Fixed-Route Transit and Pedestrian Access
Steering Committee Meeting Notes
September 18, 2013
9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

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Following introductions J. Meyer covered the project schedule. The online survey started in early September and will be active through October 15th. So far 60 responses have been received. The project team will continue to promote the survey and do outreach over the next month. The committee members were encouraged to spread the word about the survey and flyers were made available. The open house is scheduled for Wednesday, October 9th. There will also be a combined steering committee meeting earlier that day. The project team is looking at early November to have a draft report ready.

J. Meyer presented some of the early survey results. He cautioned about the small sample size at this time but indicated the early survey results are supporting the technical analysis. Survey respondents have so far indicated the greatest needs are east of Iowa and the focus of improvements should be on major corridors such as 23rd and 6th. Survey respondents have also indicated that the greatest improvement that would enhance transit service in Lawrence would be to have continuous sidewalks on both sides of major roadways. The project team will provide an update of the survey results to the steering committee in October.

J. Meyer reviewed the revised heat map and the bus stop evaluation/scoring process. The main take away from the heat map is that areas east of Iowa are generally in the greatest need of pedestrian improvements that would support transit service. This does not mean that there are not areas west of Iowa that have issues; instead, the primary concern with the area west of Iowa is the connectivity to/from a person's origin/destination. West of Iowa, there are sidewalks, or shared use paths, generally present (in most cases) and in good condition. The steering committee then discussed this development issue – this is something that is constantly mentioned at various meetings and plays an important role in supporting transit operations. The Dillons store on Massachusetts was identified as a good example of a

development that provides good connectivity between the bus stop and store. J. Meyer indicated the report will include a discussion about the need to strengthen the development/site plan review process to be sure to include adequate transit connections. He indicated this would be especially important as development continues to occur to the western portion of Lawrence which will eventually be served by transit.

J. Meyer then discussed the phase two analysis which the project team is conducting. The phase two analysis began with an initial review of major corridors that could benefit from transit-pedestrian improvements. The project team used aerial photos, field work photos, and Google Streetview to identify preliminary pedestrian-transit related issues or deficiencies. He indicated the project team was conducting field work that began on Tuesday, September 17th. The field work is important as some of the deficiencies identified through online mapping have been recently improved. For example, the intersection of 23rd and Alabama was recently improved to include sidewalks on the north side of 23rd (where sidewalks did not previously exist). There were also a few other locations where the project team had identified deficiencies that had recently been addressed.

The project team is continuing the field work today (September 18th) to review additional corridors. J. Meyer indicated that initially the project team thought the heavy rain (that occurred the morning of Tuesday, September 17th) would make the field work difficult. It turns out the rain was a benefit as the difficult walking/transit conditions were much more pronounced.

J. Meyer then provided a brief overview of the "targeted areas" for improvements. For the rest of the presentation he showed field work photos of existing conditions and discussed potential improvements. A summary of the corridors and the general discussion of the steering committee members is provided in the following.

<u>23rd Street (Iowa to Alabama)</u>
J. Meyer showed photos of the bus stop on 23rd in front of Dillons. This stop is directly in front of the store entrance but in order to get to the store a person must walk across 30 feet of grass and the surface parking lot. The project team measured this distance at approximately 170 feet. By comparison, an individual in a wheel chair would need to use the 23rd Street sidewalk and travel north to the parking lot entrance before proceeding to the store entrance, this distance totals over 300 feet (almost twice as far and less safe as the direct connection). J. Meyer showed photos and discussed how a sidewalk connection to the parking lot could enhance connectivity to the store. One parking space would be lost to accommodate this improvement and the marked buffer area around the parking spaces for individuals with disabilities could be used to cross the parking lot to access the store entrance. The committee discussed some of the challenges including that the 30' of grass is on private property and likely would not be a high priority for a property owner to install a sidewalk. J. Meyer mentioned the stop on the other side of 23rd does have a parkway sidewalk connection from the stop to the sidewalk but that was possible because the connection is within the City's right-of-way.

J. Meyer also showed a photo of the bus shelter in front of Dillions and indicated that the 16' of concrete between the street and sidewalk was a good example of what improves the bus boarding/alighting process. He indicated that this could be an example of what the desired condition would be at most stops in Lawrence. It was mentioned that there currently is no set design standard for the bus stops.

J. Meyer indicated that the project team observed several mid-block crossings while conducting field work. The majority of the committee members agreed that they have also observed a number of mid-block crossings on 23rd, some that even occur very close to traffic signals. It was also mentioned that the bus stop on 23rd is frustrating from an operational standpoint as the K-10 Connector often has long dwell times which can negatively impact local bus service.

Naismith Drive (south of 23rd Street)

Photos of the Naismith bus stop, just south of 23rd at the Dillons parking lot entry/exit, were presented. This bus stop is heavily used as evident by the large muddy area at the stop and the "goat path" that continues south along Naismith, behind the guard rail, to the trail connection. J. Meyer pointed out that there is a sidewalk on the other side of the street; however, people are still using the east side of the street, where a sidewalk doesn't exist, to access this bus stop. Possible improvements were then discussed. These included pouring concrete at the bus stop, adding a new sidewalk, moving the guard rail, and adding a pedestrian crossing just south of the bus stop. Ideally the sidewalk would continue north of the bus stop to 23rd but the project team recognized that the roadway/intersection would need to be reconfigured in order to accommodate pedestrians.

J. Meyer indicated that this location was a good example of possible short-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions that could come out of the Multimodal Planning Studies. At this particular bus stop, adding a concrete pad at the bus stop and a pedestrian crossing would be a short-term solution. Constructing a new sidewalk that would continue south to connect to the trail would be a mid-term solution and reconfiguring Naismith at the intersection of 23rd could be a long-term improvement to provide a continuous sidewalk from the bus stop to 23rd Street. The committee agreed with the recommendations and the general approach for the report. It was mentioned that these improvements could potentially allow the southbound bus stop on Naismith to be relocated if a pedestrian crossing were installed. It was also mentioned that KDOT will be reconstructing the intersection of 23rd and Iowa to eliminate the free flow rights that currently exist. This will improve the pedestrian environment and will be mentioned in the study report.

Naismith (north of 23rd to 19th)

J. Meyer then discussed Naismith Drive from 23rd to 19th. Photos of a "goat path" on the east side of the street were shown (no sidewalk currently exists on the east side of the street). He talked about how the initial analysis showed east-west pedestrian crossings of Naismith lead to catch basins which could cause issues and be extremely difficult for individuals with disabilities to maneuver.

The conditions near the intersection of 19th were then discussed. J. Meyer indicated the project team observed numerous pedestrians in this area and many walking in the road and even the muddy path where no sidewalk exists. This area is heavily used by transit riders, especially the K-10 Connector stop on the west side of the road. The committee agreed this was an area that should be improved.

19th (Iowa to Alabama)

J. Meyer showed photos of the north side of 19th which has no sidewalks in the area. There are bus stops along 19th and this is a corridor that the project team feels should include sidewalks on both sides of the street. This led to a discussion that sidewalks, as a matter of policy, should be included along major and minor arterials. The south side of 19th has a continuous sidewalk but several deficiencies were noted. A discussion followed about the north side of 19th being KU property and this area is being discussed as part of the campus master planning process. It was suggested that the project team

contact the KU campus master plan team to coordinate the improvements being considered in this area. Further discussion indicated that a shared-use path is being discussed on KU property along 19th Street.

The area near Anna Drive was then discussed. The project team saw the need to construct concrete pads at the two bus stops and to provide some form of a pedestrian crossing of 19th. It was mentioned by the committee that the big need in this location is to extend a sidewalk to the student housing that is located north of 19th. J. Meyer indicated the project team would include this in the report.

6th (Iowa to Massachusetts)

The project team completed field work of this corridor and photos of deficiencies/issues were presented. Numerous mid-block crossings were observed, by both pedestrians and bicyclists. The project team members also crossed the street several times during field work and noted the difficult and uncomfortable situation. The committee members indicated they have also witnessed several mid-block crossings and expressed concerns about crossing 6th. The project team also observed high bicycle usage on the sidewalks along 6th. General improvements, including finding some 6th Street crossings, were identified as a need that should be addressed in this study.

Spot locations

The project team then discussed the following spot locations.

33rd Street (near Kohl's and Wal-Mart)

Photos of the bus stop and pedestrian crossing along 33rd, near Kohl's and Wal-Mart were shown. This is a heavily used transit stop and frequently includes carts left near this stop. Photos showed no concrete between the sidewalk and roadway and due to heavy rain the area was extremely muddy. The committee discussed how individuals in a wheel chair would board the bus. It was mentioned that the bus ramps are able to extend over this area to allow a wheel chair to board but it was agreed that this area should be improved.

J. Meyer also indicated that there are crossing concerns at this location. Field work showed a long layover at this bus stop and traffic that passed the bus uses the center turn-lane. This created potential traffic operational issues especially given the proximity to the store driveways on both sides of 33rd. This location was identified as an opportunity to potentially develop a bus pull and enhanced shelter.

9th and Iowa

Photos of the intersection at 9th and Iowa were displayed. There is a bus stop on the west side of Iowa (south of 9th) that people would use this intersection to access. The cross walks on nearly every corner of this intersection could benefit from some improvements. J. Meyer showed a photo of three pedestrians who had crossed the east leg of the intersection (9th) and proceeded to end up in the gas station parking lot to continue walking south. One of the committee members frequently uses this intersection and agreed that this is an area that needs improvement. J. Meyer indicated that the project team was conducting additional field work at this intersection and it would be addressed in the study report.

Adjournment

The meeting ended shortly after 10:00 a.m. The next Steering Committee meeting will be a combined meeting that occurs on October 9th at 1:00 p.m.