

**REGULAR MEETING
OAKDALE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MAY 15, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

The Oakdale Environmental Management Commission (EMC) held a meeting on Monday, May 15, 2023 at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue North, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting began at 7:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL OF ROLL

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Chairperson: Keith Miller, Chairperson

Commissioners: Noah Gerding, Vice Chairperson
Bonnie Wilson
Connor Brown

Also Present: Max Lohse, Community Development Specialist and City Staff Liaison
Andrew Gitzlaff, Community Development Director

Quorum Present: YES NO

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION REVIEW

a. OLD BUSINESS

i. Bike and Pedestrian Plan Update

The Toole Design consultant, Shaun Murphy-Lopez, presented the draft Future Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Network map, with a total of 27 proposed projects. He expressed that he and City staff are in the process of ranking the proposed projects and are looking for feedback on that process. He added that each project is categorized as near term (in the next 5 years), mid term (in the next 5-10 years), or long term (beyond 10 years). Mr. Murphy-Lopez summarized the initial recommendations for ranking factors, noting that proposed factors need to have measurable sources:

- Cost estimates: project receives higher rank with less cost
- Crashes (reported crashes involving motor vehicle): project receives higher rank with more crashes
- Demand (community engagement informed the public's desire for certain projects) project receives higher rank with more demand
- Destinations: project receives higher rank with higher concentration of destinations
- State and federal grant funding eligibility: project receives higher rank with higher likelihood of getting state or federal funds

In response to Chair Miller's question regarding the scores for the crashes factor, Mr. Murphy-Lopez stated that data from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has not yet been acquired. Scores for this factor will be filled in once the data is available.

In response to Commissioner Wilson's question regarding destination scores and the date of the data, Mr. Murphy-Lopez emphasized that the data was from three years ago. Commissioner Wilson followed up that more development will occur near the Oakdale Marketplace and Oakdale Station retail centers and that this will increase destinations in the area. She noted that the destinations factor is fluctuating as Oakdale continues to develop. Mr. Murphy-Lopez highlighted that the five factors were weighted equally and pointed out that certain factors could be weighted less, such as the destinations factor due to its accuracy changing as Oakdale evolves.

Chair Miller commented that crashes may be a factor that receives higher weighting, depending on the strength of MnDOT data. This aligns with safety being a top priority from the survey. Mr. Murphy-Lopez responded that if there are few crashes in Oakdale, it is possible to give it a lesser weight whereas if there are more crashes associated with certain projects, then a higher weight may be necessary.

In response to Commissioner Gerding's question regarding whether other crash databases are available aside from MnDOT (such as a bicycle-focused database), Mr. Murphy-Lopez shared that he was unaware of another data source that broke down data by intersection. He shared that there is data that tracks hospital visits due to bicycle crashes but this data source may be reported inconsistently and is not as strong as the MnDOT data. While the MnDOT database does not capture every crash, it is a source that has uniform reporting. Mr. Murphy-Lopez added that there is always a desire for near-misses to be recorded but there is no collecting agency to record that data.

Mr. Murphy-Lopez pointed out that funded projects continue to be added to the Implementation of the Future Network spreadsheet. Additionally, he has been working with City staff to list opportunities and challenges, as well as identify the lead agency responsible for the construction of the project. While a project may be under the purview of the county or state, it is more often than not that the City will be responsible for maintenance.

In response to Commissioner Wilson's question clarifying the draft Future Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Network map and the dotted purple lines (representing future signed walking and bicycling routes), Mr. Murphy-Lopez explained that the streets with this proposed facility are quiet residential streets, with a lack of high motorized traffic. The necessity of putting a sidewalk or shared use path on those streets is much lower and would be disruptive because of the narrow width of the right-of-way. Therefore, it is recommended that signs be installed to direct people.

In response to Commissioner Gerding's question about the orange dotted line markings (such as the one at 16b) on the draft Future Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Network map that do not correspond to the legend, Mr. Murphy-Lopez explained that those markings represent a

change they would like to make to the colors used in the draft map. Instead of yellow dotted lines representing future sidewalks, they would like orange dotted lines.

Mr. Murphy-Lopez shared that Oakdale has a good bicycle and pedestrian network as is and the goal of this plan is to connect the dots and bridge the gaps within the network. He highlighted that new projects have been added since the Commission's previous meeting based on development. The projects total roughly 22 miles. There are four projects that have a stronger likelihood of federal funding. One such project goes along the Gold Line on Hudson Boulevard and is programmed to be done by Metropolitan Council. Century Avenue, 10th Street, and Stillwater Boulevard are the three other projects. They have been designated as part of the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network that the Metropolitan Council uses to prioritize federal funding.

Chair Miller mentioned that the Stillwater Boulevard project (16b) is an example of where the shared use path switches from one side of the road to the other. Other shared use paths in the City continue on one side of the road. He suggested that signage might be implemented to make people aware of the switch at Stillwater Boulevard. Mr. Gitzlaff added that the project on Hadley by Walton Park (17) is attempting to partially rectify the same issue of the bike path switching sides of the road. Mr. Murphy-Lopez stated that they can recommend solutions to make situations like these better.

In response to Commissioner Wilson's question regarding the possibility of adding bus stops to the map, Mr. Murphy-Lopez explained that this version of the map has crosswalks. In another version of the map, the crosswalks have been removed and bus stops have been added. It would be cluttered to have both crosswalks and bus stops together. Commissioner Wilson added that parks, according to the legend, have not been designated on the draft map. Mr. Murphy-Lopez responded that this will be brought up to the mapmaker. Other suggestions for the mapmaker include:

- Change title from "Future Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Network" to "Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Network Implementation"
- Add a label for the neighboring community of Maplewood
- Match the line style of existing shared use paths by Tanners Lake to the style of other existing shared use paths
- Label Oakdale Lake Preserve

b. OLD BUSINESS

i. Xcel Energy Fleet Electrification Advisory Program

Chair Miller introduced the work done to identify potential City fleet vehicles that would be candidates to be replaced with electric vehicles.

Mr. Lohse shared that the period of data collection is complete and there are initial recommendations. He added that more collaboration with other departments is needed to determine prioritization.

Mr. Gitzlaff added that this work was funded by an Xcel Energy grant. Sawatch Labs conducted the analysis, using data from telematics devices placed in City of Oakdale fleet vehicles for a minimum three month period. The data needs to be further analyzed. The next step is to share the results with City Council and work with Xcel on exploring locations for charging infrastructure. The study highlighted where locations would make sense based on current operations.

ii. Update on Great Plains Institute EV Smart Program

Mr. Lohse explained that the City of Oakdale joined the Great Plains Institute (GPI) EV Smart Program in February of 2023. This program offers technical assistance and certification – bronze, silver, and gold – so that cities move towards creating EV-friendly communities. He shared that City staff had a meeting with GPI staff to determine Oakdale’s certification status. Because of the City’s EV work prior to joining the program, Oakdale is close to reaching bronze certification.

Chair Miller commented that it is good to know that previous work, such as changing ordinances, has paid off. He also shared that he has worked with the Great Plains Institute in the past and commented how it is a great organization.

In response to Commissioner Gerding’s question regarding what previous actions taken by Oakdale have poised the City to achieve bronze certification, Mr. Lohse commented that he would have to revisit the GPI’s progress spreadsheet. Mr. Gitzlaff added that a major step for the first certification is a plan for EVs and how that meets City goals. This was accomplished during the EV audit from a couple years ago, which may be due for a refresh. Additionally, passing the ordinance, developing charging infrastructure guidelines, and performing a fleet analysis were steps taken previously. The next step will involve infrastructure analysis. Mr. Gitzlaff informed the Commission that as you move through GPI’s certification, the policy actions may be easier than the implementation actions. Mr. Lohse pointed out that previous Community Development Specialist Shannon Reidlinger’s work in creating an EV-Ready Community Plan was critical in moving towards a bronze designation.

iii. 2023 Washington County Recycling Grant Award

Chair Miller reminded the Commission that at the previous meeting the grant application had been prepared and was being submitted to Washington County.

Mr. Lohse provided a brief update that the grant was awarded. Chair Miller commented that the Washington County Recycling Grant allows the City to continue to make improvements with reducing, reusing, and composting.

Commissioner Wilson expressed excitement for the single-use plastic reduction project and the reusable shopping bag giveaway. Chair Miller added that looking to see what other cities are doing in this area could be beneficial. He also emphasized that the Environment Commissions Conference on Saturday, May 20 could be an opportunity to learn from other cities.

In response to Commissioner Gerding's question regarding the funding amount from year to year, Mr. Gitzlaff shared that the money is comparable.

c. OTHER ITEMS

i. Commissioner update(s)

Commissioner Wilson provided an update regarding a grant awarded to Age-Friendly Oakdale and Oakdale Wellness 50+ from the Minnesota Department of Human Services' Age-Friendly Minnesota to assess transportation needs and barriers in the community, explore options, and plan solutions to improve transportation access for older adults and those with disabilities in Oakdale. Four community conversations, directed by a hired consultant, will be held to determine what Oakdale residents want their transportation future to look like, keeping in mind that most people want to remain in their current homes. A report will summarize major findings and workshops will be held to educate citizens on current and future transportation options. This evolved from an Age-Friendly Minnesota survey that found that the number one priority for people was staying in their homes and finding ways to get around Oakdale without using cars, bicycles, or their feet. This is a first pass at learning more about transportation options that exist and ones that could exist depending on future planning. The initiative will also be working with Washington County to better understand what citizens desire and what transportation options they would use.

Chair Miller mentioned that the Environment Commissions Conference will be held on Saturday from 9 a.m to 12:30 p.m. at Ridgedale Library and there will also be an online option.

Commissioner Gerding gave a shout out to the Tree Board, City staff, volunteers, and partners at University of Minnesota that made the Tree Giveaway possible.

ii. Council Liaison Updates

Mayor Zabel was unable to attend the meeting and Mr. Gitzlaff provided updates on his behalf.

- During the Arbor Day Tree Giveaway, 200 new trees were claimed and are now part of Oakdale's tree canopy.
- The Jane Klein Memorial Spring Planting took place on May 6 and included adding 40 new trees along 40th Street by Goose Pond Park.
- Development continues to be fast and furious. There have been approved projects materializing at Willowbrooke, Helmo Bus Rapid Transit Station, and soon-to-be Oakdale Marketplace.

Mr. Gitzlaff provided an update regarding hiring former Staff Liaison Shannon Reidlinger's replacement. Candidates are currently being interviewed.

Mr. Gitzlaff stated that the next meeting is scheduled for June 19, 2023. The City will be closed that day to honor Juneteenth. The Commission has the option to choose a new date in June or forego the meeting. He informed the Commission that City staff feel comfortable

with the progress of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and waiting until July to provide an update would give the consultant time to complete the deliverable. Chair Miller recommended foregoing the June meeting due to the lack of pressing matters.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the EMC will be Monday, July 17, 2023 in the City Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER WILSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER BROWN, TO ADJOURN THE MAY 15, 2023 REGULAR MEETING OF THE OAKDALE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMISSION AT 8:10 P.M.

4 AYES

0 NAYS

MOTION CARRIED

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Dunn
Community Development Specialist