

To: Omaha City Council President Pete Festersen

From: Julie Harris, Bike Walk Nebraska
Scott Dobbe, Omaha by Design / Metro Smart Cities, Inc.

Date: September 6, 2022

RE: Market to Midtown Bikeway Pilot Transition



The Market to Midtown Bikeway officially opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony on July 28, 2021. Per the agreement approved by the Omaha City Council April 13, 2021, this pilot project was to remain installed until October 31, 2022, upon which time it would be determined whether the facility should be removed or considered for permanent installation. We are approaching this date and decisions will be needed soon on how to proceed.

Performance measures of the pilot project were included in the agreement approved by Council. (See Exhibit "B".) Extensive data and survey collection has been done and reported at the 6-month and 1-year mark of the pilot. Although we still have 3 months left in the pilot timeline, by all accounts, the performance of the Bikeway has been successful in meeting every measure so far.

[The evaluation reports can be found on the Bike Walk Nebraska website.](#)

The announcement of the streetcar project with a potential alignment on Harney Street is a significant development that must now be considered in addition to the performance measures as the City determines the fate of the pilot project. At this time, we do not know the final streetcar route and whether or not it would impact the Bikeway being built as a permanent facility. With so many variables in play, we propose the following as a path forward:

1. The Bikeway remains in place after October 31, 2022. If the streetcar alignment includes Harney Street, the Bikeway will presumably be torn out as part of that construction, anyway. Keeping the Bikeway in place in the interim is the practical and resource-efficient choice, as there would be little sense in going to the expense of de-constructing the Bikeway and reverting to the prior roadway configuration, only to have it all taken back out-of-service for streetcar construction within one to two years.
2. A supplemental agreement is drafted between Metro Smart Cities, Inc. and the City of Omaha that outlines maintenance and snow/ice removal responsibilities, including the associated costs.
3. Measures are taken to minimize ongoing maintenance, These are to include consideration of bolting the flexible delineators to the pavement, which will significantly reduce the time and cost associated with the upkeep of the lane.
4. The City of Omaha and Metro Smart Cities, Inc. coordinate with the Omaha Streetcar Authority to investigate ways to incorporate a permanently-installed protected bike lane in conjunction with the construction of the streetcar. If the streetcar alignment is determined to not include Harney Street, the City, Metro Smart Cities and Bike Walk Nebraska will work together to develop options for a permanent Bikeway installation independent from the streetcar project.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the City to make this successful pilot project become a permanent part of Omaha's active transportation network.

EXHIBIT “B”

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

All parties agree that the goal of the project to increase the level of bicycle ridership, including, but not limited to, bike shares and scooters, above the determined baseline along the specified corridor. This goal is to be accomplished by increasing the perception of safety and comfort level of riders and vehicular traffic alike. This goal should be evaluated alongside other performance measures aimed to promote multi-modal transportation options and public safety.

These measures include, but are not limited to the following:

- Minimal increase in vehicular conflicts with commuters utilizing the protected bikeway and installed infrastructure,
- Minimal increase in pedestrian conflicts with commuters utilizing the protected bikeway or as a result of installation of infrastructure supporting the protected bikeway,
- Supportive feedback from commuting public of all modes of transportation
- Supportive feedback with minimal disruption of private business along routes,
- Minimal disruption of curbside operations within the public ROW; i.e. Metro Transit, ParkOmaha, etc.,
- Effective snow clearance consistent with the City policy of 24-hour removal following a snowfall in excess of two inches.
- Supportive feedback from active transportation users of the facility
- Positive results from user surveys, interviews and other formal evaluation mechanisms
- Demonstrated use by people riding bicycles, bike share and scooters