crashes - we are hoping to see a reduction in crashes. If an increase is seen then will need to look at adjustments. PD and FD have the data and can give the initial input.
  - Katelin Brewer-Collie will this only include verifiable crashes. Nicole Losch for formal eval will rely on first responders.
- Nicole Losch we also have a lot of other metrics that we will be looking at as well. With projects there are always trade offs. Looking to see if it is an accepted change. Q re: traffic volume changes; Nicole Losch still trying to figure out what threshold would look like there, too much decrease likely means something in the corridor is not working well. Counted # of bikes on Ave and on sidewalks, hoping folks get off the sidewalks. Counted peds. Parking will be prohibited for pilot, but will try to understand if we are getting complaints. TWLTL is functioning as intended? Colchester Ave can give some idea of how bus+ TWLTL operations can work.
  - Rich Nadworny if as feared folks are seeing extreme congestion that would be seen as not working? Nicole Losch yes.
  - JC have you considered in the area outside the 4 lane can be considered independently? Nicole Losch yes.
- Nicole Losch emergency vehicle operations will be looked at. Signal preemption has been discussed in the process but not happening now due to cost, traffic modeling, complicating factor for comparison, etc. “Quality of service”, “Level of Comfort”, likely to be done by survey. Business impacts and school drop offs. Transit operations; time, ridership. Traffic violation comparison.
  - Patrick Kerney speed wagons? Went to Rutland, town had them on a pole. Could we have something like that? Nicole Losch has RFS many in for those.
  - Jason Van Driesche QOS/LOC is key. Assumes will measure that for all users regardless of where they live. Nicole Losch Targeted survey will focus on NNE, but would like to offer a survey for broader input as well. Jason Van Driesche would like to do targeted feedback of BHS families, etc.
  - Andrea Todd important to Task Force to reach the school communities.
  - JC Colchester folks should have input too.
  - How will abuse be prevented? Recommended to implement controls TBD.
  - Woman still committed to getting outside help for qualitative?
    - Nicole Losch yes, CCRPC to help find consultant to gather that data.
    - Rich Nadworny recommended to do a pre-survey as well to get baseline.
  - Man 2 & 3 school families are paying attention.
  - Andrea Todd Ward 3 touches North Ave and overwhelmingly supported it.

- Jason Van Driesche obviously need primary focus on NNE given resolution, think there is value though in doing scientific survey of the rest of the city. Outsider input may be dismissed if not done to the same level as the NNE survey, even if not to the same resolution.
      - Nicole Losch will talk more next month.
      - TA observing a challenge, how do you mesh qualitative and quantitative?
      - RL understanding is that is up to the city council/mayor...
  - Nicole Losch infographic draft presented.
    - Jason Van Driesche may be misunderstanding if not clear enough.
    - Chris ... thinks that it can help. What is next deliverable?
      - Nicole Losch revised metrics and measurements. Schedule. Draft plan. City's response to Task Force as to how it will run the public input. Sign and marking plan will be available on website before next meeting.
  - Nicole Losch before we adjourn, discussion about schedule and design, potential phasing. Heard that potential delays there could have a negative impact on the rest of the project. City recommends that 127 happens as a phase 2. Would give opportunity to install buffered bike lanes and EAP -> Shore. Phase 1 would include EAP/Shore, Shore/Plattsburgh, 127->Washington. Phase 2 127 intersection and 127->EAP.
    - Rich Nadworny timeframe stays the same? Nicole Losch yes.
    - Jason Van Driesche how does phasing it improve the experience? If you take this approach likely to skewed numbers bikes downward.
    - Andrea Todd spent many meetings discussing this and Task Force recommended all at once. Why? Guess is that it is so contentious.
    - Rich Nadworny when you have more detail we can have a better discussion about it.
  - Man why maintain parking south of berry?
    - Nicole Losch high use of parking large motivator to leave it for another time.
  - Gus surprised that DPW would recommend phasing without bullet points to talk to it.
    - CS wants to make sure what is rolled out is fully baked.

## **Discussion about the Town Meeting Day ballot results**

### **Next meeting**

Measuring Public Input

### **Actions Taken**

- Approved agenda without modification.
- Approved February minutes without modification.