

**MINUTES**

**1. CONVENE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING**

Mayor Labadie called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

**A. Roll Call**

Present: Mayor Labadie; Councilmembers Maddy, Sanschagrin, and Gorham; City Attorney Shepherd; City Administrator Nevinski; Parks and Recreation Manager Czech; City Clerk/HR Director Thone; Planning Director Griffiths; Director of Public Works Morreim; and, City Engineer Budde

Absent: Councilmember DiGruttolo

**B. Review Agenda**

**Maddy moved, Sanschagrin seconded, approving the agenda as presented. Motion passed.**

**2. HIGHWAY 7 CORRIDOR STUDY PRESENTATION**

Faith Zha, MnDOT Highway 7 Project Manager, and Paul Glaser, MnDOT Senior Project Manager, introduced themselves and shared details that came out of the Highway 7 Corridor Study, safety and crash data, briefly reviewed the Segment 1 alternatives MnDOT had prepared, including no build (Alternative 1), roundabouts (Alternative 2), or improved intersections (Alternative 4).

Councilmember Maddy noted that he did not see the Eureka Road intersection included in any of the plans.

Mr. Glaser explained that Eureka had not been specifically identified in this layout, but throughout the alternatives, they were proposing a left-in at Eureka and no left-out, and explained how traffic would have to utilize the Minnewashta roundabout to navigate to the east.

Councilmember Gorham asked how MnDOT had looked at getting people across Highway 41, for example, at Highway 7, where kids were going to the middle school using bikes or walking.

Mr. Glaser stated that today they cross at a signalized intersection and in this case they would cross at a multi-lane roundabout, but acknowledged that both may be less than desirable. He noted that if Alternative 2 moved forward, there would have to be consideration for what the crossing treatment would be for that roundabout.

Councilmember Gorham asked who would maintain the crossing beacon Mr. Glaser had mentioned.

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Ryan Wilson, West Area Manager, Metro District, stated that for roundabouts, rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) are one of the treatments they can use to indicate the presence of pedestrians or bicyclists. He explained that they do have a cost participation policy that guides the way they interact on a capital construction basis, as well as for maintenance/operations. He noted that the current policy states that RRFBs are maintained by locals, but explained that there was an update to this policy in the works.

Councilmember Sanschagrin noted that Highway 41 already has a light and asked if there was a way to leave the lighted intersections as they were and address others with roundabouts.

Mr. Glaser stated that there would be some options to leave Highway 41 as a signal, but it would not address any safety considerations, and noted that there would probably also need to be some type of accommodation for a U-turn movement if they put a median barrier down the corridor. He gave a brief description of the various intersection options, such as side stop control,  $\frac{3}{4}$  intersection, signalized, Reduce Conflict Intersection (RCI), Greet T, single-lane roundabout, and multi-lane roundabout. He gave an overview of the matrix and data used for evaluation of the Segment 1 alternatives and explained that although both Alternative 2 and Alternative 4 addressed the needs in the corridor, the recommendation was for Alternative 2, with the roundabout corridor, because it addressed them a bit better.

Councilmember Sanschagrin asked if there were fewer accidents in roundabouts than at signalized light intersections, to which Mr. Glaser responded that the biggest benefit of roundabouts is that they greatly reduce severe injury and fatal crashes.

Councilmember Gorham asked how pedestrian mobility would be improved, to which Mr. Glaser replied that the perception of crossing at a signal from a pedestrian standpoint was that they were safe, but they do see a lot of pedestrian fatalities at signals.

Councilmember Gorham asked if there was a reduced rate of fatalities with the use of beacons at roundabouts. Mr. Glaser responded that beacons at a roundabout increase the yielding compliance for pedestrians, but was not sure there was a study that would say it would reduce the number of crashes with pedestrians.

Mr. Miller reviewed statistical data related to RCIs, which showed a significant decrease in fatal and serious injuries, and explained that they do the same thing as a roundabout because they reduce conflict points and reduce high-speed maneuvers. He acknowledged that multi-lane roundabouts can be a bit tricky because people are not as familiar with them, but there were still significant decreases in pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle crashes.

Mr. Glaser stated that related to speed, there is a chart that shows the probability of surviving an accident at 25 mph compared to 35 mph and 40 mph, and noted that speeds traveling through a roundabout, which is a fluid traffic control device, are low.

Councilmember Gorham stated that he felt the City would be able to sell the barrier median pretty easily, but noted that he would like to see there be more statistical information about pedestrian safety at roundabouts.

Mr. Glaser stated that they can bring that kind of data to the City and noted that one of the things they have been looking at is incorporating a continuous trail option, where feasible, in Segment 1, and stated that there may be a need for some location connections. He explained that in

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Segment 2, they were looking at more improved crossing options in that segment, rather than more of a regional trail facility like they were for Segment 1. He outlined the next steps of the corridor study and explained that they were in a formal public engagement phase in May, and having an official recommended alternative in June, and then begin working on implementation of how it may be able to be built, for example, in pieces or all at once. He explained that the study should wrap up by the end of September 2025.

Councilmember Gorham confirmed that City Engineer Budde was on the TAC and asked about the risk that Mr. Glaser had mentioned regarding the scope of the FY 29 paving project not addressing all the needs. Mr. Glaser explained that the paving project has some level of safety improvement funding available, but not to the level of the alternatives presented, with the number of roundabouts and median barriers.

Councilmember Gorham asked how much they had planned for the FY 29 project, to which Mr. Miller replied that it was somewhere around thirty-five million dollars.

Mayor Labadie asked if the pop-up events MnDOT has held were well-attended by the public. Ms. Zha replied that their pop-up events went well and met with around seventy people in total, and noted that the roundabout suggestions had been well received, especially at Eureka Road. She asked if MnDOT was planning to make this same presentation to all the cities along the corridor. Ms. Zha acknowledged that they would share this exact presentation with all the cities and local partners along the corridor.

Mr. Miller gave a summary of the next steps as this project transitioned from the Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP) to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Mayor Labadie expressed concern about residents from all the corridor cities getting burned out with surveys and having the feeling that nothing was happening. She referenced the survey that will close on June 3, 2025, and asked if they do not have the same number of responses for the Eureka intersection that they did on the original survey, if it would impact this project, or if MnDOT was looking at everything in totality. She asked if the cities along the corridor should be doing anything to encourage more resident input.

Ms. Zha noted that having residents take the survey and share their study information with the public, like they were tonight, was providing them with a lot of good feedback. She stated that all of this feedback will help inform the future project, which she would consider a near-term project.

Mr. Miller agreed that they would take all of the input into consideration, and there could still be tweaks made to the plan. He acknowledged that MnDOT understands that the Eureka intersection was important to the City and its residents and explained that even if there were no comments about it during this phase of the study, they would not just assume there was no longer an issue there because it still needed to be part of a comprehensive solution.

Councilmember Gorham asked about whether the cities needed to try to push the legislature over the next few years because the STIP would dictate when the design work began and whether there was a dollar figure goal that was part of this discussion. Mr. Glaser explained that there would be a planning-level cost included with the alternatives for them to understand the difference and the gap in funding.

Councilmember Gorham asked how the decision about the recommended alternative would be made. Mr. Miller responded that since it was MnDOT's road, they would be the final decision maker, but their goal was to make the decisions in partnership with the corridor cities and have their support.

Mayor Labadie noted that the current State Senators and Representatives were supportive and on board with this project. She thanked the MnDOT representatives coming to give this presentation, holding pop-up events, and keeping the City in the loop about this project, and asked that they continue to do so.

### **3. UTILITY BILLING POLICY**

Finance Director Schmuck explained that an internal audit had been conducted after the last quarterly utility billing had been done and found a few accounts that had inaccurate billings. She stated that some of the past practices that the City had used to handle correction for these billings were not documented and she was recommending that the City establish a Utility Billing Policy that would incorporate City Code, fee schedule, State statute, as well as historical practices to it would all be in one place. She noted that the policy was straightforward and intended to bring it to a future Council meeting as part of the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Maddy asked if this just codified business as usual or if substantial changes were being made to which Finance Director Schmuck replied that for the most part it was just codifying the City's existing practices.

Councilmember Sanschagrín stated that he felt the first sentence may be broader than intended and suggested some language changes to the policy. He asked if there may be a way to include a more specific website reference rather than just pointing people towards the City's main website. Finance Director Schmuck clarified that the links within the document were hyperlinks and bring residents to the proper page within the City's website but noted that they could also use the search engine.

Councilmember Maddy referenced the language removal suggestions made by Councilmember Sanschagrín and stated that he was confused about why they would want to take them out.

Councilmember Sanschagrín stated that the current wording was, 'to define reasonable regulations' and stated that these were not regulations and it was just a policy. Finance Director Schmuck clarified that some of them were regulations.

Councilmember Maddy stated that he had relied on staff's recommendation to let them know what made sense, but felt it would still make sense if Councilmember Sanschagrín tweaked it a bit.

Mayor Labadie reminded the Council that the goal was for this to be able to come before them on the Consent Agenda, so if there were things that needed to be hashed out, this was the time to do it.

Councilmember Gorham and Mayor Labadie stated that they did not have a strong opinion about the suggested changes made by Councilmember Sanschagrín.

Councilmember Sanschagrín stated that his suggestion would be clearer for residents. Finance Director Schmuck stated that she could make the recommended changes if the majority of the Council was indifferent to them.

#### **4. DRAFT COUNCIL BYLAWS**

City Administrator Nevinski gave an overview of the history behind Council consideration of having bylaws and explained that what was included in the draft bylaws generally reflected how the Council currently operated rather than creating new processes, but they could look at the possibility of doing things differently in the future.

Councilmember Maddy referenced the ex parte communications sections, which generally say not to talk to anyone else, and he had also abided by Statute 13.D. to not interact with a majority. He asked if the City wanted to say that they could not speak about City business with just one other person.

City Administrator Nevinski stated that this was related to members of the public because the Council had to be aware of open meeting laws in their communications, and explained that ex parte communications and due process related to matters that might come before the Council for formal consideration, and how they represent their position on matters.

Councilmember Gorham stated what separates what Councilmember Maddy was referring to, and this section was that it was communication directed to the merits of the outcome of a proceeding, and just hearing someone out would be okay. He explained that he had additional comments on the draft bylaws but did not think there would be enough time to get through them all tonight and noted that Councilmember DiGruttolo also was not here tonight to discuss this item.

Councilmember Sanschagrín referenced III.d. Meetings, and stated that he felt that should just be included within the first paragraph of this section. He referenced III.b. and stated that the League of Minnesota Cities has documents that talk about the mayor being the head of the City, but he felt this could convey a sense of confusion. He noted that the League of Minnesota Cities agreed that what was described within the Mayor's Handbook may be a better description than what the League had used and was considering adjusting their description, and explained that Shorewood, as a weak mayor City, had the Council as the head of the City.

Mayor Labadie noted that the amount of time she spends in the role of Mayor is more than double that of the Council role. She referenced organizations such as the Regional Council of Mayors and the Minnesota Mayors Association, where the meetings were not attended by Councilmembers, as well as meetings with Senator Anne Johnson Stewart with other mayors and quarterly meetings with the area mayors and the Superintendent of the public schools. She clarified that she disagreed with Councilmember Sanschagrín because there were times the Mayor formally represented the City, whether the Council liked it or not, and asked where the proposed language under III.b. was taken from. City Administrator Nevinski stated that the language came from the handbook, but staff could take a closer look and try to make some modifications for future consideration by the Council.

Councilmember Maddy asked what the problem was with the proposed language, because it stated that the Mayor was equal to the rest of the Council except for certain items. Councilmember

Sanschagrín stated that it was a misperception because the Mayor was an equal member of the Council.

Councilmember Maddy disagreed and stated that if there was an emergency and something needed to happen right away, the City needed to lean on the Mayor and not the members of the Council.

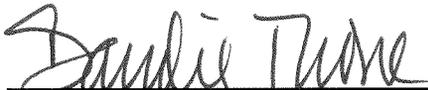
Councilmember Sanschagrín stated that representative was the key word and clarified that he did not mean to disrespect Mayor Labadie with his comments. He stated that he appreciated all the time Mayor Labadie was spending representing the City, but that was where some confusion came in with some of those activities, because technically, the Council should be part of those activities.

Mayor Labadie explained that she did not find this segment confusing and referenced an upcoming conference that would hold a Mayor's Breakfast and would only have mayors in the room. She asked City Administrator Nevinski to provide the Mayor's Handbook language and the League of Minnesota Cities language to the Council for the next time this item was discussed, for them to consider the language side by side.

**5. ADJOURN**

**Maddy moved, Sanschagrín seconded, Adjourning the City Council Work Session Meeting of May 12, 2025, at 6:48 P.M. Motion passed.**

**ATTEST:**

  
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**Sandie Thone, City Clerk**

  
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**Jennifer Labadie, Mayor**