

Monroe Street Reconstruction

Wingra Entrance Workshop Notes

5:30-7:30PM, April 27, 2017

Temple Beth El

Total participants: 17+

City staff in attendance: Christy Bachmann (Engineering), Phil Gaebler (Engineering), Jim Wolfe (Engineering), Ben Zellers (Planning), Janet Schmidt (Parks)

The goal of this workshop was to collect public input on the plans for the Wingra Park entrance and the adjacent northwest corner of Commonwealth Avenue that will be realigned during reconstruction. Workshop attendees were introduced to design opportunities within the scope of the project, including improvements such as plantings that would require private maintenance after installation.

Participants conducted a site visit of each location in small groups prior to debriefing and discussing design ideas and preferences as a full group. Notes below are compiled from the site visit and full group discussions.

Wingra Park Entrance

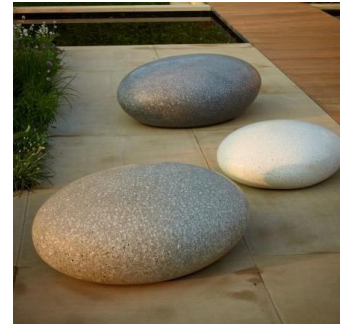
- Split path into a "Y," with new leg leading towards the Commonwealth crossing.
- The m path should be widened to accommodate bicyclists, runners, and the garbage trucks that use it.
- Need a better ('aproned') path connection to the sidewalk to better accommodate bikes and pedestrians who don't take the turn at 90 degrees.
- Maintain the ramp/curb cut for bikers, maintenance vehicles.
- Include a rain garden or butterfly garden in the middle of the new "Y" split path.
- Include some seating outside the new bus shelter to be a resting place for bikers, people-watchers, people waiting for the bus on nice days, etc.
- Position the bus shelter so that cyclists' views are not impaired.
- Ensure it is a covered bus shelter to protect riders from the elements, especially during winter.
- Include a well-placed and attractive drinking fountain.
- Include a public art element that is understated and relates to the park and history of the area.
- Use public art or signage to depict activities that take place in the park, to give passersby an idea of what they will find inside the park—e.g., soccer, canoeing/boating, nature, wildlife etc.
- Include interpretive/educational signage on the history of the area: the old Wingra ice house, Ho-Chunk history in the area, cranes, Arboretum, etc.
- Look to the Midvale Gardens for an example of public art.
- Try to connect the existing edible garden to the entrance feature if possible.
- Lighting of public art or entry archway should be low voltage or small in-ground lighting.
- Do not restrict view of the lake from park entrance.

Commonwealth Intersection

- Bury power lines along Monroe at Commonwealth and on Commonwealth until past Klinker Cleaners, to allow for planting a large tree
- Good location for a rain garden. Include a tree if possible. Work with Klinker to take landscaping to the building façade (add shrubs along building foundation?)
- Look to Shorewood Blvd. for examples of rain gardens that incorporate trees.
- Look into directing water from adjacent parking lot into the rain garden.
- Low maintenance treatments.
- Could include some neighborhood identification signage.
- Educational signage about the rain garden, Wingra watershed etc.
- Include some low-profile seating for bus stop, maybe large stones.
- Incorporate an aesthetic connection to the Wingra entrance across the street
- Relocate traffic light utility box if possible; if not possible, decorate it – maybe with a wrap. The wrap could include educational info on the rain garden or art sourced from the local community (Wingra School or Monroe Street Arts Center).
- Square off the intersection as much as possible to slow down traffic turning from Commonwealth onto Monroe.

Preferred Precedent Imagery

Wingra Park entrance design preferences: low-profile seating, natural materials, public art that relates to the activities and environment of the park. Potential for interpretive signage regarding ecological or historical context.



Northwest corner of Commonwealth design preferences: decorated/wrapped utility box with a rain garden or decorative plantings.



Comment Card Question:

What would you most like to see happen in this location as a result of the Monroe Street Reconstruction?

- Intersections safer to cross
- Increased pedestrian safety
- A Wingra Park entrance that is more inviting and bi-directional
- A piece of art welcoming to the entrance, informative of what is deeper in the park
- More engineering focus on bio-soils and retention, because of proximity to Lake Wingra
- A bubbler/water fountain
- A vision that is inviting and welcoming that gets people talking about the neighborhood
- A focus on the location as a gateway for a park and for a business district, opportunity to showcase green infrastructure, model for green urbanism
- No further restriction of park/lake view
- Efforts to address park planning, better connecting the park to the streetscape

Meeting notes compiled by Urban Assets.

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