

# CITY COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

## BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

### Work Session – September 11, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice, a work session of the City Council of the City of Bemidji, Beltrami County, Minnesota, was held on Monday, September 11, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Mayor Prince presiding.

Upon roll call, the following Councilmembers were declared present: Prince, Fiskevold Gould, Peterson, Johnson, Rivera, Eaton, Thayer

Staff Present: City Attorney Katie Nolting, City Engineer Sam Anderson, Deputy City Clerk Rachelle Barckholtz

Others: MNDOT: T.J. Melcher, Darren Leasch, Matt Upgren

Mayor Prince stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss alternatives for Hannah Avenue and Middle School Drive and to receive an update from MnDOT in regard to Trunk Highway 197.

The Trunk Highway 197 plan was first implemented on August 19, 2019. Along with the help of the HRDC, MnDOT formulated a Community Review Panel that has been meeting since August 2020 to revisit the Highway 197 corridor project. Out of these meetings new alternatives have been discussed and on December 20, 2021, Council passed a motion of support, aligning with the recommendation from the CRP, City Staff, and MnDOT, for Alternative #1, which includes Roundabouts at the Menards Entrance, Hannah Avenue, and Middle School Drive.

In March, Kimley-Horn was hired to begin design of both Hannah Avenue and Middle School Drive Road segments between 23<sup>rd</sup> Street NW to TH 197. City Engineer, Sam Anderson, has brought to Council, 4 alternatives: 2 for Hannah Avenue and 2 for Middle School Drive. City Staff and MnDOT are not looking for formal action from Council, just updating Council on the TH 197 Project and get a consensus from Council on the Hannah Avenue and Middle School Drive alternatives.

#### Hannah Avenue NW

Hannah Avenue is currently 44 feet wide with 12-foot drive lanes and 10-foot shoulders. With either alternative presented, majority of the road width would be narrowed to 32 feet to accommodate an oversized boulevard (5-10 feet width) and 10-foot paved trail. This road width and trail would be similar to what the City has recently completed on 30<sup>th</sup> Street NW and Norton Avenue NW. The trail would provide a connection between the recently completed 23<sup>rd</sup> Street trail and the eventual trails being proposed on TH 197. There's no current entrances or access points that are proposed to be closed.

- Alternative 1 (preferred option):  
This alternative includes a new compact roundabout being placed at the Burger King/Simonsons entrance. This would have some impacts to those properties directly around the roundabout, primarily Marketplace Food's parking lot, but overall fits better than staff anticipated and Alternative 2.
- Alternative 2:  
This alternative includes a "turnabout" or partial roundabout at the Burger King/Simonsons entrance. This alternative meets the goal of converting the Burger King/Simonsons entrance from full access to  $\frac{3}{4}$  access or eliminating the ability for a vehicle to take a left out of that entrance.

After discussion by council, the consensus is to choose staff recommended Alternative 1.

#### Middle School Drive NW

The proposed Middle School Drive south of the Target/Tires Plus entrance is primarily staying the same as what currently exists today. There will be some slight narrowing of the roadway to accommodate a 10-foot boulevard and 10-foot paved trail. Both alternatives propose a roundabout at the Target/Tires Plus location. The Culver's/Target frontage road entrance location closer to TH 197 doesn't provide enough separation from the highway to improve safety and efficiency for the corridor, along with the increased impacts to neighboring properties made the preferred roundabout location to be what's shown in the attached alternatives.

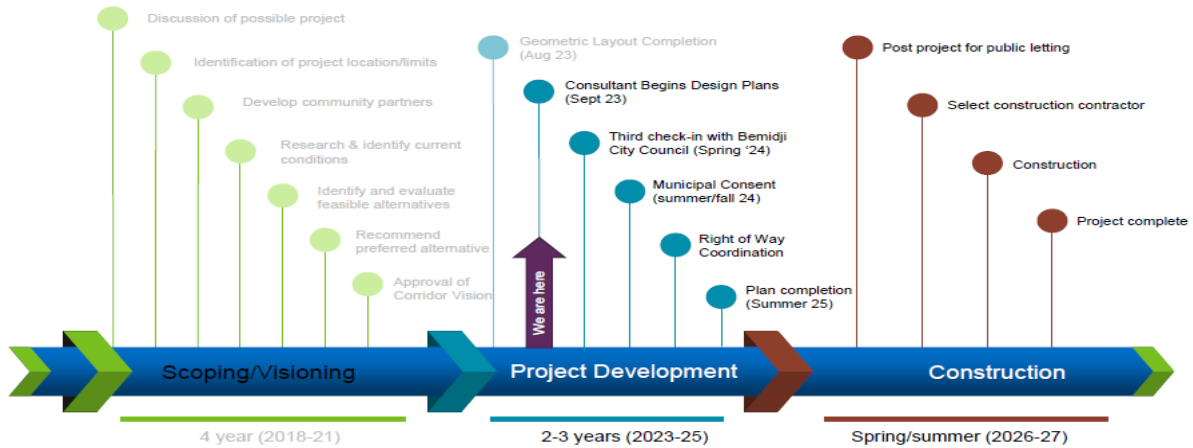
- Alternative 1 (preferred option):  
This alternative includes a  $\frac{3}{4}$  access at the Culver's/Target frontage road access.  $\frac{3}{4}$  access still provides vehicles to take a left in, right in, or right out, but prevents vehicles from being able to take a left out.

- Alternative 2:  
This alternative includes a raised concrete median between the proposed roundabout and TH 197 as to prevent left in and left out vehicle movements. This would make only allow right in or right out vehicle movements for the Culver's/Target frontage road access.

After Council discussion, Alternative 1 was the consensus to move forward with.

At this time in the meeting, Matt Upgren and his team from MnDOT shared a PowerPoint update on the TH 197 Reconstruct Project. The power point included what the have been working on since their last update and the changes that have been made to the project. At the end of the power point MnDOT shared a timeline of the next steps in the project:

### Next Steps and Coming Schedule



**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, motion by Peterson, seconded by Fiskevold Gould, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachelle Barckholtz  
Deputy City Clerk