

**Cedar Park Association
SW LRT Charrette
Sunday, November 14, 2010
Charrette Notes**

Public Comments at the beginning of the day

(these are comments made by community members, and don't necessarily reflect factual interpretation of the proposed project)

General

- Potential commercial and other development along LRT alignment and at stops within park and Kenilworth trail could be unsightly and invade park setting
- LRT could create another barrier from neighborhoods into park and trail areas
- Will pedestrian and bike crossings at stations and throughout LRT alignment be safe?
- Will crime increase with increased use of area and "idling" by commuters
- Will parking congestion increase in bordering neighborhoods (i.e. Kenwood)?
- Is there a need for light and shelter in more remote station sites (e.g. Cedar/Penn)
- Concern for the sense of place – loss of views, loss of flora and fauna, habitat and habitat connections within and out of park; loss of landscape experience; loss of area history
- Access into and across park may be disrupted by on-grade tracks; would act as another barrier
- Need for access into park from Bryn Mawr and northern neighborhoods (e.g. Harrison)
- Loss of direct access into park from Kenwood and Lowry Hill

CAC (Park Board)

- Loss of informal crossings – human and animal
- Loss of habitat
- Loss of the perception of area as parkland
- Loss of access between neighborhoods
- Visual and sensory pollution in neighborhoods, greater park and along Parkway from trains and train infrastructure
- Congestion and pollution from more cars
- Frequency of trains will create noise and exacerbate congestion at key intersections
- Long-term construction noise (multiple years)
- Disruption of current safe, continuous trail movement throughout parkway system
- Need for an entrance to the park
- Current trail alignment versus track placement
- Disruption of federally-funded continuous commuter trail
- How to retain and enhance visitation to the park
- Protection and maintenance of prairie landscape
- Water quality damage during LRT construction, especially at channel and at 21st St.

Site Concepts

Site I: Cedar Lake Parkway Crossing

Site Issues

- Traffic congestion along Cedar Lake Parkway and from multiple streets to the west
- Pedestrian access to South Beach
- Lack of parking for South Beach
- Potential congestion from LRT crossing at Cedar Lake Parkway
- Noise and light impacts on neighboring residences from train
- Loss of aesthetic and visual character within corridor
- Potential viewshed issues with train overpass and infrastructure

Working goals

- Maintain Park Board mission of a continuous driving and trail experience along Cedar Lake and through corridor
- Create southern gateway to Cedar Lake Park
- Minimize traffic impacts on LRT and recreation trail
- Minimize physical impact of train (speed, lights, noise, etc.)
- Resolve multiple street convergence issues on Parkway and at intersection
- Provide safe access to and parking for South Beach
- Add parkland at intersection to improve pedestrian movement and emphasize gateway idea

Concept 1. Raising the parkway and dropping the LRT: A parkway overpass over the LRT alignment

Concept elements

- Parkway overpass over LRT (15 ft. clearance); overpass descends at 5% grade to link with Xerxes Avenue South.
- LRT line depressed at least 3 ft. below existing grade to minimize surface, visual and environmental (noise, lights, etc.) impacts.
- Roundabout created west of realigned Cedar Lake Parkway to resolve multiple street (Sunset, Depot, Cedar Lake Road) convergence issue. Burnham Road realigned to feed into roundabout. Will require retaining wall at Burnham Road.
- Off-street parking (20 spaces) added to edge of South Beach as part of the roundabout complex.
- Buildings (residential) removed on southeast, southwest and northwest corners of intersection to widen sight lines, resolve auto/train/recreation conflicts and add additional parkland as part of the gateway concept.
- Varied paving patterns cue pedestrians cyclists and drivers
- Additional trail access points east and west off overpass and through intersection along Cedar Lake Parkway trail.
- Bike trail continues under overpass along but above LRT line.

Concept 2: On-grade crossing: All modes converge at existing intersection

- Minimizes cost
- Kenilworth Trail crosses Cedar Lake Parkway parallel to train alignment

Public Comments

- No preference to the bike/pedestrian trail with #2
- #2 doesn't resolve issues at site nor emphasize Parkway as the end or beginning of the larger park area to the north
- Like #1, but costly
- Train could be lowered even more to mitigate noise and view impacts to adjacent residences. Would create snow accumulation issues in trench.

Cedar Lake Park Station (Formerly 21st Street Station)

Site Issues

- Noise and light impacts on neighboring residences
- Loss of corridor character, including habitat and woodland values
- Traffic congestion at 21st St. intersection
- Potential for parking congestion
- Potential for 'idling' by commuters and beach users
- Potential for vandalism/crime by train users
- Emergency access to stations and to beach

Working Goals

- Eradicate sound (wheels), noise and light pollution from quiet neighborhood
- Slow trains through corridor in both directions
- Emphasize setting – enhance characteristics of corridor and use that image to strengthen habitat, planting and provide opportunities for appropriate recreation.

Concept: The 'four-way' stop

Concept Elements

- Split on-grade platforms developed on either side of 21st Street.
- Split platforms create a four-way stop, which slows trains and builds a neighborhood intersection. Southbound (toward suburbs) platform is located on the northwest corner of the intersection. Northbound (toward downtown) platform is located on southeast corner of intersection.
- Track moved to hug west side of corridor to increase buffer space from neighborhood.
- 'Sound-wave' land forms (berms) are developed along the eastern side of the track north and south of the east platform to abate train noise, help screen trains and other infrastructure from neighboring houses (cars, overhead lines, etc.) and to strengthen existing landscape character. Landforms could be designed to offer other appropriate activities (biking, picnicking, etc.).
- The sculpted terrain – an artist opportunity, could be planted to restore woodland vegetation and to pull the Cedar Prairie into the corridor.
- Stations could be designed to reflect neighborhood and trolley history, or designed as part of the sound wave concept (e.g. undulating planted (sod) roofs).
- Small auto drop-offs would be developed on east and west sides of the 21st Street intersection: The west side of Thomas would be widened to accommodate 12 'kiss and ride' drop-off spaces. An unpaved pedestrian trail through the existing woods would connect riders with the platform.
- A similar drop off would be developed on the north side of 21st. west of the intersection, along with a small 'knuckle' turnaround serving both LRT station and Hidden Beach users.
- Concept also includes additional pedestrian crossings between Burnham Road and 21st to accommodate more access to the west side of the corridor.

Cedar Prairie Station (Formerly Penn/Cedar Lake Park Station)

Site Issues

- No access over or under I-394 for Bryn Mawr and northern neighborhoods for cyclists or pedestrians
- Need for alternative to Penn Avenue to reach trail complex; no safe pedestrian access along I-394 frontage road
- Need for bus access to trail from Bryn Mawr
- Station site is remote – doesn't connect to any place
- Concern about potential commercial development in park

Working Goals

- Create a center in the middle of the prairie to link neighborhoods
- Make simple, straightforward connection from Bryn Mawr and northern neighborhoods to trail system

Concept: 'Bridging the Neighborhoods'

Concept Elements

- Formal park access off of Penn Avenue with 'kiss and ride drop-off, bus access, pedestrian sidewalk and access to park via bridge.
- Pedestrian and bike access continues west to Parkway via off-road trail along frontage road or on signed interior streets (e.g. Madeira, Thomas).
- Potential for related development on site – bike spa, Nice Ride, bike and coffee shops, etc. and down slope (residential) to parallel Lowry Hill character and pull both sides of prairie together.
- New road and pedestrian trail under I-394 climbs up grade of north slope to 'kiss and ride' area; provides alternative connection to Penn Ave trailhead from meadowlands and Bryn Mawr.
- Beautifully designed bridge (aka Sabo bridge over Hiawatha) traverses prairie from 'kiss and ride' to Prairie station; aligned with Lowry Hill water tower. Bridge ramps down to an elevator at the station to provide access to both the platform to the south and to Cedar Lake Trail.
- Bridge narrows as it moves toward Lowry Hill. Narrowed perspective de-emphasizes its scale and focuses connection of prairie edges.
- Bridge could provide observation points (belvederes) along it and focus view of downtown with plantings, which would also break up its horizontality across the prairie.
- Existing Cedar Lake Trail and prairie regraded and lowered to move under LRT at Kenilworth intersection; trail connects with Kenilworth trail at a new trail roundabout. Trail continues into downtown between LRT and Lowry Hill.
- Potential trail connection up Lowry Hill with link to Douglas.
- Park space at toe of Lowry Hill would be programmed more tightly with pedestrian and bike trails and woodland restoration.

- Potential for residential development at toe of slope to enhance concept of station site as a prairie center.
- Clustered development at station – bike parking, Nice Ride, coffee shop to create a ‘way station’ and minimize sprawl through park.

Public Comments

- Elevator not adequate for bike access, especially trailers, etc. Have to have an alternative to get bikes and kids down from bridge.
- Move elevator into a more central location.
- Whole area is considered civic and park space, even if not publicly owned – residential development not appropriate.
- Concept doesn’t really provide a new alternative to Cedar/Penn site.
- Consider doing a bike transportation plan to identify 3-mile bike sheds for funding and connections to larger regional trails – think systemically; station could be a hub for larger connections.