

Monroe Street Engagement Resource Team Meeting Notes

Date: December 13, 2016	Time: 5:00-6:00pm
Location: Barriques, Monroe Street	Recorder: Katie Fadelli
Attendees: Christy Bachmann, Robbie Webber, Hiam Garner, Peter Armstrong, Zia Brucaya, John Imes, Susan VanderSanden, Mary Campbell, Ben Yahr, Aaron Williams	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Follow-up
Cross Section Review Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jim Wolfe presented the cross section to the Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission on November 29th. After a long discussion, the commission voted 5-3 against supporting the proposed cross section. The commission felt that the proposal was too focused on autos rather than pedestrians and bicyclists. They are an advisory vote; the vote does not determine whether the cross section proceeds or not, but when it eventually goes to Council they will see that the commission voted against it. - Robbie noted that it seems fairly unusual that a major project like this would be voted down by the commission, however, this commission has different members than those who have supported large projects in the past. - The Board of Public Works will be the next to review the proposal on December 14th. The meeting will begin at 4:30 in the City County Building Room 108 (Parks conference room). The project is 9th on the agenda, but will likely be taken up 4th. - The Board of Public Works is the lead agency that will make a recommendation to the Common Council. If they do not vote in favor of the proposed cross section, they would send it back to City Engineering, likely with time to make changes for review at an additional board meeting prior to review by the Common Council on 1/3. The Board of Public Works is the main body that public works contracts and official resolutions from City Engineering go to. 	
2017 Public Engagement Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zia reached out to Professor Jim LaGro from the UW School of Urban and Regional Planning about doing a Monroe Street project with one of his spring courses. He has a 699 Landscape Architecture course that would be a good fit; the class will be 16 undergrad juniors who have good graphic design skills. City staff will hold a kickoff meeting with Jim this Thursday to develop a clear project plan. His students will begin with 3-4 weeks of background reading and precedent research on what other cities have done in similar situations. One good project opportunity would be to develop design options for Crazylegs triangle to share at the spring public workshop on the east end of Monroe Street. Students will receive guidance throughout the process from city staff. - Robbie wondered if they might also focus on placemaking and traffic calming efforts to reduce street speeds along the street. She noted that there are natural ways to slow people down by making streets with less activity feel tighter. Zia said that the idea of parklets has been brought up, which students could research in order to recommend a program that the City could implement with businesses. They may also be able to provide traffic calming precedents and design ideas along the corridor. Their work plan will be better defined during the meeting with Jim and staff. - Peter noted that Streetscaping and traffic calming is especially needed on the edges of the business districts, specifically from Harrison to Edgewood/Commonwealth. He asked how and when the community can continue to have input on these plans. - Christy noted that engineering is starting work on grades, and believes that Leonard may also end up being a raised intersection. She asked that ideas be sent her way and she will forward them on to appropriate staff members, who will either be staff in her engineering department, Yang Tao in traffic engineering, or Phil Gaebler in water resources. 	

- Zia is working with Phil to identify a list of people with technical experience in green infrastructure/stormwater management to include in a green infrastructure focus group at the city that will be held in February. This will be a group of 8-10 people that Phil will present ideas to (i.e. the location of side street rain gardens, ways to keep bigger street trees, etc.), and ask for feedback to round out these ideas and narrow down opportunities for the upcoming public workshops. Group members will also include people who would be involved in the community implementation or maintenance side of some of this work, such as rain gardens.
- The City and Urban Assets will work on scheduling two meetings with the Monroe Street Merchants Association and other Monroe Street business owners in January and March. The first meeting will focus on preparing for the reconstruction process, including a reminder of what to expect, and how to go about planning for marketing to drive business during that time. The second meeting will deal with future business district enhancement opportunities and outline what elements the city and businesses would be responsible for installing and/or maintaining.
- Christy noted that businesses start getting concerned around this point in the process, and the city's Office of Business Resources is focused on preparing them for the construction period. Ruth Rohlich and Mike Miller (who previously owned a business on Monroe Street), will work directly with business owners to come up with an agreement regarding funds to hire someone to represent businesses in the meetings with contractors during reconstruction and to develop and coordinate marketing efforts. The city has done this with past projects like Johnson and Williamson. Monroe is in a much more challenging situation with fewer parallel streets for access, so Christy cautioned that the construction period could be very difficult, which is why the city will likely support the upper limit of funding to hire a support person. In the past, funding has ranged from \$5,000-\$10,000.
- Hiam asked that he and Orange receive the proposed meeting date. He will share meeting documents from the Vilas Neighborhood and Monroe Street Merchants Association meetings where they discussed supporting the proposed cross section and additional bike enhancements such as signage, painted graphics, stop signs, and bike parking on side streets, as well as making Madison Street a bike boulevard like Kendall.
- Peter suggested using funds to implement a program during construction such as rentable Burleys (bike trailers), that would give people options to keep shopping on Monroe without using cars. Aaron questioned whether this would be effective in encouraging shopping by the majority of people who are currently accessing Monroe Street by car, and who don't live in the neighborhood or don't currently bike. Peter noted that perhaps Burleys would help people in the neighborhood like him, who currently use their car to shop although they bike for other reasons, to start using their bike to shop on Monroe.
- 2017 public engagement activities, in addition to the green infrastructure and business focus groups, will include two workshops in April and May that focus on placemaking and green design along the east and west halves of Monroe. The workshops will include an outdoor component (e.g., walking to Crazylegs Triangle to discuss opportunities), as well as indoor discussion. There will also be an open house in July to present the full corridor design based on feedback from the workshops and to gather additional input.
- The ERT noted that there should be focus placed on the intersection where Edgewood Ave crosses Monroe, where they currently have two crossing guards. Peter will share a video where the guards are interviewed about the safety of the intersection. The group agreed that this intersection (and Edgewood as a whole), should be included in the east end workshop.
- Aaron expressed the UW's concern about logistics during the UW football season, which begins 9/1, when the street is still under construction. This is something that the UW and city will need to work on.

Other & Wrap Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Urban Assets will finalize 2017 meeting dates and workshop formats over then next month. Please share any ideas regarding content or format of these meetings with Zia.- The next ERT will be held on January 25th from 5-6 PM, following the 1/3 Common Council decision.	
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