

MEETING MINUTES

Steering Committee #4
West Main Street Transportation and Placemaking Study
19 February 2021

Attendees

- Lydia Hausle
- André Primus
- Stephen Gray
- Darin Ramsay
- Alexis Vidaurreta
- Jesse Peers
- Bob Williams
- Jay Arzu
- Dr. Lomax R. Campbell
- Yolanda Allen
- Ronalyn Pollack
- Lora Leon
- Dan Kenyon
- Bleu Cease
- Dawn Noto
- John DeMott
- Deborah Hughes
- Jason Haremza
- Chris McDonald
- Abigail McHugh
- Kevin Kelley
- Luticha Doucette
- Julie Bosai
- Tati Spencer
- Bill Belec

Discussion/Comments

1. Engagement Updates
 - a. John: will pop ups be in person?
 - Opportunity for MOCHA to get to know the neighborhood, Dawn Noto to bring neighbors
 - b. Jay: Are elected officials permitted to attend the pop ups?

- Yes, could also bring more people out if there is a chance to have face time with electeds
- 2. Revitalize Rochester Fund Update
 - a. Dr. Campbell: could REDCO RRF be used to pay residents, business owners, business associations to make positive changes?
 - Being intentional about creating access to capital for residents who are lending their talents and expertise to the project
 - Example: what if residents were encouraged to walk the corridor taking videos or streaming live, hash tagging campaign, showing what they would like on the streetscape and encouraging others to weigh in; could provide stipends for this kind of engagement
 - b. Stephen: both showing immediate action to build trust and momentum, and bringing ideas into space that don't involve huge capital funding to test them
 - When capital funding arrives, we'll have ideas about what people liked, what worked, what didn't
 - Testing will come from community use
 - c. Dawn: Rock Soup program, people would pay whatever they could for soup, contribute community ideas or business ideas, soup eaters would vote on best idea and the winner would win the soup money to implement
 - Dr. Campbell: what businesses along West Main serve food? Whatever this is we want to build holistically, intentionally
- 3. Breakdown of Survey #1 Results (Community Goals)
 - a. John: outstanding analysis to collapse everything into this form; reflect on Thurston Rd streetscape
 - 2M, benches, curbs, crosswalks, etc
 - Many of these goals were expressed for Thurston especially walking friendliness
 - Later, business owners complained about loss of parking for bump outs; there was a cost to making the street walking friendly which was incurred by business owners
 - Business owners now park their cars on the sidewalks
 - How do we anticipate the impacts of our vision? Can we quantify the cost attached to improving the street for walking?
 - Jason and Dawn second this concern in the chat, and note that on East Main Street the universally-accepted vision met pushback when it came to implementation
 - b. Stephen: we are pulling together precedents to shape our approach
 - NYC: removing parking for pedestrian improvements in collaboration with business associations
 - Starting with paint and temporary obstacles; if it works it becomes permanent, if it's not supported by surrounding businesses or doesn't work then it goes away
 - c. Andre: Rochester Bicycle Boulevards plan
 - Tension between people who bike and people who drive about inconveniencing one another
 - These kinds of issues force people to think about other folks' points of views
 - What could the effects be on businesses? On pedestrians? What's the trade-off?
 - Japanese study: people are more willing to accept self-sacrifice if they're viewing things on a longer time scale; need to give people the tools to think long term so they're not constrained by short-term thinking
 - d. Lydia: When we get to the point where we're thinking of design solutions we will go through the impacts and trade-offs very transparently
 - Parking is unique on West Main because very little of the street has existing on-street parking
 - e. Dawn: installed curb bump outs in front of the fish market to try to keep people from double parking to run in, but now they leave cars next to the bump out

- Also, creating spaces for people to spend time incurs cost in the form of maintenance and trash collection crews
 - Fruit trees
 - Think outside the box! We just spend \$5M on focused investment strategy for jefferson and they're getting the same issues
 - Jason: "No flowers are better than dead flowers"
- f. Chris: By the time this is done, the current business owners and residents will understand the importance of all the historic events and people; when they phase out, is there a succession plan even short term to help keep the messages relevant to the next generations?
 - Sounds good now, but in the long term there could be cobwebs hanging from everything we achieve
 - Lydia: part of what we're hoping to do is catalyze both potential funding from REDCO process and the follow-through
 - Neighborhood service centers have a leadership academy that young people are encouraged to join to learn about how to be community leaders; could be an opportunity to partner, and start "succession process" by involving young people
 - Be intentional about identifying the right people to carry this forward to keep broad interest over time
 - Lydia: keep this conversation going and if you have ideas keep making sure they're incorporated
- g. Dr. Campbell: building for the city we want so we can eventually get there; why it's important to plan holistically and execute toward holistic picture
 - Coalition must be broad-based and community-owned
 - If the collective group brought a 15 year outlook with a short-term, medium-term, long-term action items, provides a chance to check in periodically and ensure that the coalition is still intact
- 4. Existing and Planned Conditions and Needs Assessment
 - a. *Outline Review*
 - b. *Approach to Ground Truthing*
 - Dr. Campbell: *thumbs up*
 - c. *Example Modules*
- 5. Wrap Up & Action Items
 - a. Deborah: disconnect between driving alone % and lack of vehicle access in susan b. anthony neighborhood
 - Something to look more closely at
 - History of transportation modes- fascinating area! Train stations, subway, trolleys, canal
 - How did those different modes both feed and inhibit how the neighborhood developed? Neighborhood is unique in having had all those forms of transpo at one point or another
 - b. John: speed data fits perceptions very accurately
 - How much of traffic is through traffic and how much stops in the neighborhood? Where does it originate where does it terminate
 - Perception that much of it is through traffic, which is shared by businesses
 - Mini marts: transaction studies showed 150-200 customers driving, who make very quick stops and only want to park in front
 - c. Jesse: Bikes through here with his kids including to visit his father, doesn't own a car
 - One of the most intimidating stretches of road in the city for biking
 - There was less traffic on Rochester streets, but it did seem like people were driving faster on West Main
 - d. Jay: State Senator Brouk is moving to lower speed limit from 30 to 25
 - Are we considering roundabouts or other traffic calming at Genesee/Brown/West Main?
 - Lydia: not considering anything until we have complete info, but once weve identified problems we'll start looking at design solutions

- Darin: Bull's Head Revitalization Plan considered a roundabout but it didn't work; Brown will be realigned with a roundabout and straightened to meet Genesee more regularly
- e. Bleu (copied from chat): High auto speed passing through and danger for bicyclists and folks in wheelchairs fits what I see and hear from neighbors and businesses.
- f. Abigail: conversation hinting at gentrification, and how to avoid it- what would that mean?
 - Lydia: policy solutions primarily, we can look to lots of places that have policies to provide incentives for people to stay and invest in their homes with forgivable loans, around the country places are exploring protection overlay zones to promote growth while pushing the market into an equitable direction. No solution working somewhere else is a perfect fit, and this is both an art and a science that we want to work on in this group. Also working with the city to see what's implementable
 - Dr. Campbell: we don't have a shared definition of gentrification; we want gentrification to improve the area, but we want to avoid displacement. Policies, organizing and coalitions, relationship with city council are important to ensure that this is scoped into conversations
 - Dawn (copied from chat): Bullshead just bought out and displaced a lot of people. gentrification? property that was on the tax rolls now will be a tax free development zone
- g. Deborah (copied from chat): Do we have details about crash locations that show any trends? For example, are the Jefferson or Madison crashes related to cars attempting to turn left onto West Main? Is that data available, and if so, are there trends?
 - Lydia: we can presume some trends
 - Darin: difficult to sort through crash reports but we can investigate individual locations more deeply as needed
- h. Jesse: crash data is not the full picture because people who would walk and bike here avoid West Main; they would be great for the businesses
 - Bleu agrees