

Roseville Public Works, Environment and Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 2660 Civic Center Drive
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

1. Introduction / Roll Call

Chair Ficek called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m., and at his request, Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer called the roll.

Present: Chair Bryant Ficek (arrived at 6:35); Vice Chair Edwin Hodder; Members Jarrod Cicha, and Daniel Fergus; and Youth Commissioner Carson Bauer

Absent: Members Allison Luongo, Sarah Rudolf, and Des Mueller; and Youth Commissioner Alexi Jendro (Excused)

Staff Present: Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer; Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Jennifer Lowry, Parks Superintendent Jim Taylor, and Sustainability Specialist Noelle Bakken

2. Public Comments

3. Approval of February 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Prior to tonight's meeting, the comments and corrections to the draft minutes had been submitted by PWETC commissioners, and those revisions were incorporated into the draft presented in the meeting materials.

Motion

Member Fergus moved, and Member Cicha seconded approval of the February 25, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

4. Communication Items

Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Lowry provided a brief review and update on projects and maintenance activities listed in the staff report dated March 18, 2025.

Ms. Lowry explained that the City Council had approved the contract for consultants to explore options for the license, passport center, and dance studio. She noted that several pathway projects, including Lexington Avenue and Wagner Street pathways, were set to begin this year. A public meeting was tentatively scheduled for May 1 regarding the Hamline Avenue project, and the County was working on a stormwater project at Hamline Avenue and Clarmar Lane. Several road, watermain, and trail projects were planned for next year.

Ms. Lowry discussed the implementation of wayfinding signs along county corridors, similar to Saint Paul park zones. The City was working with Xcel on a new streetlight policy that was passed in 2024. The bike lane project, including the Hamline Bike Lane Demonstration Project, was underway, with Dale Street expected to be finished by the end of the year. She mentioned the application for a new equity-based water efficiency grant and the ongoing work on the Green To Go project with University of Minnesota students.

Parks Superintendent Taylor explained the property boundary surveys in Reservoir Woods, marking the property boundaries of the cemetery leased by the City. He explained that the survey company placed the signs incorrectly, and the City was working to correct them.

Vice Chair Hodder discussed the impact of the signs on park users.

Mr. Taylor discussed the process of correcting the signs.

5. Winter Plowing Update

Public Works Director Jesse Freihammer provided a detailed update on winter plowing operations, including the City's ordinance prohibiting parking on streets after two inches of snow. The City's approach to plowing, including the use of brine mixture for pre-treatment, was also discussed.

Mr. Freihammer explained the challenges of plowing during heavy, wet snow events and the impact of temperature changes on plowing operations. He reviewed the City's routes and equipment, including the use of tandem axle plow trucks, single axle plow trucks, and front-end loaders.

Member Fergus inquired about the efficiency of brine solutions in reducing salt usage.

Mr. Freihammer confirmed that brine is more efficient at melting snow and ice than traditional rock salt.

Member Fergus also asked about mailbox recommendations and the impact of snow plowing on driveways.

Mr. Freihammer explained the challenges of plowing around existing snow banks and the impact of residents' driveway maintenance on snow removal.

6. Less Mow Summer/Pollinator Update

Sustainability Specialist Bakken updated the transition from the "No Mow May" initiative to a more year-round approach to pollinator-friendly lawn care. The City was moving away from the "No Mow May" initiative due to its lack of additional pollinator benefits and the stress it places on lawns.

Ms. Bakken discussed recommendations for responsible mowing, planting native flowers and shrubs, and using fine fescue instead of Kentucky Bluegrass. She indicated the City's website was updated to reflect the new approach to pollinator-friendly lawn care, including resources for water conservation and native planting.

Ms. Bakken announced a native plant and seed sale planned for May 24, with an online portal for pre-ordering. The sale will include various kits and seed mixes, with prices set to be competitive with retail prices. The goal was to encourage residents to plant more native plants to create habitat and forage for pollinators. She noted the sale would be structured similarly to the City's tree sale, with plants and seed mixes available for pickup at City Hall.

7. Bike Plan

Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Lowry provided an update on the bike plan, including the involvement of MnDOT consultants and public engagement. She explained the plan aims to create a safe, comfortable, and accessible bicycle network for all ages and abilities.

Ms. Lowry explained that feedback from public engagement and bike audits has been incorporated into the plan, which includes a detailed map and priority ranking criteria.

Ms. Lowry explained that a demonstration project on Hamline Avenue was planned, involving the addition of on-road bike lanes and removing right-turn lanes. She explained the demonstration project on Hamline Avenue, which included the addition of on-road bike lanes and the elimination of right-turn lanes. The project aims to improve safety and comfort for cyclists and pedestrians, with support from the school district and the county. The project will be constructed mid to late May, with plans to document its impact before and after implementation. The goal would be to create a sustainable and effective bike land that could be replicated in other areas if successful.

Ms. Lowry discussed the comprehensive nature of the active transportation plan, including engineering, enforcement, and education elements. She noted the draft plan included recommendations for potential funding sources and toward zero deaths vision policies, with room for education and engagement elements.

Chair Ficek explained that he appreciated the committee's involvement and that it started a great conversation with stakeholders. He inquired about a timeline for reviewing the final report and ensuring the plan was not left on a shelf.

Mr. Freihammer explained that the pathway master plan was funded for the next year and suggested that it be refreshed every three to four years.

Chair Ficek agreed not to let the plan sit for ten years.

Ms. Lowry highlighted the plan's potential for funding applications and creating a CIP line item for new pathways.

Chair Ficek asked about public involvement and the plan's release for public comment.

Ms. Lowry explained the process of incorporating committee comments and targeting public engagement.

Ms. Lowry discussed the plan's public engagement strategy, including targeted community conversations and a one-page summary. She explained the need for pre-installation counts and measures of success.

Chair Ficek asked about the plan's integration with county projects.

Ms. Lowry explained the county's involvement and the iterative process.

Mr. Freihammer mentioned ongoing county projects and the supportive relationship with the county.

Chair Ficek raised concerns about summer maintenance and the cleanliness of bike paths, suggesting targeted education tools. He shared examples from Ames, Iowa, of a comprehensive safety tool for different modes of transportation.

Ms. Lowry mentioned the state's new requirement for biking and walking safety classes and the development of materials by a consultant. She noted that MnDOT hosted the current bike plan website and would be transitioned to the city's site.

8. Election of Officers

Public Works Director Freihammer announced the need to re-elect officers per City Code, starting with the chair.

Chair Ficek expressed willingness to continue in his role as Chair.

Vice-Chair Hodder indicated he was also willing to continue as Vice-Chair.

No one on the Commission opposed it.

Motion

Member Cicha moved, Member Fergus seconded to elect Chair Ficek for another term.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Motion

Member Fergus moved, Member Cicha seconded, to elect Vice Chair Hodder for another term.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

Motion

Member Fergus moved, Member Ficek seconded, to elect Commissioner Cicha to volunteer for the Ethics Commission.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion carried.

9. Future Agenda Items

Public Works Director Freihammer outlined future agenda items:

- Hamline Avenue Pathway Open House
- Municipal Safety Plan
- Recycling update (Eureka)

Vice Chair Hodder suggested tours of the waterworks facility and the environmental rental center.

Mr. Freihammer agreed and mentioned the possibility of a tour of the water booster station.

Chair Ficek explained the decision to move the meeting to avoid the spring breaks of the Roseville and Mounds View school districts.

Mr. Freihammer noted the September meeting was also moved to avoid a holiday conflict.

10. Adjourn

Motion

Member Hodder moved, Member Fergus seconded, adjournment of the meeting at approximately 8:14 p.m.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0

Motion carried.