

MTNA Community Meeting  
Proposed Car Diversion at 50<sup>th</sup> and Lincoln  
November 2, 2017

**Summary of Meeting Notes, Organized by Themes**

Comments from the Meeting, Organized by Themes:

**Safety concerns about Lincoln, from people with personal experience**

Multiple bikers and pedestrians say the **least safe part of biking/walking on Lincoln is the car traffic crossing Lincoln**, going north/south on 51, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, etc. **This was a dominating comment.** Follow-up comments to this, expressed by many attendees including drivers, bikers, and walkers, included:

- Neighbors prioritize safety improvements that address the hazards bikes face at each of the intersections along Lincoln, where cars cut across Lincoln unexpectedly, rapidly, without coming to a full stop or making eye contact with bikers. Cars that cross Lincoln are a current and recognized threat to bikers on Lincoln. Neighbors request help in addressing this problem.
- With the diverter at 52<sup>nd</sup> and Division, the number of locations where cars crossed Lincoln increased as the traffic was moved to the other, smaller numbered streets. Instead of the car traffic and bike traffic largely interacting at one predictable intersection, multiple intersections are now more dangerous. Will another diverter bring with it more cut-through traffic that PBOT inaccurately predicts or mitigates?
- The diverter will not have a net reduction in traffic on Lincoln, but rather it will redirect traffic so it goes from being that which flows parallel to bikes on Lincoln, to that which crosses bikes as traffic crosses Lincoln. Reasoning: cars will be forced to the outer boundaries of these uniquely long blocks, resulting in more drivers driving back into where they wanted to be via the numbered streets, and crossing Lincoln to do so. With more traffic pulling out from the side streets, there is an increased potential for accidents between cars and bikes on Lincoln.
- Policies like this diverter that create more congestion on the mains (i.e. Division, 50<sup>th</sup>) create more careless, cut-through traffic on other streets, especially the numbered streets in this area. That decreases safety for everyone on those streets. It also increases the number of Lincoln-crossing cars that show up in unpredictable places. A former neighborhood cop attended the meeting and

confirmed that the greater restriction and congestion on main streets increases bad-behaving cut-thru traffic on all other streets.

Second to the hazards caused on Lincoln by cars crossing Lincoln, is the hazard of **cars on lower Lincoln driving too fast**. Neighbors suggest speed bumps to address this issue.

Multiple people agreed with a comment that the **bike/bus interactions** on Lincoln were some of the least safe moments on Lincoln today (especially at points like 52<sup>nd</sup>). Will this plan address buses and their impact on bike safety on Lincoln?

Pedestrians on Lincoln find **downhill bikers on lower Lincoln are too fast**, and seem to assume they have ROW and ignore pedestrians.

One driver reports that **visibility is hindered by the presence of parked cars** at Lincoln and 50<sup>th</sup> especially when exiting the neighborhood and trying to enter onto 50<sup>th</sup>. Request is to carefully refine parking at this location.

#### **Safety concerns about impact on Upper Hawthorne; Comments about Hawthorne design**

This diverter will transfer traffic load to Upper Hawthorne. This defies decades of City and citizen driven efforts to limit traffic on Upper Hawthorne (Upper Hawthorne = east of 50<sup>th</sup>), including the Hawthorne Transportation Plan and the intersection redesign at SE 50<sup>th</sup> and Hawthorne. Nor does this align with Upper Hawthorne's transportation classification.

More traffic on Upper Hawthorne will make the bike crossing at 52<sup>nd</sup> and Hawthorne more dangerous.

An engineer, who spent his career in a nearby city, warned of the dangers of sending more cars up Upper Hawthorne and into the intersection at SE 55<sup>th</sup> and Hawthorne. Cars can be blind here, to each other and to pedestrians. Sidewalks are dysfunctional east of here, and pedestrians often move into the streets to walk; but cars at the strange intersection can't see these pedestrians until they are practically on them.

#### **Equity concerns**

Other neighborhoods are lagging in bike infrastructure; this money should go there now. We can wait to address cars turning onto Lincoln from 50<sup>th</sup> when it is a problem.

Severely restricting cars is bad for equity, and that's bad for our neighborhood. Policies that squeeze people out of cars ignore/dismiss the needs of the disabled and of the aging. The jobs downtown that are easy to commute to by bus or bike are more likely for college educated residents. Low-wage job holders are more likely to be dependent on cars for the work they have.

### **Neighborhood isolation concerns**

Emergency response is a concern. The blocks in this area are unique. Homes sit on 2 sections of super-long blocks (each one about 5 normal city blocks long) that are only bisected by one street, which is Lincoln. These super blocks are increasingly boxed in by congestion that at times borders on grid lock. Without the light at Lincoln this 10 city-block x 10 city-block stretch of homes will only be accessible by first responders, via very slow and congested streets on the perimeter of the area.

The homes between Hawthorne/Division and 50<sup>th</sup>/60<sup>th</sup> are increasingly bound in by badly managed, badly congested mains. This negatively impacts livability, and should be addressed. Lincoln is the only street that bisects this 10 block x 10 block section. Restricting Lincoln negatively impacts the neighborhood's access and services.

Not all diverters are equal. The diverter at Cesar Chavez/Lincoln has more connectivity alternatives than the one at 50<sup>th</sup> will have. The Cesar Chavez/Lincoln diverter does not leave 10 city-blocks of homes cut off so the only access is from very congested boundaries.

### **Comments specifically from Bikers**

Multiple bike commuters and families that bike with kids, expressed that current Lincoln is one of the better bike boulevards (where bikes and cars share the road), and that this money is needed now to improve bad bike infrastructure in many other neighborhoods.

Multiple bikers support the diverter and offer that it won't be an unreasonable inconvenience to residents in the effected area.

Multiple bikers say they don't need the diverter and that they don't like it.

One biker states that cars are no longer welcome in this city, that planners have made that clear, that everyone in the room should get used to that idea and get on a bike, or move away. *(There was immediate response to this comment, citing equity issues for the aging, the disabled, and low wage job holders who are more likely to be dependent on cars for the work they have.)*

### **Other comments**

City policies are increasing density and the number of cars in our neighborhood, without also bringing infrastructure improvements for cars. And they don't recognize that this impacts bike safety. For instance: condos without parking leave more cars parked on the streets, and parked cars on streets reduce visibility for all, and that reduces safety for bikes.

Is safety the real motivator for this project? Car count numbers are lower here than in denser areas where bikes & cars co-exist today. So why are these numbers being challenged here? This is philosophy driven as opposed to needs driven.

Sharing the road goes both ways.

Will this improve flow on 50<sup>th</sup>? 50<sup>th</sup> is one lane in each direction—now traffic gets stopped when someone wants to turn left onto Lincoln—if not allowed—maybe that would reduce back ups.

Neighbors lament they weren't asked for input in a meaningful way before the "open house" phase where a plan is "presented." They could have contributed local knowledge of what needs fixing.

### **SUGGESTIONS for Revisions to Diverter Proposal**

Install a bike light, or a delayed light, or a dedicated bike signal @ 50<sup>th</sup>/Lincoln instead of diverter. This light would stop cars in all directions, and give bikes first priority to cross intersection along Lincoln.

Install speed bumps along Lincoln between 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup>. This will make it less attractive to cut-through traffic and reduce speed, without creating the other new problems of a diverter.

Better enforcement of rules we already have.

A half-diversion at 50<sup>th</sup> – meaning a diversion only on the west side of the intersection. Allow traffic to flow in and out of the neighborhood on the east side of the intersection, but restrict access on the west side of the intersection, going into and out of Richmond. That way you don't have the super block issue that there is on the east side of 50<sup>th</sup>, and then kids riding bikes or walking to Richmond will have the stretch from 39<sup>th</sup>-50<sup>th</sup> with relatively little traffic.