

Cespedes, Christopher

From: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 9:24 AM
To: Cespedes, Christopher
Subject: FW: UM planning process, possible TC resolution on lane reallocations!

From: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission <xxxxxx@a2gov.org>
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 9:00 AM
To: Westphal, Kirk (DGT) <xxxxxx@gmail.com>
Cc: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission <xxxxxx@a2gov.org>
Subject: RE: UM planning process, possible TC resolution on lane reallocations!

Good morning Kirk,

Thank you for contacting the City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission. Your concerns will be provided as a communication item on the October 18th Commission Agenda.

Your message has also been forwarded too transportation staff, so that they are also aware of your comments and may respond separately

Christopher Cespedes, Management Assistant

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From: Kirk Westphal <xxxxxx@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 12:33 AM
Subject: UM planning process, possible TC resolution on lane reallocations!

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I'm super excited about these two items! It's hard to overstate their potential impacts. I think each one has the power to transform the safety and comfort of people on foot and bike (and transit) unlike anything the city has seen before.

1) Community engagement for UM short- and long-term planning: tomorrow and next week! The University is inviting community input on its future campus plans. Sessions are tomorrow (12th), and the 19th. I went last night, and I highly recommend going. In addition to land use planning, there are scenarios involving potential biking, walking, and transit infrastructure. Personally I'm hoping for an emphasis on cheap and effective short-term infrastructure improvements between North and Central Campus—while we wait for potential long-term, expensive infrastructure (bridges over the river and tracks, etc.).

Details on how to register here (requires registration either as guest or with UM login): <https://sessions.studentlife.umich.edu/track/9614>

Some discussion here (in the Housing For All FB group):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/a2yimby/permalink/2715065995299106/>

2) Resolution at a future Transportation Commission meeting: reallocate lanes on ALL multilane city roads!

At the end of the last Transportation Commission meeting, under "future agenda items,"

Commissioner Kleinman proposed this: "A resolution to ask Council to set a policy that all multilane roads in Ann Arbor should be slated for lane reduction or conversion to bus-only lanes with a feasible but aggressive timeline." Wow! IMO this could be the singularly cheapest, most effective and immediate policy that City Council could implement to attempt to comply with their Vision Zero commitment (zero serious injuries and deaths by 2025). It would also be a nation-leading policy. As we know, multilane roads are disproportionately dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers due to their inherent "design speed" problem (width). Also, reallocating lanes often opens up opportunities for dedicated bus and bike infrastructure, so AAATA could advance its bus rapid transit ambitions, and City Council could get on track to meet that 5-mile/year bike lane commitment as well.

We don't know if this issue will be voted on at next week's Transportation Commission meeting or a different one, but certainly if you want to support it, I'd encourage you to write to xxxxxx@a2gov.org and copy xxxxxx@a2gov.org.

Below, I'll paste a draft of a resolution I wrote on the topic of reallocating road space and eliminating all references to car traffic throughput; feel free to give me feedback on it or use information from it to advocate as you see fit (I encourage you to fact-check; I take responsibility for any inaccuracies in it).

Best,
Kirk

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Sample resolution:

RESOLUTION TO REAFFIRM CITY COMMITMENT TO VISION ZERO, IMPLEMENT LANE RECONFIGURATIONS, AND DISCONTINUE MODELING MOTORIST VOLUME AND DELAY

WHEREAS Council proclaimed its commitment to Complete Streets in 2011 "to promote safe, convenient, comfortable, energy efficient and environmentally sustainable travel for all users"¹

WHEREAS Council accepted the Pedestrian Safety and Access Task Force Report in 2013 and committed to eliminating deaths and serious injuries on city streets by 2025²

WHEREAS Council committed to a work plan to implement Vision Zero in 2017³

WHEREAS the 2021 "Moving Together Towards Vision Zero" Transportation Plan reaffirms the City's commitment to Vision Zero with a goal of eliminating deaths and serious injuries on our roadways by 2025 and commits to other time-bound goals such as: evaluating lane reconfigurations annually, creating or upgrading 5 miles of all ages and abilities cycling infrastructure per year, and reducing speeding citywide

WHEREAS wide roads encourage faster car driving speeds and are inherently more dangerous for all road users, which is in direct conflict with our Vision Zero commitment

WHEREAS lane reconfigurations (aka "lane conversions" or "road diets") that convert 4 lanes to 2 with a 2-way center turn lane reduce crashes 19-47% due to the reduction in speed, passing movements, and sudden stops, and the elimination of pedestrian "double-threats" at mid-block crossings

WHEREAS the Federal Highway Administration recommends consideration of reconfigurations for roads carrying daily traffic volumes up to 25,000; despite many 4- to 5-lane roads in Ann Arbor currently meeting that threshold, this guidance should not prevent lane conversions for roads over that threshold and should be eliminated from city analyses because: 1) it is inherently in conflict with Vision Zero, as it is derived from a federal-level political compromise between auto throughput and safety, a primary reason the United States holds the worst road safety record among wealthy nations, 2) it is unreliable because it neglects human

behavior, advancements in routing technology, and examples of high-volume road diets and road removals around the country that have resulted in insignificant driver delay, 3) Council has stated that road safety is not up for compromise, and 4) Council has adopted a goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled by at least 50% (“A2Zero Living Carbon Neutrality Plan”)

WHEREAS road diets on Jackson and Platt roads led to significantly fewer crashes, and the South Main Street reconfiguration led to an approximately 10x reduction in speeding⁴

WHEREAS lower car speed is vital to Vision Zero, as there’s a 25% chance of pedestrian fatality or severe injury when a car is traveling 20 MPH, while there’s a 50% chance of pedestrian fatality or severe injury at 30 MPH

WHEREAS it is likely that many injuries have already been prevented due to lane reconfigurations in Ann Arbor

WHEREAS the statistically-sampled 2018 Community Survey reinforced the public sentiment about road safety: 71% of Ann Arbor residents stated that it would be worth a 30-60% delay in driving time (a 10-minute drive becomes a 13- or 16-minute drive) to achieve a “significant” or “very significant” reduction in road injuries through road redesigns

WHEREAS in unlikely cases where motorist delays approximate these levels, the city’s Vision Zero commitment dictates that it is not acceptable to continue endangering the safety of all road users—and preventing the growth in walking and cycling—for the convenience of some motorists during short periods of the day when the roadways may be at capacity

WHEREAS motorist “Level of Service”—a metric commonly used by traffic engineers to project delays experienced by motorists in different engineering scenarios—is being increasingly restricted by state and local policies because its use inherently compromises road safety and reinforces infrastructure that serves current undesirable car volumes⁵

WHEREAS the continued use of current motorist volumes in documentation and discussions concerning speed management or nonmotorized infrastructure infers that these traffic volume measurements—rather than the goal of 50% reduction in miles traveled and road safety—should impact road design choices

WHEREAS reconfiguring lanes is inexpensive, requiring minimal staff design time, contractor labor and materials; further safety enhancements such as pedestrian islands, single-lane roundabouts, chicanes, delineators/bollards, or permanent curbs can be budgeted separately

WHEREAS significant benefits of lane reductions include greater opportunities to 1) install dedicated bicycle and transit/HOV-only lanes and 2) replace signalized intersections with single-lane roundabouts (which also calm traffic, reduce injury crashes 75%, and safely decrease motorist idling time)

WHEREAS the city is unlikely to accomplish the goal set forth in the “A2Zero Living Carbon Neutrality Plan” of 25% of in-city trips being conducted by walking or bicycling “thanks to ubiquitous and safe infrastructure” by 2030 unless car lanes are repurposed expeditiously

WHEREAS persons walking and biking continue to be injured every year on City roads that are dangerously wide, a significant number of whom could be spared this trauma through a more rapid deployment of lane reconfigurations

WHEREAS the perceived or real possibility of road reconfigurations leading to more car volumes on adjacent public roads (“diversion”) is not a valid objection to implementing reconfigurations; all roads must be designed for safe car speeds, and if car traffic diversion is later found to occur and create a documented unsafe condition, the solution is to calm deploy traffic calming on those roads as well

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED Council reaffirms the City's Vision Zero commitment to eliminate all road deaths and serious injuries by 2025,

RESOLVED Vision Zero progress will be a significant component of the annual City Administrator evaluation,

RESOLVED the Ann Arbor City Council directs the City Administrator to:

- 1) on an annual basis, beginning November 2023, identify all remaining multilane road segments (4+-lane two-way and 2+-lane one-way) owned by the city, where all lanes are available to single-occupancy vehicles,
- 2) ensure these roads are reconfigured the following calendar year to a maximum total driving lane width of 3 vehicle lanes on 2-way roads and 1 lane on 1-way roads following treatment with a maximum of 10' lane widths, with public notice and written feedback opportunities—but not additional public hearings—preceding reconfiguration; exceptions may be made for lanes that are specifically budgeted to include transit and HOV-only lanes within 2 years
- 3) provide an analysis to Council by November of each year for circumstances where staff recommends exceptions to reconfiguration the following calendar year, and provide a crash and vehicle speed analysis for each multilane and formerly-multilane road segment
- 4) discontinue the city's use of the automobile "Level of Service" metric, car traffic counts, and all car traffic modeling that normalizes current volumes and attempts to measure motorist delays on city roads
- 5) discontinue all efforts to eliminate the city's existing (but unenforced) HOV/bus lane on Glen Avenue⁶

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- 1.
- 2.
3. <https://michigancompletestreets.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/ann-arbor-complete-streets-resolution.pdf>
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
7. https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2015/10/ann_arbor_adopts_pedestrian_sa.html
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
11. <http://a2gov.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3205526&GUID=F5CC0E30-7BCB-4A89-B636-4943C065381C&FullText=1>
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
15. <https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2022/01/ann-arbor-continuing-road-diet-experiment-on-south-main-street.html>
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
19. <https://t4america.org/2016/06/08/california-officially-dumped-the-outdated-level-of-service-metric-your-state-should-too/>
- 20.
- 21.
- 22.

23. <https://annarborobserver.com/hov-lanes/>

24.

Reference for delay tolerance from Community Survey (2018, Appendix A pg 5)

<https://www.a2gov.org/departments/communications/SiteAssets/Pages/Citizen-Survey/The%20NCS%20Technical%20Appendices-Ann%20Arbor%20FINAL%202018.pdf>:

Table 14: Question 14

The City of Ann Arbor is considering introducing new road designs that have been shown in other cities to reduce pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crashes, injuries and deaths. For example, roundabouts have reduced injuries for all users while decreasing motorist drive times (by creating more steady traffic flow). Other road redesign options reduce injuries but have different effects on motorist drive times. Which of the following statements is closest to the advice you would like to give the City as they make these decisions?	Percent	Number
Substantially increase drive times (a drive that was 10 minutes would be 16) to very significantly reduce pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crashes, injuries, and deaths	28%	N=171
Moderately increase drive times (a drive that was 10 minutes would be 13) to significantly reduce pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crashes, injuries, and deaths	43%	N=265
Slightly increase drive times (a drive that was 10 minutes would be 11) to somewhat reduce pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crashes, injuries, and deaths	20%	N=122
Do nothing and expect the same drive times and levels of pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crashes, injuries, and deaths	6%	N=36
Reduce drive time, even if it increases pedestrian, cyclist, and motorist crashes, injuries, and deaths	3%	N=20
Total	100%	N=614