

Hess, Raymond

Subject: FW: Recommendations to city council

From: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission <TransportationCommission@a2gov.org>

Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 4:23 PM

To: 'Alex Lowe' <lengau@gmail.com>

Cc: Hess, Raymond <XXXXXXXXXX>; Flowers, Suzann <XXXXXXXXXX>; Redinger, Cynthia <XXXXXXXXXX>; Liu, Luke <XXXXXXXXXX>; Naheedy, Cyrus <XXXXXXXXXX>

Subject: RE: Recommendations to city council

Alex,

Thank you for contacting the City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission. Your recommendations to City Council will be provided as a communication item on the March 16 Transportation Commission Agenda.

Transportation staff are also copied here so that they are also aware of your comments.

Respectfully,

Eli Cooper, A.I.C.P.

Transportation Program Manager

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Thank you.

From: Alex Lowe <XXXXXXXXXX>

Sent: Friday, February 18, 2022 12:56 PM

To: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission <TransportationCommission@a2gov.org>

Subject: Recommendations to city council

Hi there!

I understand that some members of the city council are looking for transportation-related recommendations, so I thought I'd share what I'd like to see. I've numbered them to hopefully make it easier to follow.

1: Pedestrian and bicycle priority during construction: This is absolutely crucial. Shortly after the Packard bike lanes were installed, there was construction work that shut down the sidewalk, the bike lane and one general traffic lane eastbound. While I really appreciate the construction (it was sidewalk improvements), the implementation was less than ideal. Neither my wife nor I were particularly confident bicyclists at the time, and the construction work came up pretty suddenly. Putting two tentative bicyclists in a single lane with cars going 45 mph for a half mile is quite the dangerous

proposition and resulted in both terror from us and rage from the drivers passing us using the turning lane. I understand the need for construction, but let's prioritise continual traffic flow for all, not just for cars. This case is actually one of the simpler ones to handle. My suggestion would for similar cases would be as follows:

1. Use cones, barrels, concrete barriers and signs to divert motorised traffic from the two eastbound lanes into the central turning lane.
2. Place modular concrete barriers between the temporary motorised traffic lane and the next lane over.
3. Divert both the sidewalk and the bike lane into the now-available general traffic lane for vulnerable road users.

I have provided an example of how this would look using Streetmix, since visualisation is generally helpful.

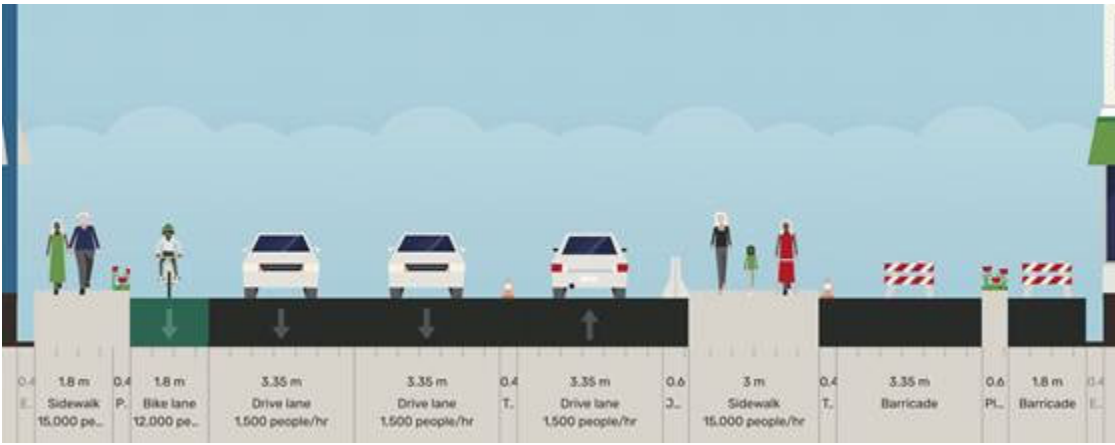
The current Packard layout:



How it looked during construction (**BAD**):



How I would have preferred to see flow (through use of temporary construction materials), with the temporary "sidewalk" shown being a mixed pedestrian/bike space:



While I'm not a civil engineer, this seems a pretty obvious solution and I trust that our well-educated experts handling the planning would be quite easily able to turn this example into a feasible reality.

2: Let's talk about bus priority at traffic lights. While an absolute ideal would be to have dedicated transit corridors (perhaps even with electrified light rail), an early way to start this work would be to provide buses with priority at upcoming traffic lights. This would require much less (though still nonzero) investment and would move buses along their corridors faster than they currently do. Add to this a few well-placed brief bus lanes to allow buses (and buses only) through lights, passing traffic stopped at the light, and we could significantly improve the speed and reliability of our buses.

3: Can we reduce the wait times of pedestrian beg buttons? It sometimes feels like the beg button does nothing at all and we have to wait for a single car to show up, despite a large number of pedestrians waiting. This is especially common along both Packard and Washtenaw (and yet another reason the city should take ownership of the Washtenaw Ave right-of-way).

4: Can we please provide bicycles with a way to trigger detectors? Currently, turning left onto a major street from a minor street frequently looks as follows:

1. Dismount bicycle at intersection.
2. Walk to sidewalk and press beg button
3. Re-enter minor road and wait for traffic signal.

Ideally, this would be in the form of bicycle sensors (camera, radar, loop sensors, etc.), preferably combined with prioritisation that would eliminate the need for a bicycle to stop at all (much as they do in some Dutch cities - after all, stopping and starting are the most dangerous times on a bicycle with car around).

5: Eliminate right turn on red, especially in pedestrian and bike heavy locations. We all know right turns on red are dangerous to vulnerable road users.

6: Implement Idaho Stop-like rules for bicycles. If state law prevents us from implementing this city-wide, a campaign to include a "bicycle yield" addition to stop signs would likely be doable. This need not be done everywhere all at once, but could focus on requested locations and locations where stop signs are being replaced.

7: Narrow residential streets! Some of our residential streets are ridiculously wide, and the city has recently taken to using speed humps to slow cars down on them. While this is somewhat effective, it has many problems (not the least of which is cars exceeding the speed limit on days like today with snow on the ground - after all, the snow effectively flattens the humps). Advisory bike lanes, parking protected bikeways, and other cheap temporary changes can be

implemented until the street requires resurfacing (at which point better, more permanent changes can be made). When implementing more permanent changes, let's see something a bit more imaginative than speed humps. The raised crossings that have been added in a few places are a good start, but let's make the entry steeper so cars have to slow down further. We could also add things like [chicanes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicane#/media/File:One-lane_chicane_1.jpg) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicane#/media/File:One-lane_chicane_1.jpg], preferably with pass-throughs for bicycles (so the bikes don't have to interact directly with cars in the chicane). On streets with well-used street parking, we could once again use paint as a temporary solution. Here's an example:

Currently, many of these streets look as follows (though only unofficially, since they're essentially unmarked except at the ends of blocks):



With nothing more than some paint, the road could be narrowed as follows:



On long blocks, there could be mid-block shifts that act as chicanes:



This could be further improved by placing plastic barriers to prevent cars from using the bikeway and concrete barriers (or planters, or bulb-outs) at the shift location to further slow cars.

8: Increase pedestrian leading intervals (this should be self explanatory).

9: Better bikeway maintenance in winter. Seriously, this is a little bit embarrassing. Bike lanes get cleared mid-block, which is great. But at intersections or at entrances to businesses, they become dumping grounds, making for dangerous biking.

Thank you for your time and considering these suggestions.

Best regards,

Alex Lowe