Item 23-0948: ALTA Planning + Design Complete Streets Study Update Presentation
Municipal Services Committee
Mon, Aug 07, 2023, 4:30PM

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 01:21
We have no public hearings or appearances this evening. And we'll go ahead and move to our action items starting with 23-0948 the Alta planning and design Complete Streets study update presentation. Should we—district nine? One second, please. There we go.

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 01:43
Thank you, chair. You may recall that several months ago, we kicked off this project by bringing on our consultant team with Alta planning and design. Since that time, the consultant team a lot—along with the Economic—Community and Economic Development Department represented by Dave Kress here tonight and Public Works have been working pretty hard to try and create the framework for the project, make sure that we have the vision for the project nailed down. And one of the ways that we've been doing that is reaching out in group interviews to try and get feedback. So, our consultant team is here tonight—Colin, Lisa, and Maria. And they have about 18 minutes at this point to walk us through where we're at in the project and where we're headed from here.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 02:43
Excellent.

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 02:43
So, we're gonna cross our fingers that we get some audio when they start to talk.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 02:47
Is there anything I need to do up here?

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 02:49
You shouldn't.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 02:49
Okay, great. Thank you.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 02:53
Good afternoon.

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 02:55
It worked.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 02:57
Great. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Colin Harris. I'm an engineer with Alta planning and design. With me, Lisa, and Maria, we—will you please introduce yourself too?

Lisa Bender (Alta Planning & Design) 03:12
Hi, I'm Lisa Bender. I'm a planner with Alta planning and design.

Maria Wardoku (Alta Planning & Design) 03:15
I'm Maria Wardoku, also a planner at Alta.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 03:20
Great, thanks. Thanks for having us today. We wanted to share where we're at in the Complete Streets study process to date. As Eric mentioned, we're in the early stages of the study. Here's an agenda of what we'd like to talk about today. I'll share a little bit of background. Lisa will share the input summary to date. And we'll share some preliminary visions so far to guide the upcoming work around the complete streets policy, the complete streets design guide, as well as the pedestrian crossings policy, and have a minute or two for next steps.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 03:55
So, with that, a brief introduction and background. This is the complete streets study. It is from Common Council action, and it's building on previous work in Appleton which includes, but not limited to, the Comprehensive Plan, the city of Appleton on street bike lane plan, the trails master plan, downtown streetscape design guidelines, and also all of the enhanced crosswalks and safety projects that the city has done recently.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 04:26
This specific study has the three following project elements as part of it. It has a complete streets policy update. It'll produce Complete Streets design guidelines, and also look at pedestrian crossing prioritization and create an updated policy with regard to crossings.

Appleton Complete Streets Study

Project Background

- Common Council Action

- Building on previous work:
  - Comprehensive Plan, Bike Plan, Trail Master Plan, Complete Streets Policy
  - Downtown Street Design Guidelines
  - Enhanced crosswalks, safety projects

- Project Elements:
  - Complete Streets Policy update
  - Street Design Guidelines
  - Crosswalk Prioritization
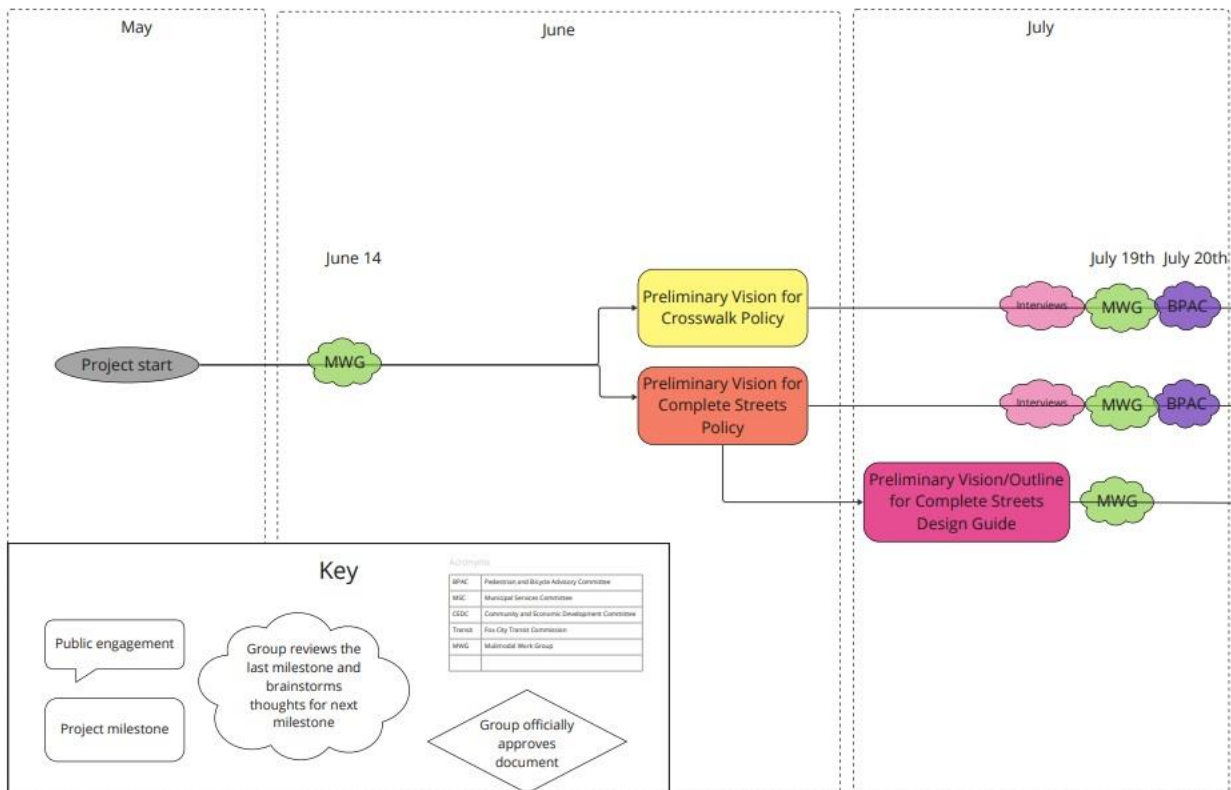

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 04:49
Alright, right, just to give you a sense big picture of where we are in the timeline, I'm going to share this version of our schedule. The main purpose here—this should have been in the packet. We are now into August. To give you a sense of the big picture, we are here with the municipal services committee meeting of August 7. As Eric alluded to, in the past month or so, we've had several interviews with partners, stakeholders. Working back in time, we've met with the multimodal working group, MWG, a couple of times so far—had a kickoff with the
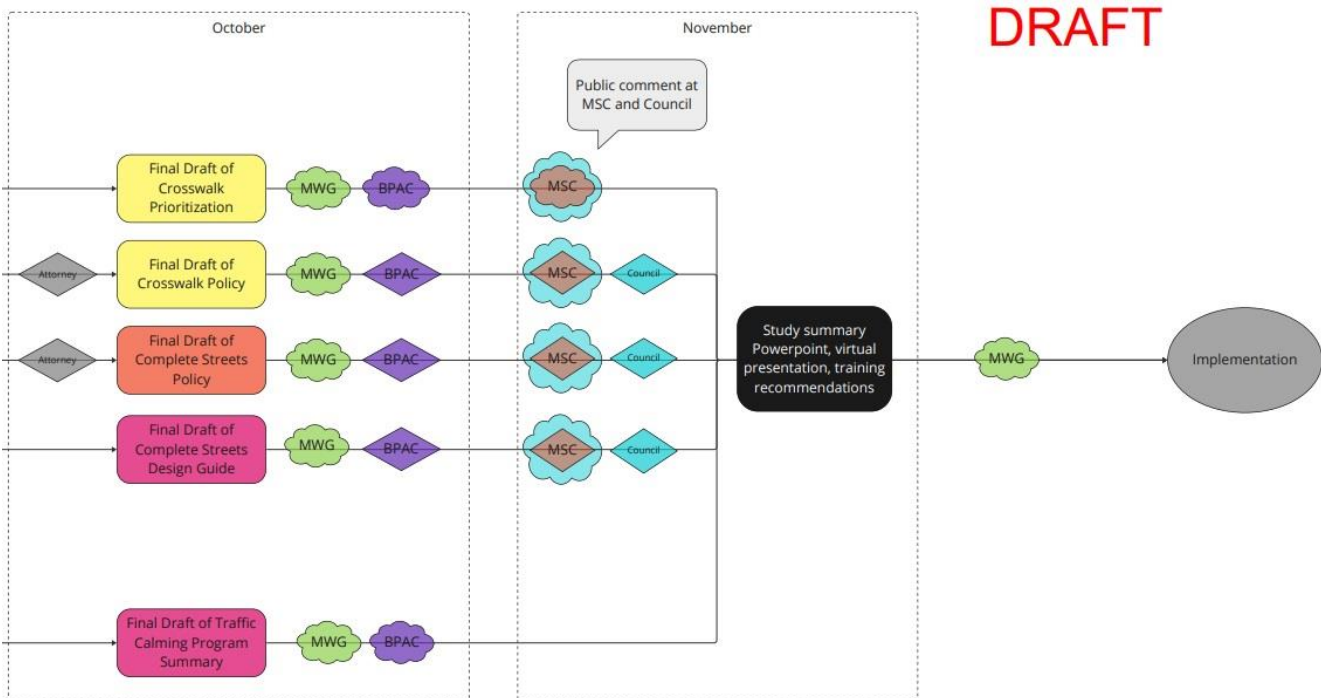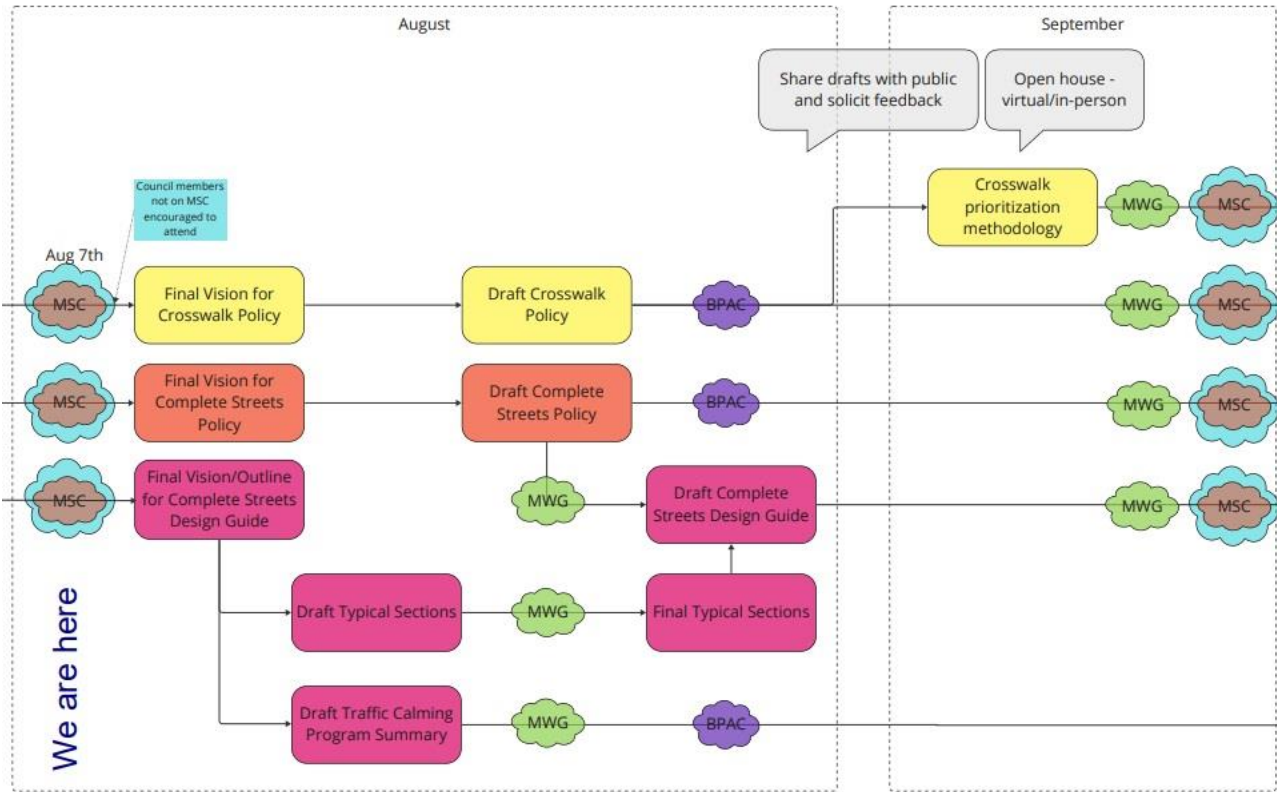
group on June 14, and subsequently met again in July—to start thinking more about the preliminary vision for the crosswalk policy or crossings policy, the complete streets policy vision, as well as where we want to head with the Complete Streets design guide.
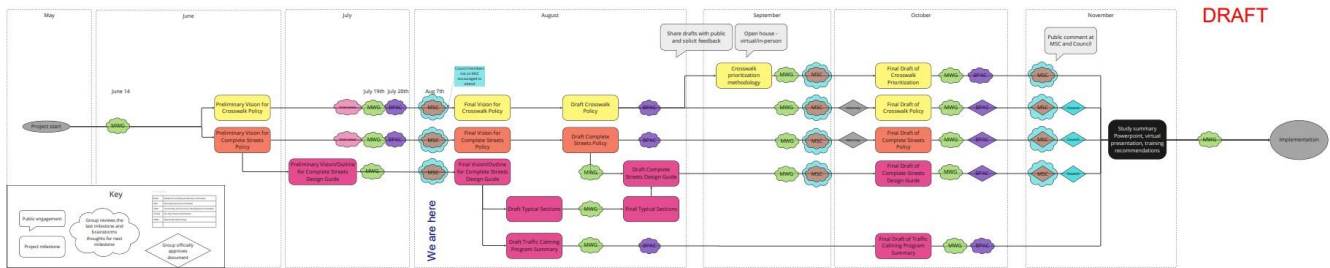
Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 05:47

So here we are here, and as I mentioned, we'll share those preliminary visions for those three main project elements with you. And to get a sense of where we're going quite a bit of work coming up as we finalize the vision for the complete streets policy and the crossing policy, do some work around crossing prioritization, as well as start to build out that complete streets design guide. That should bring us into September when we meet next. And then the whole study is aiming to wrap up in November. Right. So, with that, Lisa, would you like to share a little bit of updates in terms of input we've had to date?

August

Share drafts with public and solicit feedback

Open house - virtual/in-person

September

Council members not on MSC encouraged to attend

Aug 7th

MSC → Final Vision for Crosswalk Policy → Draft Crosswalk Policy → BPAC → Crosswalk prioritization methodology → MWG → MSC

MWG → MSC

MSC → Final Vision for Complete Streets Policy → Draft Complete Streets Policy → BPAC → MWG → MSC

MSC → Final Vision/Outline for Complete Streets Design Guide → MWG → Draft Complete Streets Design Guide → MWG → MSC

We are here

Draft Typical Sections → MWG → Final Typical Sections

Draft Traffic Calming Program Summary → MWG → BPAC

October

November

DRAFT

Public comment at MSC and Council

Final Draft of Crosswalk Prioritization → MWG → BPAC → MSC

Attorney → Final Draft of Crosswalk Policy → MWG → BPAC → MSC → Council

Attorney → Final Draft of Complete Streets Policy → MWG → BPAC → MSC → Council

Final Draft of Complete Streets Design Guide → MWG → BPAC → MSC → Council

Study summary Powerpoint, virtual presentation, training recommendations → MWG → Implementation

Final Draft of Traffic Calming Program Summary → MWG → BPAC

Lisa Bender (Alta Planning & Design) 06:34
Yes, thank you so much for having us. It's nice to see many of you again. So, Colin mentioned, we have had regular staff check ins with Eric and Dave, as well as attending the multimodal workgroup meetings. So far, we asked some high-level questions of the multimodal workgroup around kind of a vision for the future that helped

inform the draft vision you'll see in a moment. And then we also did a number of stakeholder interviews with public work staff, community development, police, fire, and transit, parks and recreation, economic development stakeholders, folks who develop land in the community, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and then some of you—we were able to have a stakeholder meeting and then incorporated into one of the other meetings. We got a ton of great feedback. There's a lot of excitement in Appleton and a huge amount of shared vision. A lot of really common themes came out of the interviews that we've had, and the conversations.

Lisa Bender (Alta Planning & Design) 07:43
Some of the big high-level themes follow. There's also a lot of detailed feedback about specific intersections and design features. But these were the big high-level themes. Safety for all ages and abilities is a high priority across all the stakeholder groups that we talked to. There's a strong consensus around calming traffic and supporting multiple transportation options for folks in Appleton. There's the desire to prioritize within budget constraints and plan for maintenance, a real commitment to taking a practical approach that can actually be accomplished. There's been a note of increased staff coordination recently in recent years. And that scene is really beneficial both internally and with external stakeholders. We've heard that context is really important. You know, in commercial, developed, and new residential areas, each of these contacts has different unique needs that we'll want to address both in the policy and especially in the design guidelines. And then I wanted to note that across all the conversations we've had, that there's just a really clear shared commitment in Appleton to use and access to education. Probably won't be a surprise to any of you, but we wanted to highlight that because it came through so strongly in the conversations we've had.

Appleton Complete Streets Study

Preliminary Complete Streets Policy Vision

Appleton will strategically use resources to plan, design, build and maintain a multi-modal network of streets so that community gathering and traveling by walking, rolling, biking, transit and driving is a safe and positive experience for people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities, supporting Appleton's local economy, health and environment.

Lisa Bender (Alta Planning & Design) 09:17
So, from there, we took the feedback that we received so far, and we have a preliminary complete streets policy vision to share. That is that Appleton will strategically use resources to plan, design, build, and maintain a multimodal network of streets so that community gathering and traveling by walking, rolling, biking, and transit—transit and driving—is a safe and positive experience for people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities, supporting Appleton's local economy, health, and environment. And from there, this will help guide the development of much more specific actions and commitments through the policy itself.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 10:07
Thanks, Lisa.

Lisa Bender (Alta Planning & Design) 10:09
Thank you.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 10:10
All right. So, the next piece we wanted to share is preliminary design guide outline. So along with the study, the second main element is focused on a complete streets design guide. And at this point, so far, we're thinking about a few things. We know at this point the design guide will include best practice guidance around traffic calming elements and street design guide elements for all modes. And also, it's gonna have a way for us to think about all the different types of streets within Appleton. You know, as Lisa said, the context is really important when we're thinking about the types of facilities that a street might have. And Appleton has a lot of variety in terms of not just the context, but the right of way width—the curb-to-curb width—that's existing.

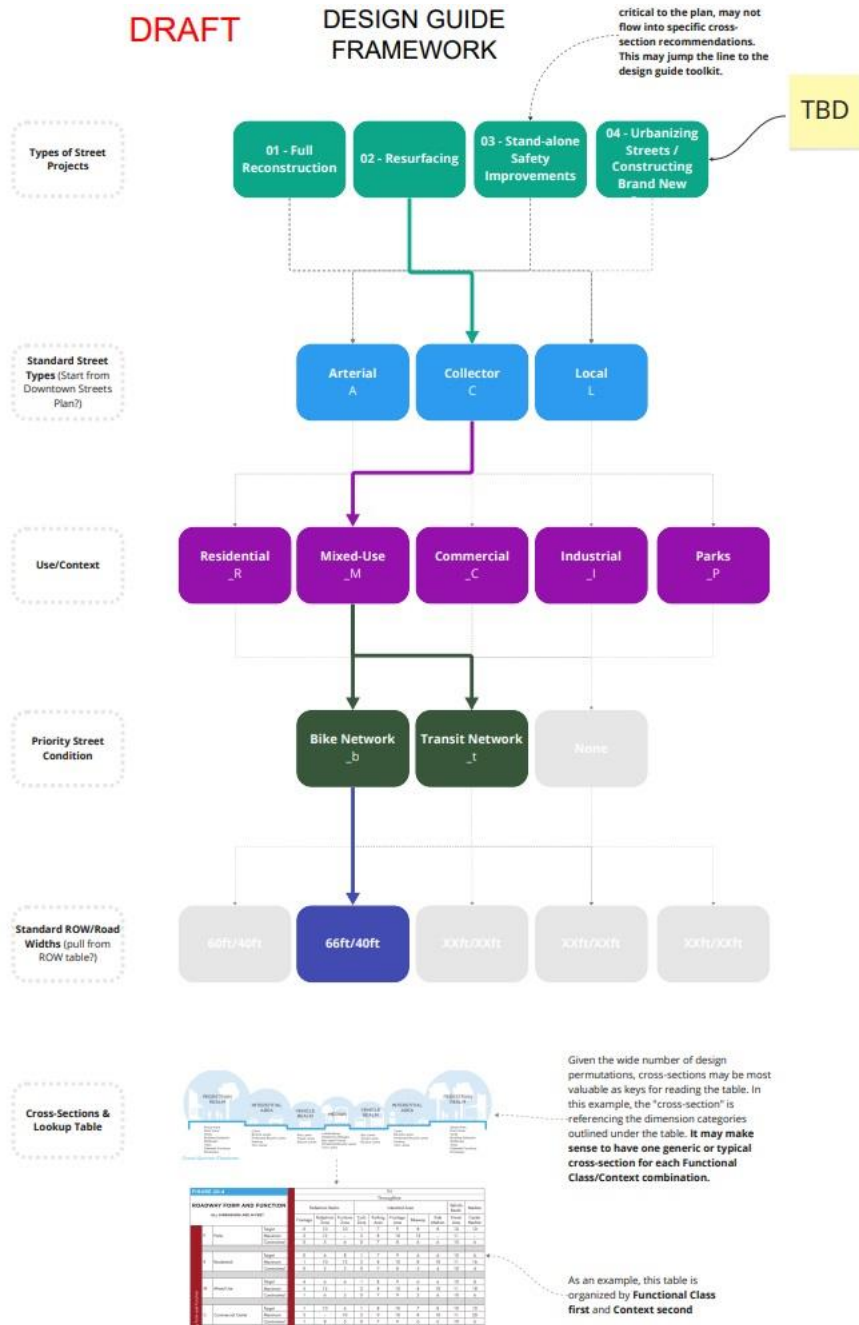**Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design)** 11:06
So, we're starting to brainstorm with mostly with Eric and Dave and, and partners, with their interviews so far, this flowchart that is still in in development, but it starts to break out various pieces that we might need to think about when selecting an example cross section or best practice cross section for a complete streets design. So, for example—types of street projects. Are we working with a full reconstruction of a street or are we just doing a resurfacing project? Or maybe we need to do a standalone safety improvement? And we're also thinking about, maybe there's a new street that's being built; how does this start to apply?

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 11:50
Looking at the—looking at the functional classification within Appleton. Is it an arterial street, a collector street, a local street? The arrows here that are bolded are just for just for an example so far. Let's say so far, you're looking at a resurfacing project that's a collector street. What does that land use or context around it? Is it primarily residential, mixed use, commercial? In this example, we're looking at a mixed-use environment. And then what's an overlay perhaps that we need to consider? In other words, what's a priority street condition? Is it on the on-street bike lane plan? Is it on the transit network? Is it in a school area? How does that start to influence what the starting cross section might be for a complete street in this area? And then that could potentially bring us to—okay, here's a standard cross section with this right away, this road width as a place to start for a design.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 12:48
This is about where we're at so far. And we're also doing some cross section studies right now with all the existing rights of way and road curb to curb. What are some of those example best streets, or street designs at this point? So wanted to share this vision. Again, it's meant to be a way to have all the resources in one place for complete streets guidance around street design as well as this flowchart which will hopefully help planners and designers and additional partners, thinking about the place to start with complete streets from a design perspective.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 13:27
All right, with that, Lisa, presented earlier. How 'bout Maria? Maria would you be willing to share where we're at with the street crossing vision?

Maria Wardoku (Alta Planning & Design) 13:39
Yes, so we have developed a preliminary vision for a pedestrian crossing policy, and building on all those stakeholder interviews that we did and understanding what's important to people in Appleton. We'll share that vision in the next slide.

Maria Wardoku (Alta Planning & Design) 14:08
So, to improve access to destinations, the city of Appleton will invest in pedestrian crossing improvements, using a consistent prioritization process that's grounded in the latest evidence on roadway safety treatments that are aligned with the complete streets policy and the Complete Streets design guide. This pedestrian crossing policy will apply to streets that are not part of current reconstruction projects, and it will streamline existing policies, replacing the enhanced crosswalk policy and the mid-block crosswalk policy. So basically, looking to improve access to destinations, use a consistent process for prioritizing the improvements, grounds that process in the latest evidence that we have, and streamline existing policies as we're doing that.

Maria Wardoku (Alta Planning & Design) 15:04
Similar to the complete streets, policy, the pedestrian crossing policy vision will kind of guide us in creating that policy. The policy itself will be more detailed. And we'll also be looking at the data that's available about streets in Appleton to prioritize crossing locations as part of this project.

Appleton Complete Streets Study

Preliminary Pedestrian Crossing Policy Vision

To improve access to destinations, the City of Appleton will invest in pedestrian crossing improvements using a consistent prioritization process grounded in the latest evidence on roadway safety treatments that are aligned with the Complete Streets Policy and Complete Streets Design Guide. The Pedestrian Crossing Policy will apply to streets that are not part of current reconstruction projects and will streamline existing policies, replacing the Enhanced Crosswalk Policy and the Mid-block Crosswalk Policy.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 15:32
All right. Well, that brings us to probably a few minutes for any questions. Any other—anything else you want to share, Eric or Dave too? Again, the status of where we're at so far, is with these preliminary visions for the three main project elements. And we're happy to be able to share where we're at with this early stage with the process with you today as we dig more deeply into the actual policy around complete streets, the complete streets policy update, the crossings policy and prioritization. And then we're going to start to build out that design guide in terms of the cross sections, as well as the traffic calming, complete streets, engineering, and design elements.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 16:23
Thank you. The questions that I have are for staff. Does anyone have any specific questions for our guests? Because I know they're on a limited timeframe? No? All right. Thank you very much. Thanks for your time today.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 16:40
Thank you for having us.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 16:41
I did have a question. Who is the multimode modal working group made up of?

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 16:46
Oh, that's a good question. And as they were saying it I was envisioning everybody going, "What's that?" The multimodal workgroup is really a cross departmental group that was created really, almost as in conjunction with this project, as a way for the various departments to align our objectives and make sure that we're all working towards that same goal. So, it is primarily made up of Public Works and Community and Economic Development folks. I think on occasion, we may have folks from other departments in there. Parks—I'm sorry, Parks and Rec is definitely in there every time. I'm sorry. But I think on occasion, we may have police and fire in there or whoever we think would stand to, you know, either help the group out or the group help them out on particular topics.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 17:45
Great, thank you. I did have another question, but it has slipped my mind. So, does anyone else have a question in the meantime? Alder Doran?

Alderperson Chad Doran (District 15) 17:54
Thank you. A question I think maybe kind of about the design guide framework, I guess. When we're talking about, for example, like the different street right of way with some options and stuff like that and kind of the flowchart, are we are we looking at our own streets for examples of how we want to do this? Or are we looking at streets in other communities that have already been done? Like, what's the process of trying to determine like, what goes into this framework and how we decide each of these steps? I guess?

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 18:25
Yeah, good question. So, I think the best way that I would describe that is we're—the first thing we're trying to do is figure out what do we have to work with here. Some of you have been in the room in the past when we've talked about our 36-foot collector streets. They're very challenging to, to, for instance, get bike lanes on them without removing all the parking. That's just one example. But we were trying to understand all the various types of scenarios that we have. And then utilizing best practices and the latest design guidance that's out there, we would look at how to how do we want to map—what do we want those particular types of streets to look like based on the width, based on the context? So, I think a more direct answer to your question is, is we're looking outward for—to try and improve upon how we design those roadways and make sure that we're incorporating the best practices that are out there.

Alderperson Chad Doran (District 15) 19:27
Thank you.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 19:28
I remembered my question. When was the midblock in enhanced crosswalk policy last redone? I can't recall.

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 19:38
I don't believe it's ever been redone. I think it was created from scratch. The—one of them was created, I would guess in the 2010 range, and the other was created in 2014, '15, '16. Somewhere in that range.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 19:54
That sounds right. And what practices seem to have changed since then? Can you give me just some general ideas?

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 20:02
In terms of best practices for pedestrian crossings?

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 20:07
Of design or pedestrian crossing—traffic calming or pedestrian crossing, I guess. I feel like they're related.

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 20:11
Well, I see we still have our consultant team here. I'm gonna take a swing at this, and then I bet they can do it even better. But I would say that the industry around traffic calming, the science around traffic calming, is evolving very, very rapidly—the design guidance that's out there. There's a lot of communities throughout the country and the world, really, that are experimenting with a lot of different techniques. And I think, you know, what we have used for the way we do things we think is still pretty up to date. But, but one of the neat things that we hope to get out of this process is to make sure that we're getting the best bang for the buck, that we're getting the best outcomes for our citizens. So, I don't know if any of you guys, Alta guys, want to chime in on that. Feel free.

Colin Harris (Alta Planning & Design) 21:08
I think one thing I would mention is that the—you mentioned the previous policies, they're called the crosswalk policies, which I think Eric and we've talked about this in the past. Mostly, that's meant, like, where do we where do we stripe a crosswalk? You know, having that having that striped crosswalk. I think, well, now it's enhanced, for example. We know that it's not just striping a crosswalk sometimes based on the road classification, how much speed and volume, what the context is, what else can be done in combination potentially with marking a crosswalk with signs, with traffic calming, kind of referring back to the complete streets design guide, as part of the crossings policy? And note we're kind of we're calling it a crossings, pedestrian crossing policy, on purpose instead of just a crosswalk policy, to have it be more holistic in terms of what other street elements can be considered when we're thinking about making a new pedestrian crossing so that it it's not just comfortable and pleasant, but it's because of some of the safety, the safety impacts as well.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 22:16
So, follow up on that. Though—we haven't determined yet how we're going to choose which locations will receive crossings like this, whatever the new design may be. Do you have an idea of—when looking at the flow chart is this just the basics or is there any more information you can offer?

Eric Lom (City Traffic Engineer) 22:42
We have not worked on that yet. I think at this point, we're still trying to formalize the vision to make sure that we have this ship pointed in the right direction. And that's really a big reason why we're here tonight. Because if the committee and the Council are like, "This is not at all what we were envisioning," now is the time to hear that. But so, the details related to that will be forthcoming once we kind of get locked into the vision and the broader scale aspect of things.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 23:20
Any other questions from alders present? Alder Doran?

Alderperson Chad Doran (District 15) 23:26

I guess it just wanted to add a comment maybe, I guess. I do appreciate the mention of trying to factor in the cost of doing these additional projects, as well as the sort of ongoing maintenance of them. I think we're all in agreement, I think this is a good step in the right direction for us. I'm not sure that what we heard today necessarily gives us a ton to one way or the other to say it's the right direction or not. I think I'd just like to see more of kind of what this plan is as it evolves. But I do think it's important to really keep that cost element in mind, you know, as we're either redoing streets or creating new streets that have some of these additional elements, the cost of the maintenance of those in addition to the cost of adding them, period, given the, you know, the constraints we already have with keeping up with our roads and infrastructure is going to make this challenging. But also, I think, if done properly, and you know, we're all conscious of what those costs are, I think that'd be beneficial as well. So, appreciate the fact that that's a piece of this also.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 24:36

Any other questions or comments? Alder Meltzer?

Alderperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 24:39

Thank you. I really liked this design guide framework. I feel like it's pointing us in a direction of being able to compare very different streets so that we can be consistent in a kind of across-the-board type of policy. And I think that that's really helpful because I think that our streets are very complicated and this this framework makes it a lot simpler to mentally process.

Alderperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 25:07

Anyone else? All right, thank you very much. Thank you very much, folks from Alta.