

Monroe Street Reconstruction

Final Corridor Design Presentation and Open House

Meeting Notes

6:00-7:30 August 16th, 2017

Wingra School

Total participants: 130+

City staff in attendance: Christy Bachmann (Engineering), Phil Gaebler (Engineering), Jim Wolfe (Engineering), Yang Tao (Traffic Engineering), Rebecca Cnare (Planning), Tim Sobota (Metro), Mike Miller (Office of Business Resources)

Q&A

- Has the City considered rumble strips to reduce speeds?
 - Not possible on this street due mainly to maintenance issues. Rumble strips wear away over time and create new joins between materials in the street that are a maintenance concern.
- Has the City considered enforcing no right turns on red lights (especially at Glenway)?
 - The City will look into the possibility. This can be changed with additional signage further along in the project.
- After installation, the underground rock trenches for stormwater management will look like regular turf grass in the terrace.
- Some trees were replaced 10-12 years ago in the area. Will they remain?
 - The tree boxes in the terrace will be expanded, with the goal of causing as little damage to existing tree roots as possible. Some trees will come out if they are unhealthy.
- Will the LED lighting in the residential districts adhere to AMA standards for temperature rating in residential areas?
 - The temperature rating of the new LED lights in the residential areas will be 3,000K which is at the upper end of approved standards. Lights that the City installed in the past were too bright.
- At the locations where the City will be removing bus stops, will the cement be replaced with turf?
 - Yes.
- Do you plan on moving the beacons currently located at Western?
 - Yes, the City plans to move the beacons from Western to Chapman/Arbor Drive.
- At the intersection of Commonwealth and Monroe, what are the plans for the Laurel driveway?
 - With the reconfiguration, the driveway will be fully outside of the intersection, which will help it to function better by making it less awkward. The driveway for Zander's will be fully within the intersection, which will also make it function better. What we don't want is two driveways that are sort of in, sort of out.
- Will there be more parking restrictions around intersections where many left turns are made onto Monroe (especially at Lincoln)?

- The City will look at parking restrictions in areas where there might be visibility issues. This can be changed with additional signage further along in the project.
- Will curb height change with the reconstruction? Trucks turning by the Edgewood campus clip the curb and wear it down.
 - After the reconstruction, curbs along Monroe will meet the City standard of 6 inches in height. Trucks should not be turning at that intersection too frequently, but a new and improved curb and corner should help.
- One of the best example of city planning I've seen is the bus pullout in front of Mallatt's, where busses could pull out of the traffic lane. Are there other opportunities to do the same on Monroe?
 - Unfortunately, no. There is not enough right of way or terrace space, meaning we would have to cut into the sidewalks. Something similar will be configured at the Regent Street end of the project, but no additional pullouts will be added. There will be fewer bus stops, however, which will reduce the amount of traffic disruptions.
- What is the plan for the steep driveways along Monroe?
 - We will improve grades wherever possible, both for homeowners and for people parking there. The driveways will certainly not become any steeper.
- At the crosswalk by Prospect, is there any way to reduce pedestrian exposure by straightening it out?
 - The proposed design is straighter/better than what currently exists, but it is still at a slight diagonal in order to keep the offset ramps as close as possible to the corners. This is especially important for the visually impaired. We will see if it is possible to square it up any further.
- Are there plans to install underground conduit in places where the utilities are not currently planned to be undergrounded, like they did on Willy Street?
 - Utilities are proposed to be undergrounded only within the business districts along Monroe. This is based on a citywide policy that specifies what types of areas can qualify for undergrounding. In some instances the City will install conduits in advance of undergrounding if there is a chance for future funding, but in this case, there are no other areas along Monroe that would be eligible (the residential areas do not meet policy requirements for undergrounding). However, a utility may choose to do further undergrounding on their own in the future.
- Has the City considered a left hand turn signal from Grant onto Monroe?
 - The City can take a look at it, but the time required for the left turn signal has to come from somewhere else, and may cause additional backups along Monroe. It may also make the side street more appealing to drivers, which we do not want to do based on resident complaints that there are already too many cut-throughs by non-residential traffic.
- Has the City considered installing continental crosswalk markings at the crossings parallel to Monroe Street as well? It would increase visibility of pedestrians.
 - The City will look into it.
- What trees will be cut down?
 - Several are planned for removal due to existing illness or preventive measures for emerald ash borer. The City will post the list of trees planned for removal online.
- I live on Nakoma, and when that street was under construction it caused a lot of traffic issues. How will semis be prevented from using Monroe?

- The City can look into additional signage, but this is mainly an issue of enforcing the designated trucking route. Monroe is not a designated trucking route. The addition of raised intersections will make this a less desirable route for trucks.
- Will water main shut-offs during construction affect those that live on streets adjacent to Monroe as well?
 - It depends on valve locations. If your street was reconstructed recently, the chances are that you will not be affected.
- Can you give us more specific information about when the various blocks will be affected during construction?
 - Not at this time. The City allows the contractor to make many of those decisions after they are awarded the project. It will largely depend on utilities and sewers, as crews will have to start at low points and work up to high points. We do expect a large portion of the street will be under construction at the same time.
- What is Metro's plan for a detour during construction?
 - Inbound buses will use the single lane of traffic. Outbound buses will be routed along Regent past West High School and then will likely use Toepfer to connect back to the end of the construction zone. We are still looking for a good outbound route, however; plans are not finalized.
- There is no designated detour route, but are there plans for high traffic days such as Badger football Saturdays?
 - The City will look at the schedule and see what can be done to ease congestion during these days, but generally, people will have to find new routes.
- What can we tell our customers regarding parking?
 - The current plan is for people to park in the two hour zones on side streets. The City will look at easing the street sweeping parking restrictions areas along the side streets, but we will probably want to keep the two-hour restriction so that spots are not dominated by commuters using them for the full day.
- Will the City monitor speeds after reconstruction? Is there a chance to put in radar speed signs (especially at Commonwealth)?
 - The City is planning to compare speed and crash rates before and after the reconstruction.

Additional Comments Received:

- I think it is a very bad idea to move the rapid flashing beacons from Knickerbocker to Sprague. There are many people that cross at Knickerbocker and an elevated intersection is not enough to draw drivers' attention. The sign in the middle of the pedestrian refuge there has been hit multiple times.
- Business district lights should be extended to the front of the Madison Theater Guild (2410 Monroe Street).
- Wayfinding signs on the bike path should direct people toward the two separate business districts.
- Comment card: "I really wish you would treat Monroe as a "residential" street and not as a second class highway. We need to have more traffic lights (like Willy and Johnson Streets). It would help to slow and "platoon" the traffic. We need to have the "speed" signs (like on Midvale and by West High). You talk about "preserving" Monroe; my main concern is

“preserving the neighborhood as a neighborhood”. The traffic noise can be quite loud. Many cars run the red at Monroe and Leonard and the “walk” light is on! How to stop people passing on the right? A real hazard!”