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MEMORANDUM

TO: Forrest Hardy (City of Minneapolis), Kevin Hansen (City of Columbia Heights)

FROM: Kristin Petersen, Adrian Diaz, Mike Kotila

DATE: March 1, 2021

RE: Summary of Community Engagement (December 2020 to February 2021)

37th Avenue Reconstruction Project - Community Engagement Summary

Engagement focused on informing the public of the project and received public input on the future of 37th Ave NE. This memo documents traffic on the 37th Ave NE Reconstruction Project website (37thAveNE.com), as well as details and comments received on the online interactive map and during the January 28, 2021 online virtual open house sessions.

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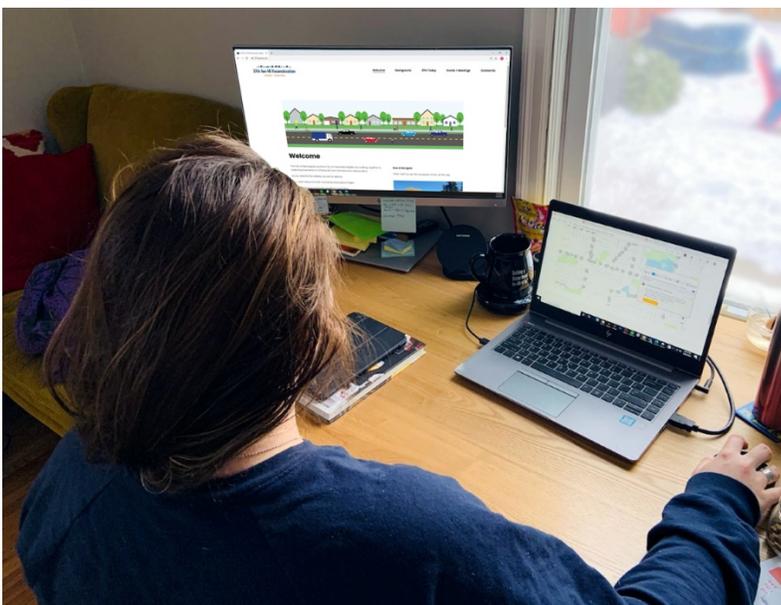
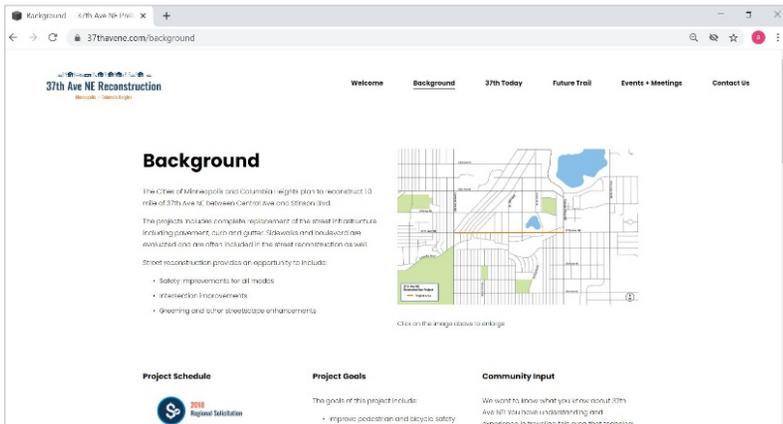
PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website provided background about the 37th Avenue Reconstruction Project and ways the public can provide their feedback and comments. Information on the website also included an overview of existing conditions on 37th Avenue NE today, details about a future shared-used trail, information about upcoming meetings and events, and contact information for project staff.

Between December 1, 2020 and February 28, 2021, there were a total 557 unique visitors to the project website. Top sources of website traffic were:

- 355 went to the site directly
- 63 were directed through Facebook
- 19 were directed from Google
- 18 were directed from the City of Minneapolis website
- 102 were from other sources

Screenshots of Website & Comment Period Analytics



ONLINE OPEN HOUSE MEETINGS

Two online open house events were hosted on January 2021 to provide the public an opportunity to learn more about the 37th Avenue NE Reconstruction project and ask questions and provide comments to project staff.

Meeting Information

- Audience: Adjacent property owners, commuters, and residents surrounding the project area
- Date: 01/28/2021
- Duration:
 - Session 1 - 6:30 to 7:30 pm
 - Session 2 - 7:30 to 8:30 pm
- Format: To follow MN Department of Health guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project team held two virtual public open house meetings that included live presentations with Q&A sessions. The presentation included information on the proposed design and project schedule.
- Location: GoTo Meeting and www.37thavene.com

Meeting Notifications

- Postcard/flier invitations were mailed directly to 912 properties surrounding the project area. Postcards directed the public to the project website that contained meeting and login information
- Meeting information was posted on the project website
- Posted on both Cities' Facebook
 - Paid Facebook ads for surrounding residents were posted

Attendance

- A total of 60 attendees and elected officials participated in the Virtual Open House events. The following staff members were also present to facilitate the events and address questions and comments:
 - 1) Kevin Hansen – City of Columbia Heights
 - 2) Kathy Young – City of Columbia Heights
 - 3) Forrest Hardy – City of Minneapolis
 - 4) Alebel Mehari – City of Minneapolis
 - 5) Lisa Goddard – City of Minneapolis
 - 6) Mike Kotila – SEH
 - 7) Adrian Diaz – SEH
 - 8) Kristin Petersen – SEH

Open House Comments and Questions

Comments were received during the Q&A sessions that followed the live presentations at the virtual open house meetings. The comments received during the virtual open house are listed below. The public was also able to send additional comments and questions to City staff after the events.

Open House Q&A Comments (Presentation 1)

- Will residents in the area be assessed or have taxes increased to pay for this project?
- Can you explain what is meant by a trail? As in what does it look like in a street?
- Will either allow for a much-needed left-turn lane EB from 37th Av to 37th PI?
- Semi-trucks run down 37th - any concerns with driving lane width?
- Who will be maintaining the boulevards and 'clear' space?
- The southside in Minneapolis has a lot of trees in the boulevard. It seems like Alt 2 would require removing all those trees. Is that accurate?
- I'm concerned about the speed limit, it's quite dangerous these semi-trucks come barreling down the street, I hope these changes can account for lower speed limits. Will this be a part of the change? And yes we live right on 37th Ave NE. I'm not concerned about street parking - if it means we have a safer and nicer roadway!
- Why was the trail installed on the north side of 37th, on the west side of Central?

- Many large trucks are passing through this section of road. To make it narrow at intersections make it difficult already for cars and semi-trucks turning difficult. What can be done to avoid accidents?
- Are you making the combo road/trail wider near the intersections to accommodate the turn lanes? Or keeping the width the same?
- Consider ped-activated crossing signals at high-density built areas like Hart & Stinson.
- Can ped crossings have a light to push for crossing?
- Is there any way we can remove transit of Semi-trucks from 37th completely (similar to Stinson Blvd between Mpls and St. Anthony)?
- Do we know what will be moving into the old Unique Thrift space? Does that need to be considered for these designs?
- Will streetlights be added with either of these alternatives?
- How long will I lose access to my driveway/garage?
- No to cutting off 37th
- Is the homeowner responsible for snow removal on “trails”?
- Please no Cul De Sac! We use 37th place when the train is sitting on the tracks forever.
- I vote no on that cutoff too! :-)
- Keep 37th place open
- Keep 37th Place connected.
- By cutting off 37th Place takes from business and not effective for bus transport and kill that area. Please do not do this.
- If pedestrian safety is a priority, it seems to make more sense to have the trails on the same side of the street rather than having to move from the north side of a street to the south side.
- I use 37th Place all the time to avoid being blocked by the train.
- No to the Cul de Sac. Have we considered talking to CP about lowering the grade of the railroad to create a tunnel/underpass under Stinson and 37th?
- 37th Place needs to be wide and open as it is
- Cutoff would result in more vehicles trapped by trains, idling and polluting.
- I prefer option A for 37th place - changing it to a cul de sac seems like it would create more of an issue with traffic and the trains
- Is it possible to remove trucks completely? it seems it has caused major damage to the road
- 37th is a truck route, trucks move everything you use
- Will the speed limit change?
- Is adding pedestrian lighting part of this project?
- Semis are generally 8' wide
- Big safety concerns with the trucks barreling down 37th Ave. I'm ok with zero parking on 37th Ave if it means safer roadways.
- It is the only east-west in the area that goes all the way to I-35W. It would not be feasible to eliminate trucks.
- The first part of 37th up to Central the semi-trucks turn R on to Central is already too narrow. Just saying.
- Trails and roadways are taken care of by Columbia heights if it's on the North side, Can someone speak to if Mpls takes care of Trails?
- Can there be parking on one side?
- Is it an option to plant native flowers in the new blvds, something other than grass at least?
- Why was the path installed on the northside of 37th instead of the south side, on the west side of Central? It would be good to know why that decision was made for that section - as it seems that the east side of Central might have the same reasons to follow suit.
- Sorry - was the speed limit question addressed? Not sure I caught that. If there is a reduction of speed limit? Thanks Kristin! :)
- But you're turning it into a pedestrian corridor.
- It seems like the focus for these improvements has been pedestrians, bikes etc. why not automatically include lighting to make them safe to use??

- Assessment question was answered from Columbia Heights perspective but not Minneapolis. Can someone address?
- I prefer the pedestrian/bike trail on the north side. I would be open to parking retained on one side if the residents there want them. An eastbound left turn lane at 37th Place would be beneficial. I would maintain the connection at 37th Place. I'd like to see a right turn green arrow rather than a no turn on red on westbound 37th at Central Avenue that could be activated while southbound Central has their left turn signal green to get more cars through per cycle. Looks like eastbound 37th west of Central would be restriped to two turn lanes? Also, I would like to see the intersection of Central and 37th to be redone as part of this project. Several projects have resurfaced up to the intersection but not including the intersection, and it is in poor condition.
- Is there a range of costs for those assessments?
- Who all is included in assessments? Only those residents whose homes are on 37th?
- Would bump-outs be considered for bus stops? etc.
- The storm water treatments look great on the recent construction south of 37 Ave.
- Any changes in regard to stormwater management and Hart Lake?
- I would not be in favor of a reduction in speed limits on 37th Avenue. I would like better enforcement of the existing 30 mph speed limit.
- Would 37th place stay at an angle or be a sharper left-hand turn?
- Forrest - What did your answer mean about who is assessed. We're not familiar with your terminology of adjacent and the other verbiage you used but sounded like side streets - can you be more clear?
- Speed limit should be reduced. Dense elder-housing in the area with another apt. developing at 37th Pl & Stinson.
- Speed limit must be reduced, it's unsafe.
- I would say no to the cul de sac for 37th Place. We really do need it for an alternative to waiting for the trains.
- A speed limit reduction would be desirable
- I support finishing the trail from Hart to Stinson. if we chose to not complete that part of the trail how many years before we could complete that section of the trail?
- I also prefer the pedestrian/bike trail on the north side to reduce crossing 37th twice just to stay on the trail. This would make it easier as a cyclist and keep the car traffic flowing. Access to 37th place should be maintained. I like the idea of a left turn lane from 37th onto Hart. I'd also like to see if a left turn lane for 37th Place could also be added. Would really like to see a pedestrian crosswalk/signal to aid getting to and from the bus stops at 37th and Hart.
- Without any parking on 37th Ave, the cross streets, like Johnson Street, will get more parking. That doesn't sound great as someone who lives on a side street.
- Disagree with the speed limit reduction on 37th. 37th needs to be the encouraged route. If anything, we should be talking about speed limit reductions on the side roads. We can't have 37th at 25 mph and the rest of the roads in Columbia Heights at 30 mph.
- James Whitaker: Northside trail! Excited about the proposed improvements.
- I support northside of street for trail. Lighting should be placed for trail.
- My understanding is that in the new Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan that all street reconstructions will have pedestrian lighting improvements.
- I agree that north side trail is a good idea, connecting to the trail on the west side of Central makes sense. Also, more sun exposure in the winter months. I look forward to seeing how this progresses. Thank you everyone.

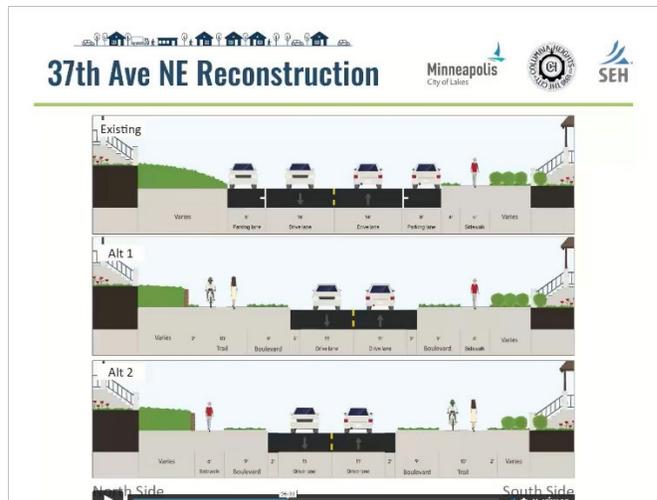
Open House Q&A Comments (Presentation 2)

- As long as there is some kind of pedestrian walkway sidewalk or trail on the north side it will be good. With the few sidewalks in the side streets of surrounding neighborhoods in CH it would be nice to have a place to safely walk without having to cross busy 37th to get to the sidewalk on the south side.

- In considering the south ped/bike path and would you keep path on south side to Stinson if railroad is agreeable to working with the project plan? As it would allow the connection to the Stinson path at a controlled intersection
- If it is the Stinson trail that we are trying to connect to, why not extend the existing Stinson Blvd trail south from 37th Pl on the west side of Stinson instead of the 37th Avenue trail eastward?
- If the trail is on the north side of 37th, who will keep it clear of ice and snow--city of CH, or Anoka County?
- What are the practical engineering and/or cost differentials for changing the center line of 37th?
- If the commercial area in the NW area of 37th & Stinson will remain, wouldn't making 37th Place into a cul-de-sac greatly impact customer access to those businesses?
- Kevin, doesn't Anoka Co or city of CH maintain the sidewalk along 40th Ave NE?
- Train traffic has noticeably increased
- Thank you for the presentation.
- Thank you for this presentation and opportunity to gather feedback. Looking forward to this project!
- Thank you for allowing input so early in the process, and for staying on here so late on a weeknight, folks

Please reference the recording of the virtual open house meetings for additional context.

Screenshots of online open house meeting recordings



ONLINE INTERACTIVE MAP

The online interactive map was open to the public from January 15 to February 18, 2021. This mapping activity provided the public an opportunity to provide location-specific comments that were focused on walking, biking, riding transit, driving, safety, and other topics. Participants were also able to identify their common travel routes in the area.

Interactive Map Comments

The following are comments received on the interactive map:

- I would love to be able to bike from my house and connect with the bike trails that lead to the river. I like what you did on the east of Central with the bike/walking path. I hope parking can be preserved on the CH side when possible.
- Trail needs to be continued straight on 37th to Stinson in addition to trail along a 37th Place cul-de-sac
- For the safety of bicycles, I would hope the trail continues on the Northside of 37th all the way to Stinson.
- Polk is a Minneapolis bike boulevard and there should be some acknowledgement to access the 37th Avenue trail safely.
- Johnson is a Minneapolis connector or long term, low stress bikeway and there should be some acknowledgement to access the 37th Avenue trail safely.
- Stinson is a Minneapolis connector or long term, low stress bikeway and there should be some acknowledgement to access the 37th Avenue trail safely.
- Minneapolis Transportation Plan Strategy 7 goal is to provide wayfinding. This should include signing to across Central and University to Main Street and north south connectors. Some idea how far it is to significant streets as well as to all ages and abilities connecting routes.
- Could a ped/bike ramp be added at the end of McKinley St?
- Increase trail width from 10' to 12' or more to improve pedestrian and bicycle interaction. This can be done by reducing boulevard width to 6' which will improve sight lines for users and turning vehicles. A center line is crucial for trail use guidance so users do not center themselves on trail reducing trail conflict. 18th Avenue NE trail (Central to Johnson) works well for pedestrian bicycle interaction. It has a 13' width and 6' boulevard.
- It would be great to have a safe designated bike path along 37th Ave NE where traffic is rather aggressive. Making it safely to Columbia Park would be very helpful as the traffic drops off significantly west of central. Ideally for bicycling it would be nice to continue along 37th to avoid some steep hills on the North side of Columbia Park as bicyclist work our way to crossing the train yard and Mississippi reaching some very nice trails at Webber Park and Victory Memorial Drive.
- work commute
- The potholes and roughness on the street has caused a lot of problems for heights residents.
- Please keep this street open. It is very helpful when there are trains. Also cars would be backed up quite far without the access.
- This is not a road. It is the parking lot for the Liquor store.
- Roundabout on Johnson and 37th.
- I am concerned about the stretch up housing with small front yards being able to keep parking off-street while also having a bike path/sidewalk for pedestrian safety.
- As part of this project can you make Hart Lake more accessible as a feature for trail users.
- In general this seems like a good project. I would love sidewalks on the North but there will be some drawbacks. I am in favor for the most part.
- I am not in favor of a cul-de-sac I feel this will impact the businesses and ball up traffic when trains come through.
- Some form of pedestrian crossing signal here would be useful it remains a bus stop. This is the closest bus stop to my home and for others who get off to access the Speedway. Crossing from one side to the other is almost impossible when traffic is heavy during rush hour. A push-to-cross signal could be useful in this case!
- Overall I like the idea of the trail being on the North side of the street since there are fewer intersections to cross

- I think the pedestrian trail should run up 37th place here and not bother with crossing the train tracks
- Please consider pedestrian enhancements, such as bump outs and wider sidewalks at 37th and Johnson. The sidewalk on the west side of Johnson near the intersection has a traffic signal pole and sign posts in the middle of it and is a terrible pedestrian environment.
- This would be an ideal starting point for the aforementioned potential Columbia Heights walking trail improvements. A trail could connect 37th here, and follow Polk St. to Silverwood Park.
- Railroad tracks need pedestrian crossings on both sides of the street here (currently zero).
- A streetlamp at the northern intersection of 37th and Pierce St NE would help visibility/identification of the corner as well as provide added lighting and security for children waiting for the bus in the darker winter/spring months.
- A streetlamp at the northern intersection of 37th and Pierce St NE would help visibility/identification of the corner as well as provide added lighting and security for children waiting for the bus in the darker winter/spring months.
- This is such a dangerous place for pedestrians I am curious how there will be sidewalks on both sides and a possible crosswalk at the angle to ensure safe crossing.
- It would be nice if 37th Place NE could be realigned so that it intersects 37th at right angles, not the angle it is at now. It is too broad and almost impossible to cross. Vehicles have a hard time seeing traffic and people use it like it a freeway off ramp when turning from 37th on to 37th place.
- The current proposal has 3 westbound traffic lanes at Central for left/right turns and going straight. We already have a lot of issues with people turning right on red so I wonder if it would actually be safer to only install a dedicated left turn lane and then have a single lane for straight & right turning traffic
- I think this is in the current proposal but there should be dedicated left turn lanes for both directions at this intersection
- Tabled intersections along trail route should be considered and at the very least have zebra striping to alert vehicles approaching or turning at intersection. It also promotes trail continuity.
- Driveways intersections along the trail should have the same coloration and asphalt material as the trail to promote safety and trail continuity.
- The cut de sac should be further explored to eliminate this pass through.
- I am hoping an enhanced Central Avenue and Reservoir Road trail crossing is considered.
- Pedestrian Lighting needs to be considered along the trail for safety interacting with vehicles at intersections as well as promoting public safety.
- The convergence of several roads here makes it difficult to navigate for pedestrians.
- Road geometry needs fixing here for safety of all modes. The extreme angle and width of the 37th Place intersection make turning and crossing needlessly dangerous.
- Would love to see additional lighting here.
- 37th Ave all the way down to 35w is in such bad shape. Road on both sides needs to be ripped out and redone not just patching it.
- Tightened intersections should be considered at all intersections to slow vehicle turning.
- Pedestrian lighting is called out in the projects regional solicitation application / Specific Bicycle and Pedestrian Elements / Pedestrian-scale lighting \$500,000. The Minneapolis Transportation Action Plan calls out Pedestrian Lighting goals in Strategy 3 Actions 3.1 and 3.3 page 56,
- If the lanes are reduced to one lane each way we should have bump outs/shoulders for the busses to pull into at stops to maintain traffic flow
- I drive this road anytime I leave the house. I feel it should only be one lane in each direction. Left Turn arrow for traffic heading north from 37th onto Central. Also, more turn lanes in addition to single lane traffic.
- The intersection of 37th at Central, needs proper left turn lanes and signaling. This is needed both eastbound and westbound.
- Motorists often form two lanes at this stop light, especially going north on Johnson. One will often be car turning right onto 37th and the others are often traveling straight or taking a right turn onto 37th.
- We should keep the 37th Ave/37th Pl intersection - it is heavily used and is convenient for residents going to the St. Anthony shopping area to avoid trains

- I am not sure we should remove parking altogether on 37th. Would it be possible to keep parking on one side of the street? I do agree with dropping the speed limit though - traffic regularly goes 40 mph down the road (including semis) which I am not comfortable with.
- This comment keeps disappearing so I hope not to repeating something
- Be mindful that without the parking lane on 37th that cars will start to park on the cross streets.
- I support a 25mph speed limit and designing the street accordingly. Traffic routinely moves well in excess of the current 30mph limit.
- With a primacy on non-vehicular transportation in the redesign, can we route trucking/ shipping to another corridor? Perhaps they could route to 694, then South on University which is a major traffic thoroughfare?
- I support removing parking from 37th altogether. Existing parking is rarely used; I live on 37th and almost never park on the street. It seems unsafe and green space is much preferred.
- Designated turn lanes to get from 37th to Johnson would make that spot much safer. The cars racing to pass on the right are scary!
- No dedicated bike lanes. If there must be one put it on the Minneapolis side
- Straight driving lanes. No bobbing and weaving like when driving downtown mpls
- Speed limit 35 mph
- Don't over think the road
- It's already too narrow feeling- widen the traffic lanes and limit traffic to 1 lane in each direction, and carve out bike/pedestrian paths and parking on BOTH sides - Minneapolis and Columbia Heights- would make this street feel safer.
- A turn lane at Johnson
- Do not do turn lane for East bound. It will create a speedway between university and central. If you do that there needs to be more 4 way stop signs along 37th.
- Agree--there is space for it, so marking an actual right turn lane on northbound Johnson & 37th would be helpful here. Southbound traffic at this intersection is typically light, so if two northbound lanes are marked, it makes sense for the left turn and straight traffic to share a lane and the right lane be reserved for the ability to turn right on red.
- 9' boulevards seem nice, but fear they have the unintended consequence of hiding pedestrian and bicycles giving vehicle a false sense of security that they can safely drive faster. I am happy to see Columbia Heights joining St. Anthony Village and Mpls in pursuing a 25 MPH speed limit.
- I would love to see sidewalks
- Alternative two, with the walking path on the south side of the road, is the best use of current space and allows us to keep the road in the same location. It will also allow for more shadier, that is more enjoyable, walks on hot Summer days. This should pair with further greenification of the current boulevards in Minneapolis.

To see specific locations where comments were made, please refer to map on the project website:
<https://www.37thavene.com/meetings>.

Screenshots of Online Interactive Map

