



City of Bloomington Engineering Department

Date: June 7, 2023

To: High Street Residents, Property Owners, and Other Interested Parties

From: Neil Kopper, City of Bloomington Engineering Department

Subject: High Street Project Update

Summary

This document provides a brief project update, including a summary of initial project decisions and public input, for the High Street Intersection Modernizations and Multiuse Path project. This information will also be posted on the project website at: <https://bloomington.in.gov/engineering/projects/highstreet>

Initial Project Scope

The basic scope of this project is to install multiuse path along High Street from Arden Drive to 3rd Street and replace/modernize the traffic signals at the Hillside Drive/Moores Pike, 2nd Street, and 3rd Street intersections. The project also evaluates intersection realignment at the 3rd Street intersection as well as additional intersection improvements at other locations within the corridor.

Project Feedback & Status Update

An initial public meeting was held on April 20, 2023 to provide information about the project and to gather public input which will aid in the development of the project. Verbal and written comments were collected during this meeting. Additionally, comments were collected from an online form for two weeks after the meeting. The following list summarizes the most frequent comments received and comments directly related to initial project decisions.

- Transportation Plan Consistency
 - *Public comment/question:* Is this project consistent with the Transportation Plan?
 - *Response:* This project is listed in the Transportation Plan as recommended project MU-8 to “Provide a multiuse path and bike lanes on S High St from E Winslow Rd to E 3rd St.” In recognition of the existing constraints on this street, the City is pursuing only a multiuse path instead of both a multiuse path and on-street bike lanes. The facility type recommended for project MU-8 is consistent with both Figure 20 and Appendix F of the Transportation Plan which specify the bicycle facility type for a street. In some instances, including for High Street, that information overrides the typical cross sections shown for street typologies.
- Side of the Street
 - *Public comment/question:* During the public meeting, staff specifically requested input regarding variables that should be considered when choosing the side of the street for this project.
 - *Response:* The multiuse path will be constructed on the east side of High Street. This decision was reached after reviewing public input and existing conditions. Factors considered in the decision include existing geometry, traffic analysis, utility locations, cost, right-of-way limits, housing setbacks,

historic properties, routing/functionality of the path, existing facilities, intersection conflicts, and tree presence. The primary consideration for this decision is the benefit of a more convenient and higher comfort pedestrian and bicycle route achieved by keeping the path on the east side of the street which limits forced pedestrian and bicycle crossings of High Street.

- Project Limits

- *Public comment/question:* During the public meeting, staff discussed multiple upcoming studies and specifically requested input regarding the limits of this project.
- *Response:* The initial project limits assume a northern terminus at 3rd Street and a southern terminus at Arden Drive. The conceptual graphics for the public meeting showed an option to realign High Street to meet Bryan Avenue as it intersects 3rd Street, but that realignment may not be desirable depending on the outcome of upcoming studies. There is a future corridor study of the 3rd Street/Atwater Avenue one-way pair and an upcoming Bloomington Transit study of 3rd Street. This project will be phased such that the northernmost blocks (including the Atwater/High and 3rd/High/Bryan intersections) will be a separate project from the federally funded southern portion. This division will allow the project to avoid making any impactful decisions in advance of the upcoming studies. The current phase of the project will have a northern terminus at Hunter Avenue and is expected to include improved connectivity to the Hunter Avenue neighborhood greenway route.

- Project Funding and Timeline

- *Public comment/question:* Can the project be delayed until at least 2024 so that the new City administration is able to weigh in on the project?
- *Response:* This project was prioritized by the Bloomington Monroe County Metropolitan Planning Organization to receive federal funding for up to 80% of both design and construction costs. The Bloomington City Council voted to approve local funding match for this project as the highest prioritized project in the 2022 public works general obligation bond ordinance. Delaying project progress until 2024 is not feasible without jeopardizing the project's programmed federal funding (approximately \$3.8MM). Construction is expected in 2026, and the next administration will be able to review this project before that time. However, if the preliminary engineering work does not continue now, then the project will most likely not be able to meet the deadlines required for using the programmed federal funding.

- Stormwater Infrastructure

- *Public comment/question:* There were multiple general and specific comments and questions regarding stormwater in the area.
- *Response:* This information is very helpful and stormwater will be thoroughly evaluated by the project's engineering consultant, Butler, Fairman & Seufert, Inc. The project will address drainage concerns along the east side of the road throughout the corridor, as is necessary to accommodate the new multiuse path. Where feasible, the project will also consider drainage improvements for the west side of the road.

- Trees

- *Public comment/question:* There were multiple requests to avoid removing existing trees.
- *Response:* Tree removals will be necessary along the east side of the street. However, design of the multiuse path will attempt to minimize removals or other impacts to these existing trees. New trees will be planted where feasible. Staff will coordinate with the City's Urban Forester and the Tree Commission regarding both removals and new plantings.

- Covenanter Cemetery
 - *Public comment/question*: What will happen adjacent to Covenanter Cemetery?
 - *Response*: Detailed design has not been completed, but this project will be built outside of the cemetery's existing stone wall.
- Right of Way (ROW) Acquisition
 - *Public comment/question*: How will property acquisition take place?
 - *Response*: ROW acquisition is expected from numerous properties along the street. All acquisition will comply with federal Uniform Relocation Act requirements, including fair market compensation offers as determined by independent appraisers. Property owners will be individually contacted with information if acquisition is required from their property.

Next Steps

In order to proceed with detailed evaluations and design, workers will begin gathering topographic survey information. Property owners may receive a letter providing advanced notice of this survey work. Project staff will continue to consider all of the project input collected to this point as preliminary engineering work proceeds. Future updates and opportunities to review a more detailed design proposal will be advertised using the email list used to distribute this document. If you would like your email address added to that list, then please contact Neil Kopper (koppern@bloomington.in.gov).

Thank you for taking the time to submit preliminary design comments for the project. Your comments will help the design move forward in a way that minimizes any possible negative effects, while allowing us to take advantage of the positive impact this project will have on the southeast side of Bloomington. We hope you stay involved and provide additional comments as the project moves forward into a more refined design phase.