

NORTH CENTER STREET TRAIL UPDATE

COUNCILMEMBER SIMONSEN & CITY ENGINEER





North Center Street Trail Update

* Note: Images in this presentation are for the purpose of discussion only and we do not imply any imagery accurately reflects the expected outcomes on North Center street.

Overall Goals for North Center

Based on considerable feedback both the Mayor and Councilman Simonsen (over roads and trails) have received over the past several years, we started with the following major goals:

- Increase safety for school children that are coming/going from school. Currently they are in the road, which is getting busier.
- Provide safe walking connections across town and to other existing pathways for exercise, recreation, and access.
- Connect Main Street to Burgi for pedestrians.
- Consider roadway changes consistent with a neighborhood road (from Master Road Plan), to encourage 25mph speed.
- Try to preserve and support the existing natural and rural feel.



Early review

Starting several years ago we started reviewing the entire length.
Some major talking points:

- How much right-of-way do we have, where is it, and what obstacles seem clearly apparent?
- There are significant differences in existing conditions as you review the entire length. How might that effect our options and choices?
- What is this going to cost? What options would carry higher cost, and by how much?
- At some points along the length, it seemed perhaps one side might be better, but at other points, the other side might be better. Are we open to switching sides back and forth, or do we want to try to avoid unnecessary crossings? Aren't crossings where most accidents happen?
- How will the city fund it (Grant funds?)



Preliminary design suggestions

Based on the goals and early review, we started the preliminary design

- We obtained survey data, necessary for any other design work
- We defined the general preferred cross section and design width
 - 11ft vehicle travel lanes, 1ft shoulders, 4ft “park strip”, 6-8ft trail
- That’s ~67% roadway, ~22% trail, and 11% park strip. The vehicle lanes would meet the engineer’s minimum width.
- We proposed a possible solution for the Northern area which already has an existing curb.
- We asked the designers to try to make it fit without disturbing existing structures or vegetation. If there was not enough width, consider taking a little from the trail or park strip width in order to make it fit.



Which side of the road?

The Design Width barely fits within the open area without disturbing existing conditions. Obviously in some areas it fits better, in other areas the trail actually will have to be narrower, but it does fit well enough that we are satisfied with it.

Key understanding: The width is the width. The order of components doesn't matter. Illustration:



Public Feedback

We presented the preliminary design to the Parks and Trails committee in June and got their feedback and support.

We conducted a public meeting July 11th.

Wes wasn't able to complete his prepared presentation on the 11th, instead the public led the discussion toward a few specific topics. The session seemed *heated* at times between different citizens.

We took note of the topics and the specific concerns, including pro and con arguments for or against competing approaches.



Review process

First, we care greatly about citizen feedback. Feedback always matters and is strongly considered. But we can't do both "A" and "B"; we can't please everyone.

We called a panel to review and discuss each item, including a review of all the comments and suggestions, pros and cons. I (JC) made it clear I wanted a thorough and open-minded discussion, to consider all feedback very seriously.

We had: Engineering, Planning, MAG Grant writer and Trail specialist, Legal, Mayor, and myself as elected citizen representative.

The panel voted on each item. I will share a summary.



Main Concerns

Why the East side?

- Neither side would be *perfect* or meet all preferences.
- Flipping the design (road on East vs trail on East) doesn't eliminate concerns as some citizens asked. Either the trail hits the obstacles or the road does. There are many considerations and they were thoroughly discussed.
- Both sides have pros and cons at certain points, both sides have some amount of existing trail or sidewalk.
- We counted driveways and intersections, and found the East side scored far better, today, based on our point system. We think this is likely to remain stable for quite some time based on the few remaining undeveloped areas.
- We would prefer to avoid forced crossings without any real reason. Of course people will cross wherever they want to cross. We don't want to *force* them to cross more than necessary.
- Staying on the East side allows a young child to be dropped off on the trail by parents and get all the way to school without having to cross center (especially at Main).

Panel Vote: 6 East 0 West





Attached vs Detached

Main Concerns



- Both approaches are possible.
- Some people have expressed a preference for attached (by our count of hands, about 30% of citizens present)
- Some people have expressed a preference for detached (by our count of hands, about 60% of citizens present)
- Some of us at the city have received a lot of negative feedback about our few attached trails (Wes, JC, and Celeste have all received unsolicited negative feedback in the past).
- We discussed every pro and con we've heard or could think of, for both approaches, including:
 - Snow and plowing issues, width of design, safety and comfort, target audience, concerns about gravel, initial and ongoing costs, UDOT or other available recommendations and standards (which don't legally apply but may provide insight).
- We generally agreed that we don't *love* loose gravel as a separation mechanism, mostly that it can be messy, but there are several other things to consider:
 - We've been sweeping the trails now, about once a week. It's really been helping. We like having someone out maintaining the trails like this, there are many benefits and it's needed for more than just sweeping.
 - We have also been snowplowing multiple trails and we think we need to continue and expand this practice, which applies throughout the city for many different trails.
 - We have been discussing many other options that we can try and which might be better than loose gravel, including:
 - Low water grasses or other Vegetation, various compacted materials, exposed aggregate concrete, colored or stamped concrete, etc.
- In short, detached, IE separated, seems not only to be more popular among citizens, but we think it's safer, more comfortable, and is the best choice. We can work on better approaches than loose gravel. We can start testing ideas immediately.

Panel Vote: 6 detached 0 attached



Main Concerns



Additional Crossings

- Parks and Trails committee members as well as some Citizens suggested that it may be beneficial to include more crossings at key points
 - 100 N (access to Centennial Park and nearby businesses)
 - 250 N (Connecting the LDS church as well as an existing trail that leads into Remund farms)
 - We also feel that we should color the T intersection crossing at 600 N.
- Should these be raised? Colored?
 - Our panel is cautious about “going crazy” with crossing changes until we see if we like the designs we are implementing. We plan to test raised and colored crossings at several points to gain experience with the options.
 - We also have a right-of-way issue near 250 N that needs to be addressed separately before the connection with a crossing can be implemented.

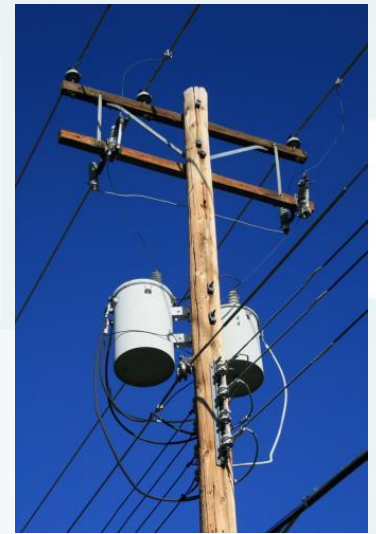
Panel Vote: 6 add at-grade colored crossings at 100 N and 600 N, and work towards adding 250 N.



Main Concerns

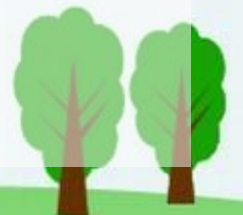
Power Poles / Lines

Will the city bury all of the power lines? Can the city commit to burying?



- There are certain poles that are “in the way” of the trail (or the road if you put the trail on the other side). We would consider burying the lines related to these poles if we have money within the budget to do so. We’d like to do that if we can as opposed to just relocating the poles.
- The project is already very expensive.
- We won’t know how much money we have within budget (if any) until we get bids.
- We think the lowest project bidder is probably the best suited to bury lines at the lowest cost as well, as part of the job.
- We don’t think we can commit to anything or get more information that would change that. We can come to the council to decide at a later date when we have real info if we want to:
 - Spend more to bury the lines for these few poles (if it doesn’t fit within the allocated budget)
 - Spend more to bury the lines for even more poles (whether or not the problem poles fit within budget)

Panel Vote: 6 keep our current approach 0 change our approach



Main Concerns

Trail re-alignment to Sewer Easement

There is a sewer easement that continues north at the point where N. Center turns and goes toward the West before turning northward again. Can we put the trail in that easement?

- Easements are specific, the existing easement doesn't grant any right to do a trail. We'd have to seek new rights from many property owners.
- In the past, the city (like other cities) has received pushback from citizens who don't want a trail in their backyard. It's often unpopular with property owners.
- A key drawback is that this route would fail to provide the same level of service to *all* residents that live in the northern area, basically making trail access difficult for many families, especially on the west side of N. Center in this area.

Panel Vote: 6 do not pursue this concept at this time.



Main Concerns

Bulb-outs



This was more of a question from the city to the residents at the Northern end of the trail area:

- Do you think you might like the city to add “bulb-outs”?
- We discussed the reasoning, as well as pros and cons.
- Primarily: They should better establish the travel lane, protect parked cars a little, and should provide better visibility for turning, while possibly losing a little parking capacity.
- Citizens expressed some interest and wanted to be kept in the loop.

Panel Vote: 6 continue to design bulb-outs to meet the stated goals, keep the citizens in the loop.



Main Concerns



Drainage questions

Several citizens expressed concern about drainage when it rains or snows heavily.

- Wes agreed that we should attempt to correct any existing issues while making these changes as part of this project, and he believes we can.

Panel Vote: 6 make every effort to address the drainage concerns.



Another Public Meeting?



We considered this.

- We know there are different views, and we know we can't please everyone. We feel the final design we're working on respects all the feedback we've been given and meets the most needs in the best way. We've gotten feedback from our citizen-staffed PTT committee, the neighborhood design review meeting, and multiple one-on-one meetings between staff and interested citizens.
- We followed a consistent procedure for getting feedback, and we reviewed all the feedback thoroughly, as we have done with other similar projects.

Panel Vote: 6 proceed, based on the considerable feedback we have received



Timing



The engineering tasks have continued to take more time than anticipated, and at this point the project is best served to start in the spring or 2025 after winter. Some components may possibly be started sooner, weather permitting. But the project is generally anticipated to begin construction next spring.

Working through the citizen feedback process may have a little to do with it, but it's mostly other things. Some key things of note:

- It took longer than hoped to select and contract with the engineering firm.
- There were problems initially with the survey data.
- The complexity and amount of detail was just large.

We want to get in, get out, and close roads for the least amount of time possible, and to avoid dealing with change of seasons.

The project remains top priority.

We still expect to go out for bids fairly soon.

One major benefit: Wes believes we can position to get the best possible pricing. Wes can explain his reasoning.



Questions?

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References / Credits

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