

REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



To: Edina Transportation Commission

Agenda Item #: VII. A.

From: Wayne D. Houle, PE, Director of Engineering

Action

Date: August 15, 2013

Discussion

Information

Subject: Correspondence Relating to Transportation Issues

Action Requested:

No action requested.

Information / Background:

Attached is correspondence from Dr. McKlveen and Ellen Jones regarding Vernon Ave and Ayshire Blvd. Also included is a response letter from James Grube – Hennepin County Director of Transportation and County Engineer.

Attachments:

Letter Dated July 22, 2013 from Dr. McKlveen and Ellen Jones to Hennepin County

Letter Dated August 5, 2013 from Hennepin County to Dr. McKlveen and Ellen Jones

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**Robert E. McKlveen, M.D.
Ellen F. Jones**

5261 Lochloy Dr.
Edina, MN 55436
952-924-9048

July 22, 2013

Mr. Jim Grube
Director of Administration
Hennepin County Transportation Department
1600 Prairie Drive
Medina, MN 55340-5421

Dear Mr. Grube,

We recently learned that Hennepin County is planning to reconstruct County Road 158/ Vernon Avenue in Edina, and we are writing to ask that you consider changes to the intersection of Ayrshire Blvd, Hansen Road and Vernon Avenue as part of this reconstruction. Such changes could address vehicular safety, pedestrian, transit and bicycle safety, and traffic calming while preserving traffic throughput. As residents of the adjacent neighborhood, and as a former member of the Edina Transportation Commission (REM) we are familiar with the problems created by this intersection.

Vehicular Safety

This intersection is the location of one of the only fatal non-highway accidents in recent memory in Edina. The current intersection has poor sight lines between Vernon and Ayrshire, with high vehicle speeds on Vernon, high traffic volumes on Vernon and moderate volumes on Ayrshire and Hansen. With worsening congestion on TH 62, especially during the afternoon rush hours, Vernon experiences heavy "bypass" volume daily. Throughout all hours, traffic often exceeds the posted 40 mph speed limit. It becomes very difficult for traffic to safely exit Ayrshire onto Vernon because of these volumes and speeds. It is also dangerous for traffic making the acute-angle turn from Southwest-bound Vernon to northbound Ayrshire due to high speeds on Vernon; cars turning right from Vernon have to slow to about 20-25 mph for this turn, resulting in sudden braking and risking rear-ender accidents.

Pedestrian, Transit and Bicycle Safety

There is no safe pedestrian crossing of Vernon for nearly 1 mile, from Eden Avenue to Tracy. The Ayrshire/Hansen intersection falls in the middle of this section of Vernon, with access to Highlands Park on the north and Garden Park on the south side of Vernon. Both parks see high volumes of pedestrian and vehicular traffic for their playgrounds and athletic fields. We have witnessed children dashing across Vernon on foot and by bicycle, with several close calls on numerous occasions.

Metro Transit bus stops numbers 494 and 540 are at this intersection, and transit riders have to cross Vernon during rush hour to reach their stops. They do so at their own peril due to the lack of crosswalks, signals, or other traffic controls.

Finally, the broad opening from Vernon to Ayrshire, with a large expanse of pavement on Ayrshire is confusing to motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists, with cars cutting across this asphalt acreage at a variety of angles, further endangering all those involved. Vernon Avenue is a designated

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bicycle route, but the current design of this intersection does not meet safe design standards for bicycle routes.

Traffic Calming

This intersection lies at the bottom of a long hill from both directions on Vernon. This exacerbates the problem of excessive speed on Vernon, and traffic calming solutions would help mitigate vehicle speeds and decrease risks on this section of road.

Possible Solutions

We suggest using a large, elongated traffic circle for this intersection. Such a solution would achieve the safety improvements and traffic calming that we believe are needed. There is adequate publicly-owned land on all sides of the intersection to enable such a solution, so that no private property would be affected. The northern terminus of Hansen would have to be relocated about 100 feet southwest along Vernon to improve its alignment with Ayrshire and to go around the west side of an existing high-power line structure. The entrance/exit of Ayrshire could be significantly narrowed and redirected northeastward without altering the northeast limit of the roadway. The intersection of Windsor Avenue and Hansen Road could be left largely unaffected. Adjacent sidewalks and bike lanes could be routed around such a roundabout to further improve safety. We have included a rough sketch of such a traffic circle, with our apologies for our poor artwork and lack of engineering expertise.

An alternative solution would be the placement of traffic signals at this intersection. However, because of the malalignment of Hansen and Ayrshire, a complex arrangement of multiple lights would be required, increasing cost and potentially decreasing safety.

Please consider our suggestion of a traffic circle for this dangerous intersection as part of the upcoming reconstruction of Vernon Avenue in Edina.

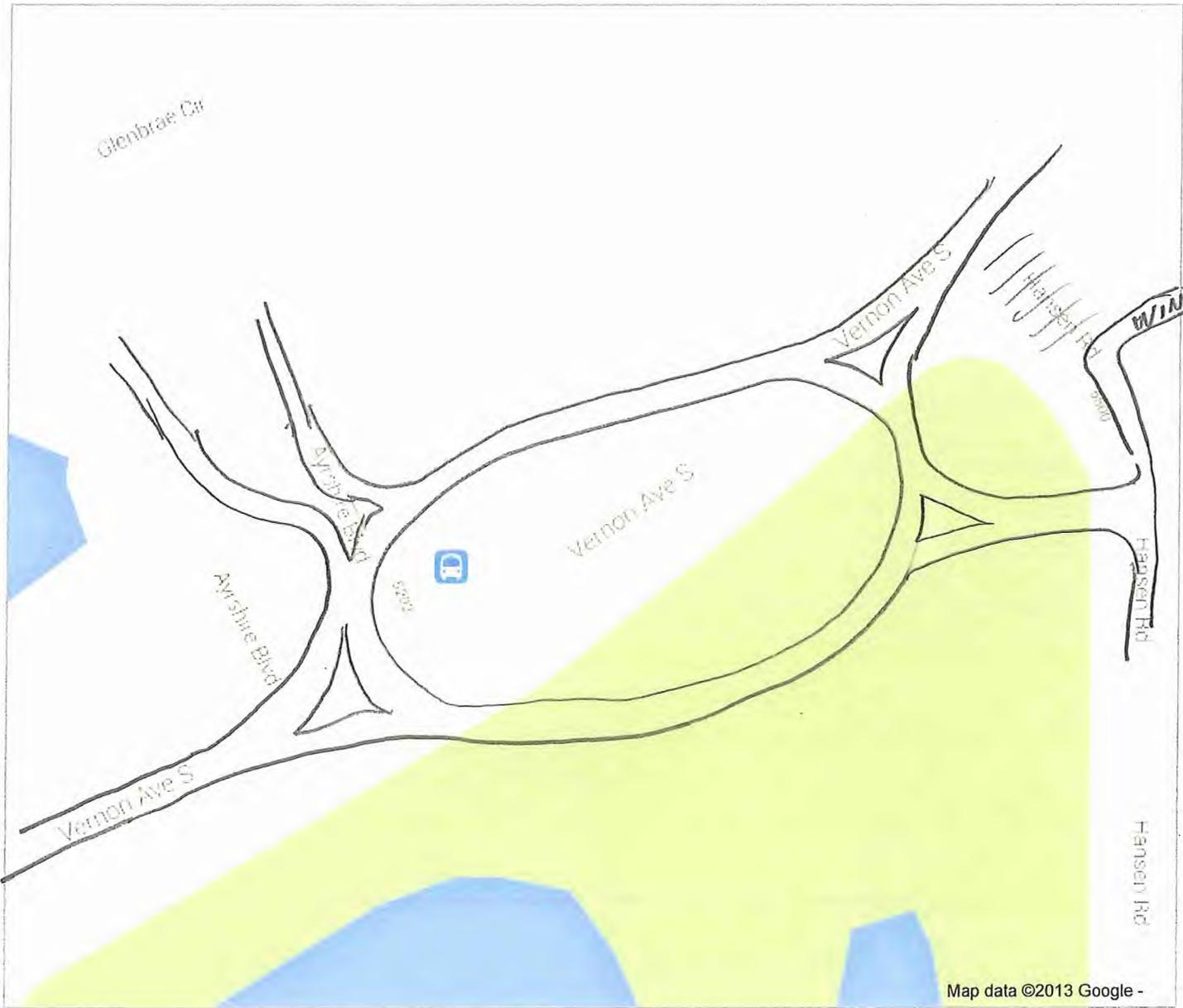
Very truly yours,

Robert McKlveen

Ellen Jones

CC: Scott Neal, Edina City Manager
Wayne Houle, Edina City Engineer
Edina Transportation Commission
Harlan Hanson, Division Manager, Hennepin County Construction Division
Craig Twinem, Division Manager, Hennepin County Design Division
Tom Johnson, Division Manager, Hennepin County Transportation Planning
Robert Byers, Senior Transportation Engineer, Hennepin County Public Works

To see all the details that are visible on the screen, use the "Print" link next to the map.





Hennepin County Public Works

Transportation Department
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August 5, 2013

Mr. Robert E McKlveen, M.D.
Ms. Ellen Jones
5261 Lochloy Drive
Edina, MN 55436



Dear Dr. McKlveen and Ms. Jones:

I am in receipt of your July 22, 2013, letter regarding proposed work along Vernon Avenue (County Road 158) in Edina. In your letter you mistakenly refer to the work as reconstruction. The work to be conducted is merely a mill/overlay activity, not reconstruction. As such, the work will not contemplate any access modifications along the corridor. While your letter offers some good thoughts, we will have to wait until the corridor is scheduled for reconstruction to engage all who would have interest in changes of this magnitude. At this point, we do not have the corridor scheduled for such consideration and I do not foresee such action for at least 10 years. Of course, if a reason is found to bring the corridor forward for consideration things could change.

Sincerely,

James N. Grube, P.E.
Director, Transportation Department and County Engineer

C: Scott Neal, Edina City Manager
✓ Wayne Houle, Edina City Engineer

JNG/ca