

April 13 Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Panel Meeting Notes

Luna Pier Road Bridge – Mike stated that this bridge is supposed to start by the end of this year. The bridge was originally programmed for just preventative maintenance, but MDOT has elevated it to a full replacement. He stated that MDOT wants to consult with local communities about what their non-motorized priorities are for this bridge, but that MDOT's budget is tight. He stated that MDOT owns the bridge, but not the road itself.

Jim said that bike lanes would require 10 feet, but a separated lane with a barrier would require more space. He said that there may be a parking area on the west side of this bridge for Luna Pier's festivals in the future.

Kim said that Erie Township has a Parks and Rec. Plan with a bike path but that it stops at Bay Creek Road and they don't have plans currently for facilities along Luna Pier Road but could incorporate this. Jim suggested that a way could be found to connect to Erie's schools.

Lucie asked how much more a barrier would cost. Mike said the bridge would need to be significantly wider with an additional 2 feet on each side of the barrier, so it would need to be 14 feet on both sides, with the barrier itself adding another 2 feet. He stated that there would need to be some kind of local plan for MDOT to refer to in order to justify the additional cost of this. Jim said that there are also access ramp concerns with this bridge. Mike mentioned that there could be right-of-way concerns too, but Jim said that the County GIS indicates that MDOT owns the necessary right-of-way.

Mike stated that grading could be provided so that this path could be provided in the future. Bill stated that the bridge is currently not very safe to bike on due to the traffic. Jim asked about the possibility of a separate span for bike/ped. Lucie said that this would make more sense if this were a shared use path and that it would likely be more expensive to do this. Alex agreed and said that this has been SEMCOG's experience in the region. Mike stated that, most of the time, a combined facility on the bridge itself is less expensive. Bill asked if 8 feet would be good enough. Mike said that the 10-foot standard is not assuming 1-way directionality, and that separated bicycle lanes with one-way directionality could have a narrower width. Brian stated that an additional 2 feet would be needed to meet AASHTO standards along the barrier of the bridge itself.

Mike brought up that an unplanned facility could meet with public criticism that money is being wasted. Lucie asked when MDOT needs an answer. Mike said by April 23rd. Florence asked if there would be an additional local cost. Mike said that MDOT would pay for it unless there was something like a sidewalk. He mentioned that 6- to 8-foot pedestrian fencing should also be part of the request.

Alex said that this road and bridge is already a regional priority in SEMCOG's non-motorized plan, and that this request just needs to be tied in to the county and local municipality plans. Lucie said that the draft County non-motorized plan could be used but that right now the Plan just indicates a signed route, which she believes implies at least a paved shoulder. Mike stated that MDOT would like something specific in the Plan about this bridge.

Alex asked if paved shoulders would show adequate treatment. Mike said that he thought that it would. Jim stated that he thought that the facility should be separated on the road to accommodate families using the bridge. Mike reiterated that a barrier should be asked for with 14-feet of right-of-way then. Brian asked about the barrier itself, and Mike said that would require another 2 feet. He mentioned

that the facility could be wider on one side and narrower on the other side. Brian stated that a wide shoulder could be put in at first but that it could accommodate a separate facility in the future. Alex suggested adding in some extra painted lines for safety. Mike said that this would be up to the locals since it is their road and not MDOT's.

Lucie asked if the approach would need to be a path or if it could just be a paved shoulder. Mike said that the Plan should show a separated facility, but right now the County can just submit the current draft of the Plan. Lucie said she would change the Plan now if the Panel is okay with this. No one had any objection to this. Florence agreed that we should ask for the separated facility on both sides of the bridge and that we should get unified support of this from Luna Pier, Erie Township and Monroe County.

League of Michigan Bicyclist Pilot Program – Lucie said that there was an exchange of emails and there is a grant available for sharrows to create bike lanes as well as a grant for setting up bicycle counters. She stated that there is not a great place for the sharrows now, except for perhaps the Raisinville Road bridge, but that the counters could be used along North Custer as well as along the Heritage Path by the battlefield. Rusty stated that there is already a counter by the battlefield operated by the National Park Service. Lucie said that she did not know this and that she would get the count information from them.

Lucie asked if the counter would be on the motorized lane of traffic. Brian said that it depends upon what technology is used. Florence asked Mayor Clark whether the City was open to this since N. Custer is their road. Mayor Clark said that he has looked into the program and explained to the panel the technology that is being used. He said that the deadline for this program is April 15th, and that the local municipality would have to be responsible for a lot when it comes to these counters. Alex brought up possible vandalism of the counters. Mayor Clark stated that he'd like more information about the program, but that it's difficult to get it since this program is coming at the last minute. Alex mentioned that SEMCOG still has its bike/ped counting program that is currently on hiatus due to COVID-19. Florence stated that it might be best to just pass on applying for this program at the moment. No one had any objections to this.

U.S. Bike Routes 25 & 30 – Lucie said that she met with MDOT, the Road Commission and SEMCOG. She said that the discussion was about whether Douglas Road would be a good entry point into Michigan for these bike routes. She said that the Road Commission made an agreement that they would maintain Douglas Road and that they would send a letter stating this to ODOT.

Florence asked if Matt would be the new representative from the Road Commission on the Panel now that Randy has retired. Matt stated that he would run this through the new Road Commission director to find out how she wanted to handle the appointment.

Loop Trail – Lucie said that the application is currently in the queue and will be talked about at future meetings. Brian said that SEMCOG will try to help the County implement this application so that MDOT will get on board to fund it. He said that there should be a decision within 6 months. Florence asked for

a road map of a date this would be done. Mike said that MDOT's TAP grant people will likely not give a concrete answer about this. Florence said that it's good for the Panel just to have an idea of when this could happen. Brian said that the sooner that we get MDOT the information that they need, the sooner that it will be in the queue.

Equity Grant – Florence stated that two surveys are going out and that she has finished up the equity survey with input from SEMCOG. Lucie said that the first survey is about travel behavior and the second survey is about the proposed facility map itself.

County Plan – Lucie said that she has revised the Plan based upon Brian and Alex's comments. Lucie said that there are still missing pieces of the Plan such as public input and having a 5-year action plan. She said that the latter needs to be developed by this group. She said that she has created some draft goals and objectives and that they be shared in order to receive input from this group at a future meeting.

Mike announced a Planning and Environment Linkage study for I-75 at Front Street and Elm Street for a fully funded project five years down the road. He said that the study will hopefully start by the end of this year and could last 12 to 14 months. He stated that there will be no preconceived notions of what changes need to be made.