

Ayd Mill Road Improvements – Frequently Asked Questions

4/15/2020

General Background and Technical Questions

Q: Why isn't there a connection from Ayd Mill Road to I-94? Why wasn't the original plan for the I-35E to I-94 route implemented?

- A northern connection to I-94 would cost tens of millions of dollars in property acquisition and infrastructure improvements. Cost was the main reason for why this indirect connection to I-94 was never made.

Q: Why can't Ayd Mill Road just be turned back to nature or turned into a linear park?

- Ayd Mill Road is an important City street that carries an average of between 13,000 and 27,500 vehicles per day, of which 75% of those trips begin or end in Saint Paul. Permanently closing the road to vehicle traffic would force all vehicles to find alternative routes which could have a negative impact on adjacent roads.

Q: Why not use the open space between the railroad and Ayd Mill Road for a trail?

- This open space is railroad property and attempts by the City to acquire it from the railroad have failed.
- The 3-lane proposed project uses all the City's available space between the railroad and the proposed trail.

Q: Why is work being done now on Ayd Mill Road?

- Ayd Mill Road has deteriorated to the point where the surface is becoming unsafe for vehicles.

Q: Why wasn't Ayd Mill Road maintained or redone a long time ago?

- Different ideas for Ayd Mill Road have been proposed over the years. There has not been consensus on the specific road configuration and additional maintenance efforts.
- Saint Paul Public Works evaluates road conditions annually throughout the City and develops a Five Year Capital Plan to address road conditions based on the budget available. Ayd Mill Road was initially on the Five Year Capital Plan for a mill and overlay in 2022. The condition of Ayd Mill Road worsened to a point that Public Works sought to accelerate improvements sooner.

Q: What are the long-term maintenance costs of the mill and overlay? Can maintenance costs be reduced?

- Performing a mill and overlay, combined with improving storm water drainage in the area will lower future maintenance costs.
- Addressing the drainage issues will prolong life of the mill and overlay work.

Q: How long will the mill and overlay last? Should a complete rebuild be done?

- The mill and overlay will add several years to the life of Ayd Mill Road.
- Complete reconstruction of Ayd Mill Road is not affordable at this time.

Q: Will speed limits be reduced?

- The existing speed limit on Ayd Mill Road is 45 miles per hour. Public Works will make a speed limit determination for Ayd Mill Road during the design phase of this project and will implement any change when the road is reopened after construction.

3-lane Concept for Ayd Mill Road Questions

Q: What is the 3-lane configuration?

- The 3-lane concept converts the existing 2 northbound lanes to 1 northbound lane. The additional space created by eliminating this lane will be used to create an off-road shared bike/pedestrian trail along the east side of the corridor.
- The 2 southbound lanes will remain open to vehicle traffic.
- A left turn lane for northbound vehicles will be included at intersections.
- The existing median between north and southbound lanes will be maintained.

Q: What is the cost of the 3-lane concept?

- The estimated cost for the 3-lane concept for Ayd Mill Road is \$7-\$8 million.

Q: How does the 3-lane concept impact traffic?

- The City and its engineering consultants have evaluated the traffic impacts of the proposed 3-lane design for Ayd Mill Road and the surrounding roads.
- This traffic modeling data can be viewed in the April 6 video presentation starting at 23:44 or on slide 16 of the PowerPoint slides available at www.stpaul.gov/aydmillroad.

Q: Can you put roundabouts at the various intersections on Ayd Mill Road?

- Roundabouts for a multi-lane road require a larger amount of space than available. The 3-lane design and road grades are not conducive to a roundabout solution.

Q: How is this going to affect traffic in the surrounding area?

- Traffic modeling data for the 3-lane proposal shows some increases on surrounding roads, especially during the morning rush hour.
- The traffic modeling data can be viewed in the April 6 video presentation starting at 23:44 or on slide 16 of the PowerPoint slides available at www.stpaul.gov/aydmillroad.

Q: Why is a bike/pedestrian trail being added to Ayd Mill Road?

- Saint Paul’s Comprehensive Plan including both the Bike and Pedestrian Plans prioritize people walking first, followed by people bicycling, transit riders, and vehicles. An off-road trail facility on Ayd Mill Road is included in the Saint Paul Citywide Bike Plan. We are implementing the priorities and elements of all these plans.
- A trail would provide a separated and safe corridor for nonmotorized traffic.
- Ayd Mill Road provides a future opportunity to connect to the existing Midtown Greenway.

Q: What are the bike and pedestrian accommodations with the 3-lane concept?

- A shared-use off-road trail is proposed along the east side of Ayd Mill Road.
- There are select locations where the 12-foot trail may be narrower due to right-of-way or other constraints.
- The boulevard separating the northbound vehicle lane from the trail is proposed to vary from 6-8 feet wide in most locations.

Q: Where can bicyclists and pedestrians access the Ayd Mill Road trail?

- Bicycle and pedestrian connections will be made at Jefferson Ave., St Clair Ave., Grand Ave., Hamline Ave., and Selby Ave. Trail facilities will be extended along the ramps from Jefferson, St. Clair, Grand and Hamline down to Ayd Mill Road to the signalized intersections.
- Signalized crosswalks will be installed to allow for safe pedestrian and bicycle travel across the intersections.

Q: Will there be signals for pedestrians and bicyclists to access the trail?

- There will be signalized crosswalks at the pedestrian/bike access points, which are located at the ramp intersections with St Clair Ave., Grand Ave., and Hamline Ave.

Q: What will the specific access points for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians look like?

- Please see the April 6 PowerPoint presentation, slides 6, 7, and 8, for a visual representation of the connections available at www.stpaul.gov/aydmillroad.

Q: What are the improvement plans to existing facilities such as signals, lighting, storm sewer, and sanitary sewer?

- Signals
 - The temporary traffic signals at Ayd Mill Road intersections with Grand, St. Clair, and Hamline will be replaced with permanent signals and upgraded pedestrian and bicyclist crossing facilities.
- Lighting
 - There will be new roadway and trail lighting installed along the Ayd Mill Road corridor.
- Storm Sewer
 - Due to the removal of one of the northbound lanes, new catch basins will need to be installed to reduce potential road flooding.
 - Several drainage utility covers are in poor condition will be replaced.

- Sanitary Sewer
 - Several sanitary sewer utility covers are in poor condition and will be replaced. The City is evaluating the condition of the sanitary sewer to determine if any other repairs are needed.

Q: What park/pedestrian/beautification features will be added?

- The bike and pedestrian facilities will include a trail and pedestrian style lantern lighting. There are no park or other beautification treatments planned for Ayd Mill Road at this time.

Q: When will Ayd Mill Road construction start and end?

- Construction is scheduled from early August to November, subject to weather.
- The construction timeline may vary as the design details are finalized.

Q: Will Ayd Mill Road be closed during construction and will there be a detour route?

- Ayd Mill Road will be closed during construction. A full closure of Ayd Mill Road ensures the safety of workers and shortens the construction time.
- Signage on I-35E will let drivers know Ayd Mill Road is closed.

2-lane Concept for Ayd Mill Road Questions

Q: What was the 2-lane concept for Ayd Mill Road?

- A 2009 City Council Resolution requested that Ayd Mill Road become two lanes, with a parallel bike/pedestrian facility.
- The 2-lane concept would have removed the 2 existing northbound lanes. The 2 existing southbound lanes would be converted into a 2-way roadway with one vehicle lane in each direction.
- The existing 2 northbound lanes would become a 12-foot-wide shared-use trail.

Q: What are the disadvantages of the 2-lane concept that led to the creation of the 3-lane concept for Ayd Mill Road?

- The estimated cost of the 2-lane concept is \$2-\$3 million higher than the 3-lane concept. This increased cost is due to additional roadway reconstruction and drainage improvements.
- The 2-lane concept would have eliminated the existing median along Ayd Mill Road, thereby increasing the likelihood of vehicular crashes.
- Left turn lanes for northbound traffic would need to be added to the existing southbound lanes to accommodate a 2-lane configuration, requiring significant roadway widening.

Q: What is the cost of the 2-lane concept for Ayd Mill Road?

- The estimated cost for the 2-lane concept for Ayd Mill Road is \$9-\$10 million.