



NORMAL HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP
4649 Hawley Boulevard San Diego, CA. 92116

Approved Meeting Minutes – 12/6/2016

Meeting Beginning Time. 6:00pm by Jim Baross

Board Attendance (x means “present”):

x	Gary Weber	x	Nancy Lawler	x	Mark Lawler (in at 6:10)
x	Bill Conway (in at 6:15)	x	Ralph Enriquez	x	Scott Kessler
x	Jim Baross (C)	x	Ryan Zellers	x	Joseph Fombon
x	Caroline McKeown (T)	x	Dan Soderberg	x	Khalisa Bolling
	Marianne Green (VC)	x	Earlene Thom	x	Adam Deutsch (S)

C= Chair; VC=Vice Chair; T=Treasurer; S=Secretary

Administration Items:

Modifications to Meeting Agenda: Request to cancel the merchandise conversation. No objections were made, so we’re not getting into that.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the 11/1/16 NHCPG meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. No issues were raised to review in the meeting. Caroline moved to approve the minutes and Ryan seconded. The approval was unanimous, except for Gary who abstained, as he was somewhere far far away last month.

Treasurer’s Report:

There’s \$2287.66 to date. We haven’t touched funds from the city for administrative expenses as of yet, but those funds are not part of our total.

Information & Communication:

Communications

1. Reports from Government Representatives – Officer Jenny Hall: Coming through to say hello. Since it’s the holiday season, she shared some safety reminders to keep in mind: keep lights on (#lighttheheights) to deter those who might be in nefarious darkness; keep blinds/curtains/drapery drawn, and lovely things out of plain sight through windows; there’s always an uptick in package

thefts at this time of year, so be mindful of those deliveries, perhaps having precious objects sent to drop boxes, or to trustworthy neighbors you know will be home.

2. Reports from Community Groups –

- NH Comm. Assoc.—there's going to a home decoration review/tour, where people will vote on the best decorations in the neighborhood. That happens on 12/13/16.
- Adams Ave. Business Assoc.—the Spirit Stroll was successful, and this Saturday is the winter event with snow for the children. BLAH is having a toy drive, rabbit hole, hair dressers on fire, and BLAH are 3 of the 4 drop-off locations. The AABA is also responsible for the lights on the avenue that go up for the holidays, including the ones that go over the I-805, but not for the ones that go over the I-15. Over a two week period, starting tomorrow (12/7), the AABA will be trimming trees and removing 190 spots with “trip-and-falls” along Adams.
- Normal Heights Urban Arts—Caroline read their mission statement. They meet the First Wednesday of every month at the Adams Ave. Rec Center at 6pm.
- Adams Ave. Recreation. Council—Dave has a report on the gates at the school for joint park use. There is a meeting pending, and he'll report on that. The Rec Council has gone dark for December.
- Friends of NH Canyons—Alberto is trying to start this group up yet, and hopes to organize things in the new year. He's collecting contact information for those interested in having trails built that go from Normal Heights down to Mission Valley.

3. Non-agenda Public Comment (may be limited to 2 minutes each) :

- [Crickets] Nobody had anything to mention that wasn't on the agenda.

Information/Discussion Items

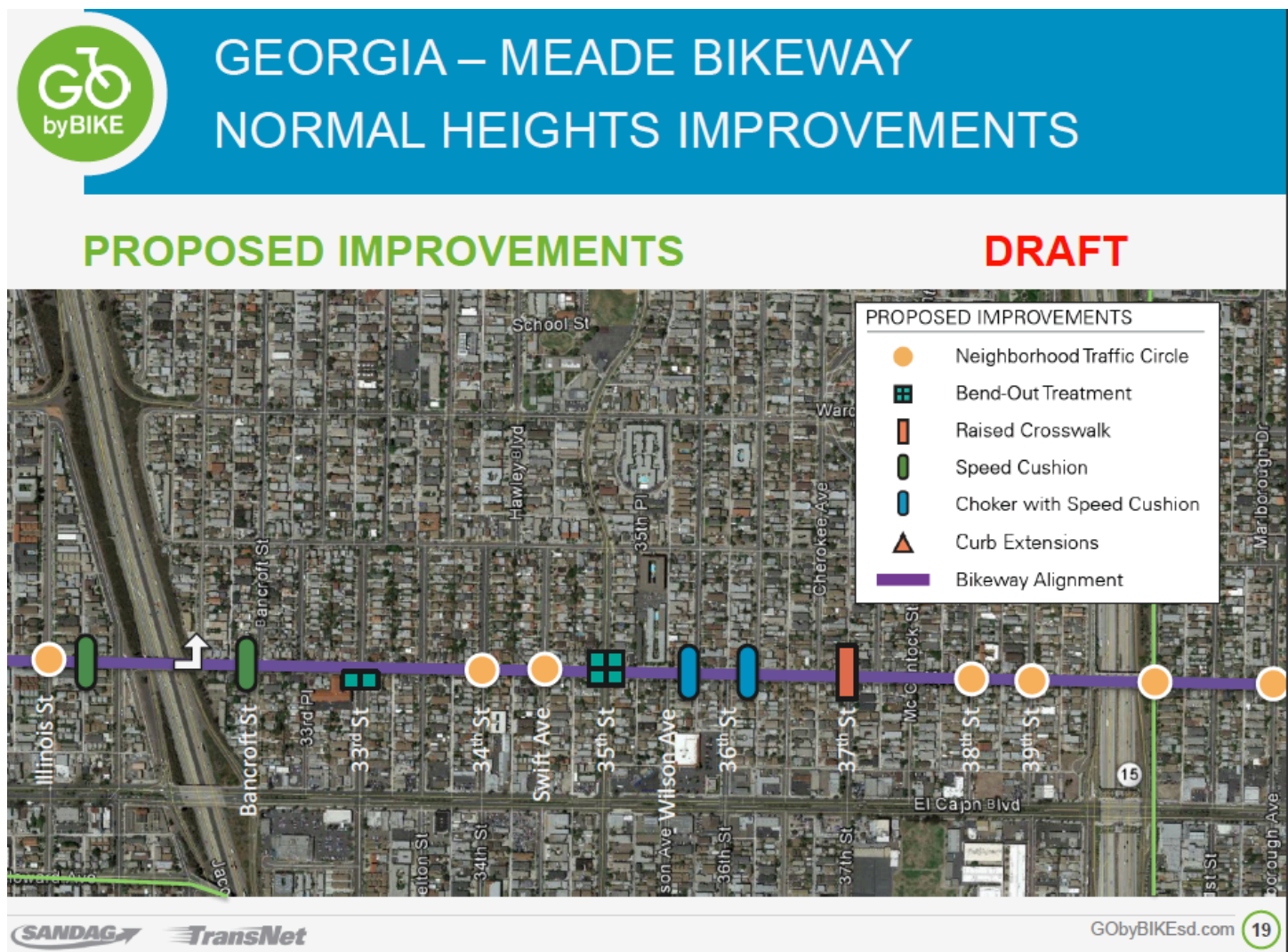
4. Adams Ave. Elementary School construction progress update. None have been made available yet, but people are very interesting in knowing why portable buildings are taking up playground space, and when they'll be gone. The Adams/SDGVA school construction project was supposed to break ground in September of 2016 and the old mobiles should be gone by now but nothing is happening on the site, and they haven't even placed the contractor mobile on the Madison side yet.

5. Meade Ave Bikeway/Traffic Calming Project, Normal Heights section – SANDAG to provide update to design plans. Danny Veeh introduced himself, and presented PowerPoint Slides. He gave an overview of the plan's purpose/intent, connecting it to regional plans, Vision Zero, and the Climate Action Plan. There

was a lot of context and the argument for the project before we got to the details of the path along Meade in Normal Heights. [More information can be found here \(http://www.keepsandiegomoving.com/RegionalBikeProjects/georgiameadebikeway.aspx\)](http://www.keepsandiegomoving.com/RegionalBikeProjects/georgiameadebikeway.aspx).

Challenges include high speeds, cut through traffic, the width of the road, and a high demand for parking, since it's just about all residential. To mitigate those things, we're shown buffered bike lanes, traffic circles, curb extension and bend-outs, chokers with speed cushions, raised crosswalks, (many things that people have commented on and protested about since the public events over the summer).

The previews were on May 10th and 25th, and they received 53 written comments. 30 liked the project, 14 were neutral, 9 were not in favor of the project (which is a tally that doesn't get into the nuances of the comments). The following graphic is a current design draft:



They specifically have tried to address calming between 30th and 33rd, and don't remove the left-hand turn at 32nd street, as well as more north-south crosswalks which will be added at 34th, Swift, 38th, and 39th.

To minimize parking loss, they've redesigned the bend-outs at 33rd St. and 35th. They're also reviewing red curbs at each intersection, hopefully to minimize the parking loss.

In a comparison between the old plan and the new, more traffic calming measures have been added. It doesn't appear that any traffic calming measures have been removed. Though, some have been modified (though the bend outs on 33rd St. were situated at the South West and North East Corners in the presentation, but this file seems to have them both on the south side of Meade).

To address the mixing of bikes and cars at traffic circles, they're changing the circles so those come together further in advance of the circle. Also, signs/stripes will be added to help remind people.

The Environmental Review was completed and reviewed, and "Final Design" is underway. The next step is to think of landscape and urban design concepts, then to refine the design to minimize parking loss, then develop civil engineering plans and specs, and final a review by the city for approval. Hopefully that will happen at mid 2018 before construction begins.

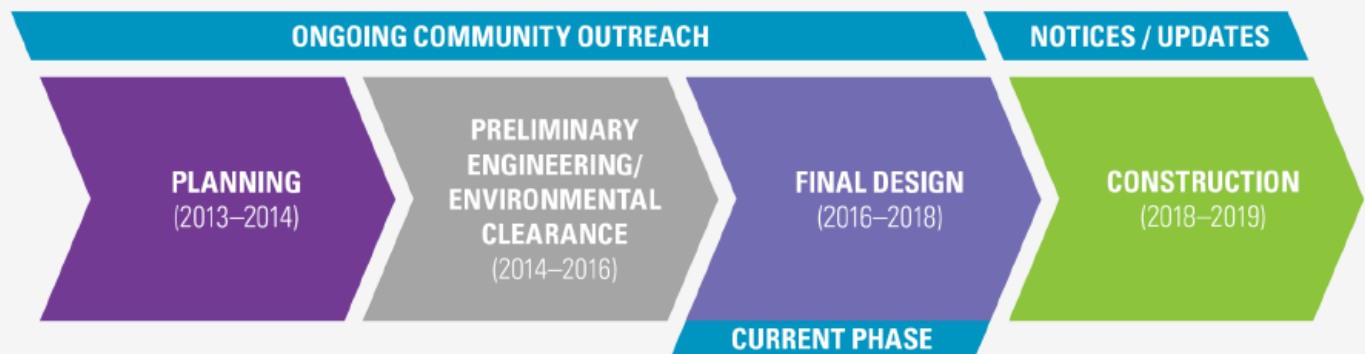
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GEORGIA – MEADE BIKEWAY

NEXT STEPS FOR FINAL DESIGN

- Landscape and urban design concept development
- Refine design to minimize parking loss
- Develop civil engineering plans and specifications
- City of San Diego plan review and approval



Comments: Caroline asked for the map of traffic calming measures to come back up. Jim clarified that we're not making Decisions tonight, but having a forum where SANDAG is open to asking questions.

Marty Graham asked about target speed for the road, and Danny thinks most of the calming measures are made to handle less than 25 miles per hour.

Gary Weber wants to know why the city couldn't maintain new landscaping maintenance. Why wouldn't they want to contribute to that?

Dan Soderberg asked about red curbing at alleyways, but Danny says that this project will only be impacting intersections where they are putting in traffic calming measures.

Scott asked about using gas taxes to subsidize the maintenance of the landscape. A city official, Steve Celniker, bedecked in a yellow cardigan, chimed in, and said that funds for landscape maintenance is already maxed out.

One request was for Meade to not to get the giant concrete buffers on Madison, west of 30th, ugly welts on the face of a neighboring right of way.

Another resident asked about assessment funding from owners along the corridor to maintain landscape. Gary explained that since we already pay our taxes, perhaps the city can do what we would like them to do with our tax dollars.

Seth Torma, a professional bike advocate, wants to see something that looks good; he's also concerned with the Climate Action Plan, and would love to see the traffic signal at 35th go away.

Scott of the AABA clarified what a Maintenance Assessment District is for, and he's concerned about residents having to do that for a large regional plan. It doesn't seem to make sense to assess the owners for something that the regional transit authority is implementing for public benefit that goes far beyond the residents along Meade. The public entity must maintain it, as they are insisting that it be built, for transportation, not for the benefits of the residents on that road. It's similar to when the 15 was carved in; residents who live along the freeway are not tasked with maintaining the landscaping along that project.

Resident who lives off Meade is happy to hear about the red curbing to make it easier to turn on to Meade. Jim and Steve Celniker clarified that the state has red curbing standards.

Resident of Kensington who uses the route spoke up in favor of the project, and gushingly praised SANDAG.

Adam Deutsch asked about the addition of traffic circles, which only currently exist in Bird Rock, which might confuse drivers. Danny said they're going to implemented along the entire regional bike plan, so they won't be unique to Meade and Bird Rock.

Jim asked about when we start to seriously discuss landscaping. It's later in the planning, according to Danny, perhaps around Summer of 2017. We can call Chris Ward about this!

Dave asked about who is funding the landscape on the construction on Pershing. There's a meeting later this week, that people are encouraged to attend. Ryan

points out that that road is an easement going through Park land, so it's not clear who they would assess. Jim clarified that the city already owns that land, so it's not quite the same situation.

Another resident asked about coordination to address cross-street traffic approaching Meade from El Cajon Blvd. The sense is that calming measures on Meade might also calm traffic approaching Meade.

Seth Torma thinks that maybe the whole community can consider paying more in taxes for maintenance. Jim recommended attending the various public groups to discuss things like this. Most residents are confident that their taxes are high enough, and that the city can maintain the projects they insist on imposing on neighborhoods.

A resident from University Heights who bikes for medical benefits spoke out in favor of the roads designed for bikes, and supports the project.

Members of the San Diego County Bike Coalition, including Randy Van Vleck, were taking video and photos and were live-tweeting the presentation and community response.

Bill Conway asked about a theme for urban design, and about budget specifics, but Danny said that a precise budget can't be determined until designs are finalized.

Marty Graham asked about the bend-outs, and wanted to see the rendering, so a slide was brought up, but it's crude and strictly conceptual, not necessarily representative of the intersections we're focused on.

Alberto asked about turning north or south around bend-outs. Danny explained how the process would work, but there's not a slide to illustrate that. There will be some kind of bike box for those turning left off Meade. Alberto explained the way it's done in the Netherlands (where he grew up...and where they have much better bike designs). We're talking about fully-protected intersections.

Comments can be sent to Danny.Veeh@sandag.org / (619) 699-7317

You can also attend our meetings, and speak out about this or any other project in Normal Heights!

At the conclusions of the Presentation and discussion, the room emptied out considerably, providing an intermission that was roughly long enough to sing through the first two verses and chorus of "Moonbeam Levels" by Prince in your head. (Those

full lyrics can be found at <http://genius.com/Prince-moonbeam-levels-lyrics>, and the track is available for purchase at various online music retailers).

6. Presentation from Ben Himlan about potential new activities for Adams Ave. from a company called “Off The Grid” <https://offthegrid.com/>, that specializes in organizing weekly markets with food trucks, general merchandise vendors and sometimes beer sales, and who operates around the State, is proposing to initiate weekly public food market on the Mason’s parking lot at 33rd and Adams.

Ben Himlan: they have negotiated with the Mason Lodge to use the parking lot for events on Tuesday Nights from 5pm – 9pm. Of course, he thinks food truck events are good for the neighborhood.

Caroline asked, Why Tuesdays, rather than Mondays when many local restaurants are closed? Ben said that he thinks a Monday would also be too slow for the trucks, so it might not be viable. Caroline also pointed out that according to the data Off the Grid sent, the people who attend these events go home immediately after, rather than stay and spend time in the neighborhood. Ben replied that the hope is that people who come here for an event would *come back later* to enjoy other things in the neighborhood (but also conceded that that’s difficult to measure). She also asked about parking impacts from those coming in from out of the neighborhood; Ben said that there’s already a parking problem, and wondered what the difference would be, to which Caroline replied that they’d be *exacerbating* and already known issue. She also asked about the larger lot at 40th and El Cajon Blvd. (Civic San Diego operates that space.) Ben said that space was too expensive, and had other “challenges” (which seem to be that it’s not a place that’s already teaming with businesses).

Jim asked about bike valet, and Ben said, “Bike valet is costly,” which is a statement that caused some head scratching, as parking a bike doesn’t involve much equipment, nor extensive staff.

Alberto asked about using the Rite Aid lot instead; Ben said that it’s difficult to communicate with a large corporation to secure a space, so they didn’t.

Caroline is also concerned about trash, and what Off the Grid does about trash removal, and the impact on the AABA’s trash collection system. Ben outlined how they remove trash, but, of course the behavior of those who attend the event can’t be completely controlled/contained, leading to concerns that trash would be discarded further away from the core event, on the curbs and lawns of nearby homes.

Dave asked about the impact from the existing Food Track event that happens on Tuesdays at Smitty's. Scott explained that it causes stains on the street, overflow parking, and don't have central management in place with whom to coordinate. All in all, it hasn't been very successful to build community engagement. We had a discussion about the impact of that event. Ben suggested Off the Grid is "a different kind of experience" than what is running already.

Bill Conway is "not trying to reach into" Ben's pants/pockets, but he's curious about the business model for the company, beyond facilitating a place for other business owners (food trucks) to sell food, to which Ben replied with a number of marketing phrases that seemed largely abstract. Bill also wants to know where else they'd be in San Diego, and Ben said, "Ideally, everywhere." Joseph followed up asking where their primary revenue comes from, and that seems to be "markets," and private catering.

Ralph sees added value to the community, but he wishes it was closer to the east end of El Cajon Blvd., an area that does not have an active culinary culture.

Adam asked "Why are you called it 'Off the Grid' when you specifically seem to rely on other established grids?" Ben replied with an anecdote about setting up in another area with an "On the Grid" campaign, so the word play got cute. He did not, however, address the company's desire to take advantage of activity fostered by other local businesses, rather than expressing a desire to build a food/event culture in a place that does not currently have one.

Committee and Ad Hoc Group Reports

13. Properties reviewed for historical significance – Nothing significant was found in the properties reviewed.
14. Project Review Committee – no new projects requiring review.
15. Transportation/Traffic Calming; new Stop Signs 33rd & Madison, etc. – Ryan. It's been installed.
- 7.

Adjourned at 7:52

The Next Meeting is January 3rd, 2017

Anticipated/Requested Future Agenda Items

Agenda order and timing are approximate and subject to change. This information is available in alternative formats (sign language, oral interpreter, and/or Assistive Listening Device). To request an alternative format, call 619-533-3650 at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting. If you have questions concerning the NHCPG, please express them at the meeting or contact the NHCPG Chair, Jim Baross, at jimbaross@cox.net or 619-280-6908, or the City of San Diego Associate Planner, Naomi Siodmok at nsiodmok@sandiego.gov or 619-236-6017.

Past Agendas and Minutes are available at
<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/profiles/normalheights/agendas.shtml>

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