

Info on converting Linden and Center Sts. to two-way

The Bethlehem Gadfly Neighborhoods, Northside 2027 November 8, 2019

(the latest in a series of posts on Northside 2027)

Gadfly attended the Committee of the Whole meeting on the 2020-2024 Capital Plan — the kickoff of the budget season — before the Council meeting on Wednesday.

2020-2024 Capital Plan

Mostly routine matters not especially rising to the interest of Gadfly followers, except perhaps this Northside 2027 item on the long-considered conversion of Linden and Center Sts to 2-way, which was expanded on in discussion by Councilpersons Colon and Reynolds as you can see in the short video.

The benefits of the conversions are described as traffic calming, an aid to the businesses there, and increased future development. PennDOT plans are still pretty far out there time-wise, but Councilman Reynolds pointed to the priority of Linden from Fairview to Church and its relatively low cost.

<https://youtu.be/LeqXKnpvUTc>

Linden and Center Streets Two Way Conversion

Dating back to when Bethlehem Steel was in operation, Center Street was made oneway north and Linden Street one-way south between approximately Elizabeth Avenue and the Fahy Bridge (New Street). This was to facilitate traffic to and from the Steel Company during peak

hours. Since the closure of Bethlehem Steel, the roadways have been left in their one-way configurations and the City will explore the conversion back to two-way traffic with the driving forces being economic impact and traffic calming /accident reductions. A full traffic impact analysis would be conducted to analyze the proposed modifications and recommend timing changes to the signals and/or the installation of additional signals, etc. to support the conversion. Design costs will also incorporate the revisions to all signal permits. Construction costs are anticipated to be high due to the amount of signal work to be completed on both roadways to support two-way traffic. This project has been placed on the Long Range Transportation Plan with funding planned between 2031 and 2045. Penn DOT has programmed \$7.2M for this project in the future. We believe the Linden Street portion of the work could be completed for far less and have estimated a 2020 cost of \$1M. The conversion of Linden Street is a higher priority for the City and we may complete that project sooner if alternate funding is identified.