

**MEETING OF THE VADNAIS HEIGHTS
Koehler Road Task Force Committee
December 6, 2018 – 6PM**

Dorie Olson - present
Larrie Pittelko - present
Charlie Evertz - present
Cindy Collova - present
Rick Halverson - present
Lucie Passus - present
Michael Schmidt – present
Gerald Baldrige (Parks, Recreation, and Trails Commission) - present
Kent Hokens (Parks, Recreation, and Trails Commission Alternate) - present
Terry Nyblom (City Council) - present
Heidi Gunderson (City Council) - present
City Staff – Watson, Wall, Sandvik, Farrell – all present
ISD 624/Vadnais Heights Elementary School – absent
Ramsey County Public Works, Joe Lux – present

Call to order – 6:00

Introduction – Council Member Gunderson introduced herself as the chair of the committee and briefly addressed the goals of the Task Force. She stressed this is an opportunity to share freely and record ideas to address during the feasibility process.

The group introduced themselves and identified their connection to the project; attendees included City Council members, residents immediately adjacent to Koehler Road, Vadnais Heights residents, representatives (staff) from the City of Vadnais Heights and staff from Ramsey County.

Both Council members discussed there are a variety of opportunities to be addressed in the upcoming feasibility process. Areas to address may include enforcement (traffic enforcement), better understanding what the options for an improved facility might be (trail, sidewalk, widening of the road, etc.). Both council members also noted this is especially important due to the proximity of the school.

Residents agreed that vehicular traffic is a significant safety concern for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Staff each introduced themselves and shared what their role in the process may entail. Mr. Watson stated that this evening's meeting is to better understand considerations regarding a feasibility study. Mr. Wall introduced what a feasibility study may include and noted it would focus on the area indicated on the map (attached as a part of the agenda). Long term plan could include additional sections of nearby streets, but this is the section that the task force will focus on immediately. Mr. Wall also went on to introduce a Trail Map that is included in the current Comprehensive Plan; he went on to say that these types of planning documents help communities implement items piece by piece to achieve an ultimate goal. Mr. Watson shared that the elected officials and city staff have received considerable feedback regarding this section of Koehler Road, but that doesn't mean other sections can not be studied in the future.

Mr. Baldrige noted that this project would almost certainly require some property abatement.

Ms. Collova estimated that easements on the south side would be less than on the north.

Mr. Pittelko said he believes that the road is not completely centered (with the Right of Way easement).

In responding to a question, Mr. Lux said an issue with giving additional space to only one shoulder is that walkers are supposed to walk against traffic, bikers are supposed to travel with traffic.

Council Member Gunderson noted that implementing a crossing (to accommodate for pathways on both sides of the road) would ultimately be a challenge either way. She went on to say there is a connection on the north side of properties and the trail includes a connection to the school which backs into wetlands.

Multiple Task Force Members agreed that option also poses the challenges of security/safety, and does not address improving mobility options for residents on Koehler and Searle Ct.

Mr. Wall shared two videos; one traveling in each direction highlighting the many considerations on either side of the road.

Mr. Lux and Mr. Farrell shared that relocating utilities can be done and those costs are typically the responsibility of the utility. Mr. Lux stated that implementing a trail could include State Aid money which means it would typically need to adhere to their rules. If the monies come from elsewhere, standards can be otherwise. He went on to say that long term planning does not, at this time, include a reconstruct. ADA compliance would require a 5 foot path. Implementing a curb would likely necessitate drainage improvements. Undergrounding overhead utilities can be requested, but the cost is typically prohibitive – especially so because the utilities contribute very little to that type of improvement. Costs vary, but for a project of this size a rough estimate would be something on the order of \$0.5M to 2M . Installing bollards would likely not be an option as the current road is too narrow. Implementing one-way traffic would likely be deferred to the city level if that was a consideration; but could be included in the feasibility analysis. In the past, the county doesn't support implementing one-way streets without being paired with a return one-way in the other direction.

Council Member Nyblom stated that assessments and plowing need to be considerations.

Mr. Farrell responded to the question of a crosswalk... it would be possible to implement a crosswalk at Searle Ct, but recommendation would be to install something more than striping. He went on to say that a traffic study would be helpful along with the results of a feasibility study.

Mr. Watson summarized, there are five areas that the Task Force would like to include in the feasibility study:

- Exploring usage of both sides of Koehler Rd
- Implementing a One-way
- Avoiding implementation of a pathway system in the wetlands area
- Traffic Count/Traffic Study
- Speed Study

Neighbors reiterated there are properties that don't appear to have adequate room to implement a trail system, there are also areas that have vegetation, utilities, driveways, etc...

Residents asked if exploring a re-mill of the surface would be worth exploring despite Ramsey County recently completely this process (this could potentially extend one of the shoulders to increase space for pedestrians).

Residents asked if it would be viable to implement a round-about at the intersection of Koehler and Edgerton St, or add all-way stop signs. Mr. Lux a roundabout is not likely, but the county would be willing to explore an all-way stop at the aforementioned 'T' intersection.

Residents stated they would like to survey residents; especially understanding the desires of those immediately adjacent to the area in consideration. Staff recommended that a survey be completed after the completion of the feasibility study.

Staff noted that a request can be made to increase patrolling of the street (enforcement).

Hokens – can the trail be included in the feasibility study? Speed issue is separate from the pedestrian travel issue.

Mr. Lux stated that a reduction in the speed limit must come from the state level following a speed survey. This process can have unintended consequences (the state makes recommendation to set the level at the 85th percentile which means the speed limit could potentially be raised. Ramsey County can conduct a speed survey and depending

on the results, they can request that the state does or does not complete their own survey. He indicated the County might have funding to assist the City with the expense of a feasibility report. The County will undertake speed surveys on Koehler during normal weather conditions and also discussed getting a MnDOT speed survey done on Koehler and County Rd E on the west (and possibly east) side of 35E.

Mr. Watson then added that in addition to the original five considerations, the feasibility study should also consider:

- An all way stop sign
- Two way bikeways
- A trail to the north of properties connecting to the school
- Sizes of a potential trail
- Meandering vs a Straight-shot, type of trail
- Additional exploration of the section going north on Edgerton St from Koehler

Council Member Gunderson said that staff will circle back with updates but encouraged Task Force members to email the group for questions, comments or concerns.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37pm.