

Willy Street Proposal

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Board Members. As a former member of the Board of Public works, the Chair of the Platinum Bike Committee Infrastructure Sub-committee and consummate user of Willy Street, please consider the following. If we truly want to become a renowned biking city...

Willy Street Proposal

Short of delaying the project, which am amenable to:

Thornton to Baldwin - Accept current width of 42 feet. Widening for bike lanes is not a reality. Perhaps put in Sharrows.

Baldwin to Blount - Narrow to 46 feet (10 foot motor vehicle lane and 13 foot bike/parking lane). 48 feet would also work, but would make tree preservation and planting more difficult. 46 feet would help make driveways smoother. (Compatible with Platinum Report)

Most of the curb and driveways need replacing - so Rob Phillips not wanting to only narrow 2 feet doesn't fly. The existing curb cannot even handle stormwater properly.

Design the street so that future bump-outs can be placed without impacting drainage.

Summary

Current Williamson Street Widths are:

Thornton Avenue to Baldwin - 42 feet

Baldwin to Blount - 48 feet

The most immediate and key issue is street width. Mike Barrett and others have stated that a 48 foot street with bike lanes is unsafe for biking (dooring). Rob Phillips believes that 44 feet with bike lanes is safe.

- Mike Barrett et al say 48 feet is unsafe for biking and subject to dooring. Not true. 13 feet is the WisDOT minimum recommendation. 48 feet allows for an 11 foot Motor Vehicle lane and 13 foot bike/parking lane (same as East Washington).
- Rob Phillips is OK with 44 feet for two reasons. 1) If the street is to be narrowed he does not want to narrow only 2 feet (46 feet) - that would be a waste of money. 2) The city could mark 44 feet with bike lanes (10 ft motor vehicle lane and 12 foot bike/parking in the future. (The latter has been done on retrofits. This is not a retrofit. This will create a bike lane squeeze and more dooring (vs. 46 or 48 feet)). This configuration has been a problem on recently retrofitted Midvale. You should never do a substandard retrofit when the current width is adequate.

- Commercial Avenue between North and McCormick was just retrofitted with bike lanes (10 foot car lane/5 foot bike lane/7 foot parking lane). It is 44 feet wide however there is less parking use and less bike and motor vehicle traffic than Williamson Street. It had also been the original width of the street. It is the correct solution for this street.
- Fallacy. 44 feet will make Willy Street a green street. Trying to make a 20,000 ADT street "green" by making it narrower does not work. Monroe Street is 44 feet and it doesn't look "green." There are no sidewalk restaurants and bikes are not comfortable on street. There has been enough sidewalk biking that "No Bikes on Sidewalk" signs have been posted.
- Fallacy. Bikes can ride with traffic (and slow it down). This works for the confident, assertive, faster and braver bikers, but it does not accommodate the typical everyday biker. The typical biker will bike closer to the parked cars (dooring). Getting more typical bikers on street should be our target goal. They are potential customers. Even premier biking cities such as Copenhagen lost ridership until they started putting in safe bike lanes on high volume streets.
- The numbers on dooring width. A car is 6 foot wide and with an open door is about 8.5 feet wide. An open door into a bike lane on a 44 foot Williamson Street would project at least 1.5 feet into an already constricted bike lane. On a 13 foot wide bike/parking lane an open door would project 0.5 feet into the bike lane. Both are assuming that that car is parked tight to the curb. Ideally a 14-foot bike/parking lane would work best. The current 48-foot Williamson with 10 car lanes and 14-foot bike/parking lane is ideal. A 46 foot width is reasonable compromise, but 44 foot becomes dangerous for bike.

Retrofitted Commercial Avenue

10 foot adjacent motor vehicle lane with 5 foot bike and 7 foot parking lane.
(3.5 feet clear for bikes)



East Washington Avenue

11 foot adjacent motor vehicle lane with 13 foot bike/parking lane.
(4.5 feet clear for bikes)



More Background.

Platinum Cycling Committee Report

Adopt and implement a Complete Streets Resolution.

Details: Complete Streets are defined in the Themes section of this report. While paths are useful, especially for recreation, paths can only be safely located in certain areas. Streets must also form the core of the bikeway system. The resolution should state that all new arterials, collectors and select commercial streets shall have bike lanes. Reconstruction of existing streets (such as East Washington) will likewise be updated to meet Complete Street criteria. Place design and construction of bicycle facilities (street and path) at the same level as other modes.

Responsible Party: Common Council with input from Engineering, Traffic Engineering, and Madison Metro

Performance Measure: A written resolution is developed, approved and implemented.

Timeline: Spring 2008

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Review the impact on commuting bicycles of the Rush Hour Parking Policy that converts parking lanes to motor vehicle lanes.

Details: Investigate solutions to current conditions. Many excellent streets for bicycling (such as Monroe Street, Williamson Street Regent Street and segments of Park Street) become virtually impassable for bicycles during the rush hour. Solutions may include improved alternate routes and signing.

Responsible Party: Engineering and Traffic Engineering

Performance Measure: Meeting held and list of recommendations developed

Timeline: Spring 2008

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Adjust signal timing/progression on significant bike routes to better favor bicycle commuters.

Details: Starting and stopping at signals is a significant inconvenience to bicyclists and either discourages some from bicycling or encourages bicyclists to ignore signals. Favoring bicyclists on certain significant routes can encourage more bicycling and improve safety.

Responsible Party: Traffic Engineering

Performance Measure: Signal timing is adjusted

Timeline: Spring 2011

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Convert current bike route network and signage to a destination-based network.

Details: Signs will indicate where bicyclist can get to and the distance. Examples exist in Chicago and Portland. May include the naming of some routes and the signage may be phased in.

Responsible Party: Traffic Engineering

Performance Measure: Network planned and signs installed

Timeline: Plans to begin no later than Spring 2009.

We can grab onto all or parts of the four Platinum Committee Items above.

More Willy Street Proposals

Support elimination of Rush Hour Lanes (see Platinum Report). Impact can be and should be assessed while street is under reconstruction.

When Rush Hour Lanes are eliminated proper bike lanes can be marked.

When Rush Hour Lanes are eliminated start placing bump-outs in intersections (far right sides) and planning and allowing for bypassing of left turning vehicles.

Place bump-outs at select locations for outdoor dining, seating, artwork and bike parking. This was successfully done on Main Street in downtown Sioux Falls, South Dakota.



The bump-outs can be up to 7 feet to allow for Motor vehicle and bike lanes (10 and 6 feet). So the distance from right way to face of curb would be up to 20 in width. About 14 feet would usable for outdoor dining. A typical parking space is 24 feet in length, so the bump-outs could be a similar length.

Some parking would be lost in front of requesting restaurants, but good customer experience will increase.

Adjust signal progression (see Platinum Report) to better favor the typical biker. This will generally help to slow traffic. Even the presence of bikers will slow traffic

Destination Signage (see Platinum Report). As an initial phase of the Platinum Committee recommendation develop, plan and install destination signage on the Capital City Trail from Blount to Cottage Grove Road and on the Starkweather Path from Wirth Park to MATC.

Business Destination Signing – Place Business Destination Signing on East Wilson (and bike path) before construction begins. The sign should be placed and designed so it can remain permanent and coordinated with the above Destination Signing. Precedent and examples are a couple of WisDOT business destination signing programs that could be incorporated into city ordinance and or policy.

Overhead Wires – Make continued progress on getting the wires underground on this mixed use/commercial street. Wiring on most other streets of this type in the city are already underground.

Street Trees – Maximize the planting of trees that will provide a future canopy.

Lighting. Support full cut-off street lighting. Low energy LED lighting would be preferred. Some is already in place on Highway 30 between East Washington and Fair Oaks. Consider or provide for future pedestrian scale light. This should also be full cut-off.

Make East Wilson (and bike path) a true Bike Boulevard (see Platinum Report). Immediate changes could and should be the following signing modifications

- Blount Street Stop for Path
- Livingston Street Stop for Path
- Bike Path Yield to Patterson Street
- Brearly Street Stop for Path
- East Wilson Street Stop for Ingersol Street (same as now)
- Few Street Stop for East Wilson Street
- 4-Way Stop at East Wilson Street and Butler Street
- Dickinson Street Stop for East Wilson Street and Bike Path
- Thornton Avenue cul-de-sac Yield to Bike Path

These are my thoughts. I am sure I omitted some obvious ideas. Also please remember that motor vehicles have multiple route choices, bikes should that same choice.

If you have questions about the specific ideas that have proposed, I would be glad to meet with anyone to explain more fully.

Thanks!

Mike

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