

Transportation Commission – CIP Committee
Seventh Street Discussion

Commissioner questions and staff responses

June 2018

Q1. The current plans for the roadway between Stadium and Huron indicate a 4" bike lane stripe, parallel to an additional 4" "buffered" stripe, to produce a 5' bike lane as measured from what I presume is the gutter line (or similar). There is no indication of vehicle travel lane width and from what I understand the roadway width varies. Why isn't the desired travel lane width indicated in the plan and the buffer distance corrected for width? Will installers follow the plan as presented on paper or the (potentially) communicated desire of staff for 10' travel lanes?

A. A uniform 10-foot travel lane and uniform 1-foot buffer will be installed in both directions. Any additional space will go toward the bicycle facilities. Lane widths are measured from the centerline of markings.

Q2. What, currently, is the narrowest lane width on 7th? Will 10 foot travel lanes actually narrow the roadway along this corridor? How narrow can lanes be?

A. Narrowest existing is 10-foot lane. 10-foot is the minimum lane width for an arterial street. Space for emergency response vehicles, buses and other wider vehicles must be maintained.

Q3. Near and through the intersection with Madison, how wide is the roadway? Will these 10 foot lanes continue once they transition to shared lanes or will lanes be wider than 10'? Was an "uphill bike lane" considered approaching Madison from the north? Along those lines, what other alternative treatments are available for the roadway surface that indicate a potential conflict zone when segments revert back to a shared lane?

A. Staff are willing to explore advisory bike lanes at this intersection, and possibly at other intersections along the corridor. Advisory bike lanes provide a way to delineate a shared space for cars and bikes. This is an alternative that is newer to the industry and beginning to gain traction as an acceptable best practice.

Q4. What sections of 7th St have "60 or more vehicle access points within 0.5 miles"? MI MVC 257.627 (e) Liberty to Davis, for example, seems to meet this criteria. I'm curious if that is the case and if there are other segments of roadway that meet this criteria.

A. Speed limits in the City of Ann Arbor are not set by driveway curb cuts. The option to consider driveway curb cuts in setting speed limits has historically been available for agencies that lacked the necessary resources and/or engineering staff to conduct speed studies. Evaluation of curb cuts was particularly applicable for gravel roads. Evaluation of curb cuts was never

intended to replace an engineering study. An engineering study trumps the driveway curb cut analysis when it is available.

Q5. According to the January 22nd, 2018 staff follow up to the Jan 18th Transportation Commission, staff elected to keep the turn lane on 7th at Madison "for safety purposes." With Vision Zero principles in mind, how does staff determine "safety" and does the type of user factor into that decision? Could a three way stop at Madison improve safety for turning movements and also allow for continuous bike lanes along this corridor. What steps would be needed to install a stop sign at 7th and Madison with continuous bike lanes in mind, as well as safety considerations for all users?

A. The City's engineering staff reviewed the request for a STOP sign and Madison and Seventh, and found that the sign is not warranted. STOP signs are not permitted to be used as speed control devices under the MMUTCD, and the sign would not be needed from the perspective of sight distance or volumes. Unwarranted STOP signs have a tendency to be ignored more often by drivers, creating a potentially greater safety issue than existed previously. Based on this, City engineering staff does not feel comfortable recommending the installation of a STOP sign at this location.

Q6. South of Stadium, why do the bike lanes end approaching Scio Church if heading south, and Stadium if heading north? Four travel lanes to accommodate vehicular traffic movements through these intersections seems unnecessary based on traffic volume, and interrupts what could otherwise be a connection point for a relatively low-stress bicycle network, with the streets in mind. Was this taken into account? Was this section of the plan "vetted" by the community?

A. Thank you for raising this question. Staff are willing to explore this option.

Q8. What does "vetted by the community" mean for staff? There seems to have been a significant breakdown between community expectations for the design of the project, and the eventual outcome as indicated in the plans. When was this project vetted, and what steps were made to contact previously involved community members?

A. Staff felt that the extensive public engagement conducted in 2014 was sufficient and moved forward to implement a plan as close as technically feasible based on the community input received. Physical constraints within the corridor were shared during the 2014 community engagement, and still exist today. Staff have developed a plan for this corridor that is technically feasible, implementable, and consistent with the expectations set during the 2014 engagement. However, in retrospect staff recognize that the high level of interest in this corridor warranted additional engagement with the community at the time of design and will make an effort to maintain transparent dialogue with communities when moving through implementation of a previously community engagement result.

Q9. What steps were made to remove parking from Huron to Miller during the roughly 5 year span of the project? What is the road width of Seventh between Miller and Huron? How would uphill bike lanes approaching Miller and Seventh impact available on-street parking for West park, particularly given that there is currently parking restrictions on Seventh between Huron and Bath?

A. Parking removal would require a separate community engagement effort that has not been conducted. A community engagement effort with N. Seventh Street (also including Parks staff and park users) is being pursued during the summer of 2018. Additional details to follow.

Q10. When was Seventh Street first classified as a minor-arterial, and why? What steps would be necessary to reclassify Seventh as a Collector?

A. Current designation is a National Functional Classification – Minor Arterial. Seventh has likely been classified as an arterial in early City planning dating back decades. The federal functional classification system was introduced in 1968 National Highway Functional Classification Study. Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently in any major way. Rather, most travel involves movement through a network of roads. It becomes necessary then to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a highway network. Review of the role of this facility will likely result in a similar designation as it has and continues to serve since the initial classification.

Q11. Why does City and County literature, as well as maps available through SemCog and Google Maps, show bike lanes on Seventh through the entire corridor instead of properly indicating the gaps present? What would need to occur for information sources to accurately reflect the available bicycle infrastructure?

A. The City Bike Map is at a scale and has been based on mapping conventions that show the general designation of the corridor since the 1999 map. The intersections where the lane drops are well known and are outlined as a long term issue to be addressed. One way to have a map address the lane drop areas is to change the scale of the map. The balance point has been to have the entire city on a single page, which creates the scale necessary to illustrate what we are showing. These lane geometry issues remain something to be addressed when a project is programmed to address those constrained areas, or when the roadway corridors are reconstructed.

The City County Bike Map correctly show the area between Huron and Miller along Seventh as a sharrow neighborhood connector. Only the Green lines on our published Bike Map illustrate a

bike lane according to the Map Legend. Information from other sources would need to be verified with the managers of their files, i.e. Google Maps.

Q12. What is the estimated budget for improvements on Seventh, just from Stadium to Miller? When does the City project a start date for a larger project on Seventh, including roundabouts as recommended in the Speed Management Study? How does the source of funding impact treatments the City may otherwise be able to consider?

A. The estimated budget for Seventh from Scio Church to Miller is \$945,000. We don't have estimate on a block-by-block basis.

Projects associated with the Speed Management Study will be considered in the CIP process for ranking, identifying funding sources, etc. The full CIP cycle will take place fall 2018.

Most of the items in the Speed Management Study recommendations could likely be funded through the Street Millage. However, these projects would compete against all other capital preventative maintenance, street resurfacing, street reconstruction, crosswalk improvements, school safety improvements, etc.

Q13. I wonder what actual improvement in safety and reducing speeding is projected from this project as it now stands? Is that specified somewhere? It must be part of the conclusions? I'd like to see that data.

A. This was a systemic application. Not based on site specific data, instead based on city-wide data.

Lane narrowing is a treatment that has been shown to reduce speeds in general.

Crash modification factors are generalized for lane narrowing.