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Subject: ALRC item 87784 Big Top Events
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ALRC members,

I am writing with great concern for the request by Big Top Events LLC to construct fencing around the sidewalk, Gate 1 entry area of Breese Stevens, and into the street. The request has an impact on our daily life in the isthmus and the image of the city. Here are just a few immediate questions and issues that come to mind:

The application lacks a number of specifics relevant to your decision.

- What is the necessity for taking over this area and removing it from public benefit and use?
- What is meant by “concert/event *days*”?
- What hours would the fence be installed and removed and pedestrian traffic affected?
- How many “uses” are expected - as the online calendar indicates “events” every weekend from now until November?

The photograph of the fencing boundary does not provide the context or detail to reflect what is lost by its presence. That is an overview and details is needed. Consider these details and losses:

- Paterson St is a key route across East Washington for travelers by foot and bike. It distinctly has a stoplight and wide, well marked crosswalk. Isthmus residents who depend on it are joined by visitors from the parking ramps and hotels and restaurants on the south side of East Wash. They will cross to face a fence as they stand in the blocked crosswalk. What’s the expectation? Join heavy auto traffic in the street? (Saying walk a few blocks and cross there isn’t sensible. We know people will take the shortest route across. That is at Paterson.)
- A major BRT station now is in the center island at this spot with large buses and passengers adding to the hectic pace, confusion, and busy movement here.
- Festival Food parking enters on this block of Paterson - the frequent destination of people on bikes and cars. Bikers also are traveling to the Mifflin St bike boulevard just ahead.
- The expansive sidewalk at Gate 1 provides bike racks and heavily-used BCycle stations - popular with those attending Breese events, as well as businesses along East Washington 24/7. There are no other BCycle stations close by or at this number. They’d become unavailable while the fence was up - a great loss to businesses and people and green transportation.
- At street level, what’s the view of this historic landmark from all who pass it? What do visitors see from East Wash or who cross the isthmus to patronize events and activities elsewhere? How obstructed is the view?

Allowing this fence at this location contracts what we say is our commitment to quality of life here: to respect historic landmarks, to promote bicycling, to serve residents, and to ensure public safety. It is just one spot in our community, but for life in the isthmus and the message to residents of all ages it is a significant request. Please do not allow this extension of premises beyond the walls of Breese Stevens by Big Top Events LLC. There is too much that we will lose.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this concern.

Cheers, Judith Strand
Madison, WI