



MARCH 11th 2nd birthday party and update

Attendees began arriving shortly before 7:00, followed by a social time with appetizers. The program began at 7:40. Total attendance ~ 100 people (87 signed in)

Steve Wolgamot pointed out that we have received great support from the community in general and that the people who stop Mike and me to discuss the project now routinely ask “When Will It be Done?” rather than explaining why it’s impossible. I highlighted the fact that 6,000 pedestrians and 1,000 bicyclists die each year when hit by cars and that the total has increased 35% over the past three years. Mike and I then characterized the concerns and issues in Washington and Ramsey Counties.

Senator Wiger then spoke, commenting that the element of greatest importance to completing the project is community support and expectations, which he viewed as being in place. He mentioned that the Capital Investment committee, of which he is a member, has not yet met, making it more difficult to obtain funding in this session for completion of the balance of the trail, but that he is considerably more optimistic about the next session. He pointed out that the late Harry Mares, former White Bear Lake Mayor who subsequently served in the legislature, was the driving force behind the original Lake Links Study, having been an advocate for completion of a trail around the lake three decades ago. Senator Wiger also noted the historic presence of a bike trail around the lake – in 1899! Lake Links has a copy of that map.

Mike and I then explained that the conditions that give rise to a high likelihood of fatalities are narrow shoulders, high speeds, poor sightlines and high traffic counts.

Some or all of these conditions exist at five places around the lake:

Birchwood Road in Mahtomedi – this will be fixed under current funding, with two narrowed lanes and a trail separated by a surmountable curb as on Lake Avenue. Expected to be completed fall of 2019.

Grove Park – the north end of Mahtomedi and the beginning of Dellwood, characterized by curves, hills and lack of shoulders. This will be corrected in 2019 by diversion to Streetcar Trail, Briarwood Avenue, and the Burlington Northern right of way, which will be completed in 2019 in Mahtomedi. This element will include a separated trail between Maple and Neptune Streets and improvement to the new Neptune Street pedestrian crossing with a flashing light warning.

South Shore Boulevard – primarily between MN 120 and McKnight. This area has received \$2.6 million of funding and Ramsey County will be completing it, we hope in 2020.

Dellwood Avenue between Meadow Street and the county line. This area is characterized by hills, curves, no shoulders and high traffic – nearly 5,000 cars per day. Preliminary engineering has been done by WSB and MNDOT surveying documents the existence of substantial right of way on the lake side. Funding is not yet secured for this section.

MN 96 in White Bear Township and White Bear Lake: S E H engineering is completing preliminary engineering for this section under a contract with White Bear Township and White Bear Lake. Funding for the engineering was provided by the legislature with Lakes Links Association's encouragement. In this area there will be separated trail elements in publicly owned land; sidetrail areas in land owned by MNDOT. In areas of limited MNDOT right of way, negotiation with landowners will be required. Those discussions will begin when there is consensus, including both municipalities and MNDOT about what can be done.

Three of the five most dangerous locations around the lake are thus already funded and in progress to be fixed, and we are working on the others.

Mike and I and Ian Harding then pointed out some of the additional amenities around the lake that will be part of the project. These are privately funded, and include:

- Incident reporting: Ian, Lake Links webmaster and technical guru explained that we now have an incident reporting system. Accidents that result in no injuries or are simply "near misses" are not reported in the official statistics. It is important that we note these when they occur, which they do frequently so that the dangers of these locations are not overlooked. A reporting system is now installed on the www.Lakelinks.net website. We encourage anyone to report any incidents or near misses as these will be important in documenting the need for improvements.
- Rest Stop and Pavillion at Bellaire Park. This structure, built to resemble an 1880's train depot, will include a bike repair station,

information kiosk and a bike rack in the outline of the William S. Crooks, Minnesota's first steam engine. Saputo Corporation is the anticipated primary sponsor with ground work and location contributed by White Bear Township.

- Wooden Covered Bridge at Streetcar Park. This structure will span Depot Creek in Streetcar Park, connecting Briarwood Avenue, Tamarack Street and Streetcar Trail. Principal Sponsors of the project are Dan and Karen Runze of Mahtomedi, in memory of their son Griffin. Local businesses have embraced the project as well. Larson Engineering of White Bear Lake is providing the engineering; Goliath Tech will donate helical pile footings for the bridge; Sharkey Design Build of Stillwater will do the assembly; Wagners CFT of Queensland Australia will supply the decking for the bridge; White Bear Boatworks will supply steel cable elements for railings; volunteers from the neighborhood near the bridge will do pre-assembly of some components; and White Bear Lift & Dock will perform miscellaneous metal reinforcing fabrication. We are enormously grateful to the Runze's for sponsoring this project, which will be a beautiful addition to the trail and to Mahtomedi.
- Historic Spur Trails/ Phone Apps. We are working up GIS based phone apps which will include much of the history and scenery around White Bear Lake. These will include the Chautauqua area of Mahtomedi; the Wildwood Amusement Park area; and The hotel, resort and early settlement history of the City of White Bear Lake. All of these will be subsets of an overall app covering the entire primary Lake Links Trail and Route.

Questions were then taken, many of which involved the intentions and plans for specific areas around the lake. Following the question period, which revealed strong support for the project among those attending, Steve and Mike led a resounding cheer from the assembled group of "WE WILL GET THIS DONE".

The "Lightning Round" followed in which attendees were given one minute to speak on any topic related to the trail. The one minute limitation was to be enforced with an hourglass timer and a bell, which proved unnecessary. Several written submissions were read from people who could not attend including two 12 year old girls with concerns about safety. More than a dozen people spoke highlight the long-established need for the project. A few with real estate experience highlighted the increase in values of real estate located adjacent to or near a trail, pointing out that such an amenity is always listed as a valuable attribute of property offered for sale. None of the speakers opposed the Lake Links Project.

Discussion was concluded at 8:45, followed by informal discussions among speakers, board members and attendees.

Thanks are due to Bill Foussard and the White Bear Country Inn; to Blanche and Thane Hawkins, who sponsored the room; and to various board members who contributed to the cost of appetizers.

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