

Summary of Engineering Recommendations

Pleasant Avenue Reconstruction: Jefferson Avenue to St. Clair Avenue

City Project No. 25-P-8184

SAP No's. 164-248-001, 164-210-013

Report Prepared: 2024-10-23

Public Hearing: TBD

Pre-Construction Conditions

Currently the roadway is generally one lane in each direction. Parking exists on both sides of the roadway throughout most of the corridor. The roadway is in poor condition with no pedestrian infrastructure available for public use.

The construction of I-35E through Pleasant Avenue in Saint Paul in the late 1960s had a significant impact on the area. The highway's development altered traffic patterns, diverting a substantial amount of vehicle flow away from Pleasant Avenue, which diminished its role as a primary thoroughfare. Additionally, the construction required the modification of surrounding infrastructure and affected local businesses, some of which faced challenges due to reduced visibility and access. Over time, while I-35E facilitated regional travel, it also created a physical and psychological barrier within the neighborhood, influencing land use and community dynamics.

Improvements

The Pleasant Avenue reconstruction project aims to transform the area into a vibrant and inviting space for all users. Central to this initiative is the development of a shared-use path that enhances mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized travelers, promoting a safer and more inclusive environment. The addition of solar lighting will not only illuminate the path, ensuring safety during nighttime use, but also highlights our commitment to sustainability. This project will stimulate local commerce by creating a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, while actively engaging the community to gather feedback and address the needs of all stakeholders. By prioritizing accessibility and environmental responsibility, we envision Pleasant Avenue as a dynamic hub that fosters connection and community spirit.

Reconstruction is needed to repair and replace pavement and utilities. Improvements include a shared use path, pavement, boulevards, trees, curb, and gutters. Traffic improvements include new lane markings, solar lighting, and signage. Both public and private utilities will be improved. Public utility improvements include storm sewer work, sanitary sewer replacement, and stormwater management treatments.

Alternates

Three alternatives were considered throughout the design process for the location of the shared use path. Option #A included a shared use path along the north side of Pleasant Avenue and the west side of Victoria Street. Option #A was favored by residents at the Linwood Park community meeting as it provided a constant loop around the park. Option #B included the shared use path along the north side of Pleasant Avenue and east side of Victoria Street. Option #B also provided a complete loop around Linwood Park but did not provide a safe crossing at Pleasant Avenue and Victoria Streets intersection. Option #C included a shared use path along the south side of Pleasant Avenue and the east side of Victoria Street. This option was favored by Street Design. Option #C was seen as a compromise option as it offered a constant trail from St. Clair Avenue to Jefferson Avenue as well as keeping the sidewalk on the west side of Victoria Street. A considerable amount of community engagement was done along the corridor, with hundreds of comments received. After much debate, Option #C was selected by the city.

Positive Benefits

Adding a shared-use trail, solar lighting, and drop inlets to catch seepage from the bluff along Pleasant Avenue can bring numerous positive benefits to the area. The shared-use trail will enhance accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, promoting active transportation and encouraging outdoor recreation. This can foster a stronger sense of community and increase safety by providing dedicated space for non-motorized users, reducing potential conflicts with vehicular traffic.

Incorporating solar lighting along the trail will not only improve visibility and safety during evening hours but also promote sustainability by reducing energy consumption. Solar lights can enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area, creating a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

The addition of drop inlets to manage seepage from the bluff will help prevent erosion and manage stormwater runoff effectively. By capturing and directing excess water, these inlets can protect the integrity of the trail and surrounding landscape, reducing the risk of

flooding and maintaining the health of nearby vegetation. Overall, this combination of features will contribute to a safer, more vibrant, and environmentally sustainable community space.

Adverse Effects

Throughout the design process, trees were identified as the only adverse effects related to the project along Pleasant Avenue. Additionally, comprehensive assessments have shown that the project will enhance the area without negatively impacting local wildlife or the surrounding community. All elements of the design have been carefully considered to ensure a positive integration with the existing environment.

Effects on Trees

A handful of existing trees will need to be removed to allow for the project. Using solar lighting along Pleasant Avenue can have some potential negative effects on trees. If solar lights are installed too close to trees, they can create additional shade, impacting the growth and health of young trees that require sunlight. While installation is generally less invasive, any digging or placement of foundations for solar lights could disturb tree roots if not managed carefully. Improperly positioned solar lights might obstruct the natural growth patterns of trees, affecting their shape and overall health. Additionally, trees growing too close to solar lights may also require more frequent pruning, which can stress the trees and lead to health issues if not done properly. Therefore, careful planning and consideration of tree placement and growth are essential to mitigate these potential adverse effects.

Time Schedule

Private utility work will begin prior to construction in the summer 2025. Project design and bidding is expected to be completed in Spring 2025.

Cost

Construction of the project is estimated at \$4,500,000. Design engineering, inspection, contingency, and assessments are estimated at \$1,785,000 for a grand total of \$6,285,000.

A public hearing will be held for the project.

Financing

Saint Paul Streets Program	\$	6,280,000
Assessments	\$	5,000
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Total	\$	6,285,000

Source of Additional Information

For additional information, contact the project manager, Eric McCarthy at 651-266-5419, or visit <https://www.stpaul.gov/projects/public-works/pw2025pleasantavereconstruction>

Summary and Recommendation

The Department of Public Works feels that this is a worthwhile project, and the Engineering Recommendation is to approve the assessment.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric McCarthy, E.I.T.

Public Works Street Design and Construction