

WBWC Comments on East Medical Bridge Project

Revised October 14, 2021

The Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition (WBWC) has the following comments regarding the proposed contract for redesign of the East Medical Center Drive bridge over the railroad.

The process

WBWC believes that the handling of the proposed contract has been faulty. To our knowledge, there has been little public review of this proposal. At a minimum, a large project like this should have been presented to the Transportation Commission so that the public interests in this area, including those of bicyclists and walkers, could have been discussed. The proposed contract appears to predetermine the bridge design before there has been public input.

Background

Longstanding city plans, reaffirmed by a City Council resolution on June 15, 2015, call for the city to complete trail improvements in the Fuller / Maiden Lane / East Medical Center Drive area before or concurrently with intersection improvements (see Map 1 below from the resolution package). This project affects one leg of that intersection. Completion of the planned trail projects around the intersection will give continuity to the Border-to-Border Trail and allow a safe bikeway between the U-M campuses. The report of the U-M President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality says (on page 107), "U-M should create a workable and safe Central-to-North Campus bike route." And making progress toward the city's A2Zero goals will require substantial increases in biking and walking.

The opportunity

Redesign of the bridge gives the opportunity to enhance the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians and make progress toward the completion of the planned trail system. The proposed contract calls for adding a 10-foot vehicle lane that *may* be needed for hospital traffic in the future. WBWC suggests including in the design two features that will improve non-motorized safety *now*.

WBWC suggestions (see Map 2 below)

1. Build the planned trail connections to the concrete pad below the bridge.
2. Add at least 5 feet to the west sidewalk on the East Medical bridge, increasing the sidewalk's width from about 10 feet to at least 15 feet, to allow room for bidirectional bike lanes and a pedestrian lane and thereby improve the safety of the proposed Campus-to-Campus Bikeway.

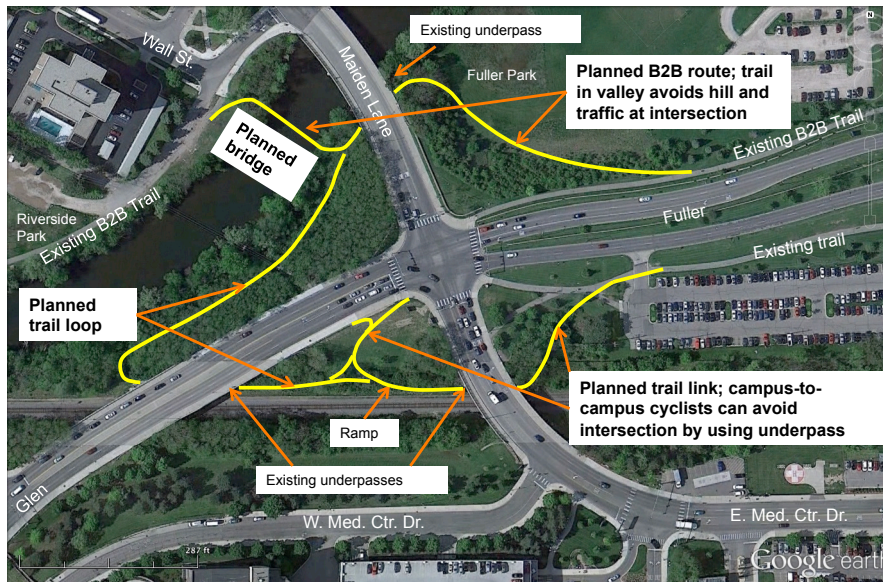
Action requested

WBWC asks City Council to direct staff to include the two suggestions above in the proposed contract.

Map 1: From 2015 City Council resolution:

REVISED

Planned B2B Trail Near Fuller / Maiden Lane



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Map 2: Suggested additions to contract:

