Active Living Advisory Committee (ALAC)
Thursday, February 13, 2020
3:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Planning Central Conference Room, 11th Floor
1819 Farnam Street

ALAC Member Attendees: Mark Stursma, Andy Wessel, Ben Turner, Tom Everson, Jason Rose

City Reps: Dennis Bryers (Parks), Derek Miller (Planning), Kevin Carder (Planning), Jeff Riesselmann (Public Works), Mike Gaughen (Public Works), Carrie Murphy (Mayor’s Office), Mike Kleffner (Public Works)

[All notes are paraphrased and not necessarily direct quotes of meeting attendees.]

Agenda:

1. Approval of January minutes (Voting Item)
   a. Tom motion; Andy second; unanimously approved

2. Sidewalk Closures / Construction Detour Policy
   a. Jeff: We have a draft Public Works policy (attached to meeting notes)
      i. We had an unwritten policy of trying to have other side of street open when there is a sidewalk closure
      ii. We have tried to lay out a clearer framework for detour policy in work zones
         1. Order of priority:
            a. Try to have portion of sidewalk open (min. 4 feet)
            b. If not possible, ensure other side of street open, with signed ped detour
            c. If closure lasts more than 2 weeks, and no alternative path on other side of the street
               i. On case by case basis, could require temporary sidewalk adjacent in roadway
         2. Require private construction projects (building permits) to comply with this sidewalk closure policy
            a. If they know going in, they are more likely to comply with the policy
            b. Andy: How do we ensure that applicants are aware of the new policy?
               i. Derek: Could add it to permit application
3. Policy refers to Part 6D of MUTCD for design details

b. Andy: Where is the natural place for administering/enforcing detour policy
   i. Mike Kleffner: The natural place will be under me (Public Works Construction division)
      1. Also would need help from Planning to ensure when a private project closes a sidewalk, need to ensure policy is followed
      2. We have staff who already deal with sidewalk/ped infrastructure. We spend about $3M annually on ADA ramps and sidewalk repair with resurfacing program
   ii. Andy: will this be inserted in existing detour policy or will it be a new policy
      1. Mike K: it would be a new standalone internal policy
      2. Mike K: When this goes into effect, we will send out to all consultants and developers in town
   iii. Jeff: This is something that we have already started to implement over the past couple months
   iv. Mark: I think it makes sense to reference MUTCD Part 6D
      1. Jeff: Yes, MUTCD gets into details on devices utilized and options for signing/constructing detours
      2. Mike K: We took proposed policy (from Mode Shift) into account, though some provisions couldn’t realistically be applied to every construction project
      3. Mike K: City does view sidewalks as transportation infrastructure. We have four people in my division focused specifically on sidewalk and curb ramp construction

c. Mark: So this will apply to Public Works, all public utilities, as well private projects?
   i. Yes
   ii. Mike K: there will be a learning curve for utility companies. They have wide authority to go in and make changes and it’s often the “wild west” with fiber companies
   iii. Jeff: We think this policy will definitely be a step in the right direction

d. Mark: How do you handle enforcement on policies like this?
   i. Mike K: Depending on the project (utility vs. City vs private projects) enforcement responsibility will fall to a different division
   ii. Mike G: We do have enforcement mechanisms for street obstruction permits: can fine them for improper use of barricades and other things like that
e. Andy: How long will it take to finalize the policy and run up the chain
   i. Mike K: We consider this basically the 95% draft policy
f. Mark: Do we want to endorse the policy now or study it and weigh in at the next meeting?
   i. Andy: I would support endorsing the policy now and if issues arise we can revisit
   ii. Andy: Motion to support the policy’s finalization and approval by the Public Works Director; Jason second; unanimously approved.
   iii. Derek: Not sure Dave (Planning Director) has seen draft policy or weighed in; a couple items refer to Planning Dept.
   1. Mike K.: We will meet with planning again in the next month on it to revise
   iv. Mike G.: Suggest putting policy on Public Works website under Contractors/Consultants when it is final

3. Bicycle Parking Policy
   a. Jeff R.: Handout summarizes intended changes to bike parking policy (attached to meeting notes)
   i. Intention is not to create a new policy but utilize existing policies/permits to implement these changes
   ii. New changes:
      1. On-street bike corrals not permitted unless for temporary / special events
      2. Add language to bike rack request form noting that on-street corrals are not permitted but temporary corrals may be permitted for special events
      3. Traffic division permits: Update two permit application forms to indicate temporary bike corrals are acceptable on public streets when part of approved parade/public event or block party/street closing permit.
   iii. This was discussed with Mayor and Planning Director
b. Andy: So basically this precludes the type of rack that was removed in Benson
   i. Jeff & Mike K: Correct
c. Mark: So in essence, if there is no existing space back of curb, you would have to create a physical curb extension
d. Andy: The issue I think here is there could be locations where the trade-off of losing an on-street space is worth it.
e. Ben: What is the reasoning for the change?
i. Andy: Would assume it is a direct response to the controversy of the Benson corral

ii. Jeff: There is almost always space back of curb to accommodate bike parking nearby
   1. Easier in terms of maintenance

f. Ben: My experience with this was previously with bike share stations
   i. Can think of situations where our preferred location for a new bike share station was on-street and it was denied

g. Ben: Are there other communities with a similar policy?
   i. Jeff: not sure

h. Ben: It’s okay to resolve a problematic situation that just happened, but creating a policy that indefinitely prohibits on-street bike corrals seems problematic
   i. I’m aware it’s been pretty consistent policy to not do these things in the street, and understand if this is just codifying it. But I think this policy is preventing us from doing innovative things that are becoming more common.

i. Mark: Question on the “temporary”: It looks like it is specific to events, but is there an opportunity for something that’s more seasonal, such as having a corral out for summer months that is taken out during wintertime?
   i. Jeff: Maybe something to look at
   ii. Mike K: There would be some logistical questions about installing and reinstalling

j. Ben: I don’t know if City has made a decision on allowing scooters in 2020, but a lot of the issues around sidewalk clutter could be fixed with designated parking.

k. Mike K: If bike corrals or other “pop-up” uses in right of way are intended to be permanent, long-term, why not just pay for the curb extension?

l. Tom: On the issue of bicycles and pedestrians being ineligible for wheel tax funding due to state legislation, is there anything we can do to help change that
   i. Bike Walk Nebraska is working with DOT and may be making some progress
   ii. Tom: Could be part of role for VZ coordinator

m. Andy: Is there anything else we (ALAC) have to discuss or offer on this issue
   i. Mark: Doesn’t appear to be

   a. No additional comments since last meeting
   b. Kevin will email to Public Works and cc ALAC members
5. Criteria for Bringing an Issue to ALAC
   a. Andy: Want to bring this up in response to Benson Bicycle Corral and also on 30th & Burt intersection project
   b. Andy: If an issue is not time sensitive and has ties to active transportation, especially if there is potential for controversy, would be appreciated if ALAC were in the loop
   c. Ben: My recommendation would be any project on a designated bike route be run by ALAC
   d. Dennis: Keep in mind this is an advisory board so there is not a requirement that issues go through the committee for approval
      i. Andy: Not trying to make this a mandatory policy or change the role of ALAC, but would appreciate if City had some informal criteria.
   e. Mark: Perhaps now is an opportunity to create a list of preferred criteria for bringing a project/issue to ALAC’s attention
      i. Ben: If on designated bike route
      ii. Andy: High pedestrian areas
      iii. Jason: High frequency bus routes
   f. Andy: Sometimes it puts ALAC in a bad situation if a City does something controversial and ALAC has no prior knowledge
   g. Jeff: Can you give examples of past projects that were brought to ALAC for feedback
      i. Andy: 32nd Ave bike lanes
      ii. Andy: 50th & Dodge, other stop lights
      iii. Mark: There was a period of time when 90% of what ALAC did was preview projects
         1. I think we really have gotten away from that. Part of reason is probably City staff has a lot more experience and expertise now with dealing with bike/ped infrastructure. However, may still be a role for ALAC especially if project is potentially controversial.
         2. Tom: I think Vision Zero coordinator can be critical piece in that in understanding when project/issue is directly related to active living
      iv. Jason: I also read this agenda item as the process for public to bring issue to ALAC.
         1. Andy: There is something in executive order creating ALAC that mentions seeking community input on active living issues
         2. Carrie: One way you can provide a communication vehicle is set up an email for the advisory committee.
3. Lee Myers: Suggest ALAC look at street bond issue projects and identify/flag projects where there are opportunities to incorporate improvements for other modes
   
v. Mark: Right now, suggesting agenda items is pretty informal process by ALAC members, suggest continuing discussion of creating more formal process at next meeting

6. New ALAC Member Recruitment
   a. Carrie: Gave 5 applications to Kevin
   b. Often advisory committees schedule interview sessions with candidates
   c. Kevin: I can scan and send out to everyone
   d. Mark: Don’t think we necessarily need to do an interview process or anything but we can each review the applications before next meeting.

7. Set March Agenda
   a. New member recruitment
   b. Sidewalk Closure Policy (if updates)
   c. ALAC Agenda Items - Process

8. Adjourn
   a. Tom motion; Jason second; unanimously approved.
City of Omaha
Public Works Department
DRAFT Sidewalk Closure Policy

The agency or contractor performing the work near a sidewalk should make all efforts to keep open at least four feet of the existing sidewalk for mobility, but when that is not possible the following policy shall apply:

1. Sidewalk closures may be considered if the other side of the street provides a walkable alternative path.
2. Advanced signage shall be placed informing of any sidewalk closure and identify the preferred crossing location to the other side.
3. If lasting more than two weeks, and no alternate path is available on the other side, measures should be taken to provide a walkable path adjacent to the construction zone.
4. If no walkable path is available adjacent to the construction zone, the contractor shall post a detour for pedestrians along a path that meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).
5. Sidewalk restrictions and closures shall be compatible with Part 6D of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).
6. In cases of long term closures more than two weeks, the agency or contractor shall submit a traffic control plan to the Public Works Department, for review and approval, which conforms to this policy.
7. In the situation of unplanned emergency repair such as water main breaks, efforts will be made to minimize the duration that the road is not in conformance.
8. Due to the long-term nature of building permits, Public Works Department shall require Planning Department to issue the stipulation that any building permit holder must conform to this sidewalk closure policy.
City of Omaha

Bike Rack (Corral) Policy

The following summarizes the language to be added to multiple existing permit applications available through the City’s website:

1. Lease Agreements: Work with Planning to add language to the second page of the Lease Agreement paperwork that states something similar to "Bike racks (corrals) are not permitted within the traveled way or within designated on street parking areas on public streets. For information on permanent bike rack (corral) installation off the street but within public right-of-way see the Planning Department's Bicycle Rack Request Form. Temporary bike racks (corrals) would be allowed as part of approved permits for block parties, parades, public events or other street closings."

2. Bicycle Rack Request Form: Work with Planning to add language to the webpage application that states something similar to "Bike racks will only be installed off the street away from designated travel lanes or on street parking areas. Temporary bike racks (corrals) would be allowed as part of approved permits for block parties, parades, public events or other street closings."

3. Traffic Division Permits: Update two permit application forms to indicate temporary bike racks (corrals) are acceptable on public streets when part of an approved Parade/Public Event or Block Party/Street Closing permit.