

MEETING MINUTES

Steering Committee #5
West Main Street Transportation and Placemaking Study
26 March 2021

Attendees

- Lydia Hausle
- André Primus
- Stephen Gray
- Darin Ramsay
- Alexis Vidaurreta
- Jesse Peers
- Bob Williams
- Jay Arzu
- Yolanda Allen
- Ronalyn Pollack
- Dan Kenyon
- Bleu Cease
- Dawn Noto
- John L.
- John DeMott
- Mike Bulger
- Jason Haremza
- Chris McDonald
- Abigail McHugh-Grifa
- Bill Belec
- Rick Rynski
- Anne-Marie Brogan
- Shawn Burr

Discussion/Comments

1. Engagement Updates
 - a. Jesse: would Andre consider doing a pop-up at the Downtown Transit Center given the traffic there?
 - Andre and Darin prefer to stay within the corridor itself by setting up at one of the busy bus stops on West Main
 - Lydia could potentially host a pop-up at a bus stop 4/9 when she's in town
 - Dawn recommends the bus stop near Canal St at 1872 café as a nice spot

- May not have the highest boarding rates
- b. Engagement rates on survey 2
 - Jesse: people on various safe streets listservs complain about survey and meeting fatigue, could we do fewer surveys?
 - Andre prefers multiple survey approach still
 - John D.: concerned about low engagement from businesses; John printed it out and distributed to business owners but has not seen great engagement
 - Relevance of surveys to businesses owners is a concern
 - Business owners seem most concerned about traffic noise, poor compliance with traffic laws
 - Jargon: streetscapes, placemaking
 - Stephen: from the responses to Survey 2, seems like most respondents are small business owners. Their comments are very much about creating a better experience for visitors to small businesses
 - Mike (copied from chat): Sharing an existing social media post is easy. If you have a few sentences describing the project and survey, we can also paste that into newsletters, if the timing aligns.
 - Abigail (copied from chat): I believe we shared survey two via social media and that's probably how we would share survey three also, so I agree with Mike that having an existing social media post to share would be easiest.
 - Shawn (copied from chat): I've shared surveys with staff and contacts. I'd also post on our Facebook page too, if a narrative can be provided
 - Ann-Marie (copied from chat): I shared 2nd survey with the carriage factory residents. although before we had good response, only 2 responded and didn't get beyond question 3, #2 survey was more challenging to respond to than #1 survey.
 - Dan: is there an example of a survey leading directly to results that we could point to? People need to feel that filling it out matters
 - Andre: this is why the next survey will be more exciting, because it's leading towards "what should we do about it?" with the connection to RRF funding
 - Lydia: inherent challenge in a blend between vision and action plan; we have the opportunity to incorporate more action items at this moment given our progress with REDCO, but need to be careful to balance with vision
 - Dawn (copied from chat): can the next survey be put on a tablet we can take to the street?
 - Andre: survey works on tablet, but he will need to provide a special link that would allow one to take multiple surveys on the same device; if anyone wants to do that he can share directly
 - Dawn proposes sitting at 1872 café with tablet

2. Survey #2 Summary

- a. Not going through every piece of feedback during the meeting, but a summary of results will be sent out
- b. High level themes:
 - Desire to directly address personal security challenges through the project goals/vision
 - Emphasis on needing to preserve transit reliability, as well as better bus stops
 - Emphasis on need to maintain West Main for traffic that passes through
 - Need for parking to support businesses came through in comments
 - Emphasis on incentivizing new and needed businesses to locate in the area
 - Strong desire for maintenance to be built into the project
 - A wide range of people and places are of noted importance to people who took the survey including historic figures, current institutions, and many small businesses along the street

3. Existing Conditions Review – Land use and public realm

- a. Jason (copied from chat): Fewer travel lanes = more room for on street parking. Seems like a potential win-win. Slows down moving traffic and provides for more parking, which was an identified issue.
 - Stephen: potentially also more room for plantings etc
 - b. John D.: anecdotal observation, businesses with highest revenue, most customers, highest volume it is often businesses with dedicated parking; if we wanted to go after data we could
 - Businesses in pedestrian-oriented spaces want more parking and are disappointing whenever any is lost to bump outs etc
 - Bleu seconds John; also the segments with no parking are definitely the least comfortable for walking and biking, and documents what people are feeling
 - More on street parking and slower traffic are common business association requests
 - Jesse agrees; this is a very wide ROW and there's room enough to accommodate everybody
 - Dawn on unregulated parking: businesses complain that residents park in all the street parking, maybe tenants could park in back or on side streets and West Main curbside could be reserved for high turnover parking
 - c. Bleu: how does the county's traffic study factor in here?
 - d. Dan: do we have the flexibility to make West Main a one way street?
 - Lydia: given barriers etc, would be a tough sell
 - Darin: City would not support, as it would speed up traffic among other issues
 - e. Dawn: Could Reynolds be blocked going through West Main as a measure to reduce crashes with Madison?
 - Roundabout, other charette solutions
 - Darin: closing off any roads would also be a tough sell with the city, but using medians to prevent certain turns would be on the table
 - f. Dan: used to be able to cross West Main into Clifton but they got rid of the crossing when they put the playground in (where is this?)
4. Revitalize Rochester Fund Update
 - a. Dawn (copied from chat): Litchfield pocket park upgrades - tables, benches
 5. Wrap Up & Action Items
 - a. Jesse: Reconnect Rochester is starting to focus on standards for big projects; they want to see mandatory bus shelters included in big investments
 - b. Bleu: everyone is very excited for more things like the suggested RRF investments, but there's a prevailing sense that solving the bread and butter issues needs to come first
 - Example: major challenge with snow removal and serious transportation issue in the survey area, especially given the number of people who use mobility devices; trash cleanup issues
 - These issues are still very actively hindering West Main, and feels like they need to be addressed first and addressed permanently before any fun frivolous-seeming improvements
 - Jason (copied from chat): Hear hear Bleu. A community is not walkable if it's only walkable 8 months of the year #snowremoval
 - Dawn: second the issue with trash; flower pots filled with liquor bottles after parties, trash cans missing, etc. Training crows to pick up trash??
 - Bleu (copied from chat): perhaps a commitment to improve some of those basic services could grow out of this
 - Darin notes that the study is a placemaking study, and quality-of-life issues fit into that
 - c. Jesse: struggles to keep track of various projects and would like greater context on how the Bull's Head Revitalization Plan affects or fits into this project
 - Lydia notes we'll provide context in the full EC&NA report