

### Summary

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East Gateway Intersection Focus Group  
Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014; 9 am  
Madison Municipal Building, Room 260

#### 1. Introductions

Meeting attendees:

Larry Jensen	Anne Walker
Donna Magdalena	Marsha Rummel
Jim Skrentny	Brian Smith
Peter Ostlind	David Trowbridge
Peter Wolff	Melissa Huggins
Chuck Strawser	Emma Schumann

#### 2. Project overview & purpose of the focus group

Melissa explained the purpose of the focus group was to gather the opinions and recommendations of neighborhood residents regarding the Wilson/Williamson Blair/John Nolen intersection.

Melissa provided a brief overview of the SCTOD District Planning Study. She presented the focus areas—intermodal transit center, bridge concepts, Wilson Street, and east and west gateway intersections—and emphasized pedestrian and bike safety has become a project focus.

#### 3. Discussion questions

- a. **What are the guiding principles for finding a solution to this problematic intersection?**
  - Safety—perception and feeling of safety
  - Streets should serve people
  - Minimize flow of commuter traffic through the neighborhood. Need to recognize 50-60 mph traffic is not good
  - Solve negative impacts of traffic on neighborhoods
  - Pedestrian/bike-oriented performance standards, not just LOS for vehicles
  - Feasible solutions that are inexpensive and don't necessarily rely on negotiating with the Railroad
  
- b. **What are the key issues associated with the intersection?**
  - Traffic calming
  - Traffic diversion
  - Connectivity between Downtown and near eastside for pedestrians and bikes
  - Connectivity to lake north and south
  - Diverting traffic onto E. Main St.
  - Clarity of movement/wayfinding; reduce or simplify choices
  - Avoid unintended consequences

- Accommodating bikes safely especially by Williamson Street to lake and by John Nolen Drive to Wilson Street
- How to access Downtown safely on Wilson Street by King Street—how to turn left?
- Separate bikes and pedestrians
- How to access Machinery Row?
- Biking from Machinery Row corner to MG&E corner—no place for bikes to gather and wait
- Downtown commuters have issues crossing MG&E corner to Williamson St.—cars often occupy bike box
- Lack of accommodations for bikes after intersection on Wilson St. Should be bike turn lane on the left side of the street at King St.

**c. Which issues are top priority?**

- Traffic calming
- Traffic diversion
- Traffic speed
- Connectivity between Downtown and near eastside for pedestrians and bikes
- Connectivity to lake north and south
- Clarity of movement/wayfinding; reduce or simplify choices
- Exiting Machinery Row
- Treating intersection as local streets instead of highway intersection

**d. What are the acceptable trade-offs?**

- Diversion vs. speed
- Directing traffic onto E. Washington Ave. or Jenifer St.
- Squared off at Williamson Street and John Nolen Drive vs. channelized right
- All channelized rights

Discussion focused on whether converting Blair St. from one-way to two-way from E. Washington to Lake Monona would be an improvement. Brian Smith explained the one-way promotes better southbound traffic. Blair St. becomes a State highway after E. Washington Ave.

#### **4. Discussion consultant team draft proposed alternatives**

**a. Variety of solutions explored**

Melissa presented each concept explored since the beginning of the Study, reiterating pros and cons.

**b. Alternatives discussed at the Steering Committee in December**

Melissa presented four concepts for the East Gateway intersection and discussed pros and cons.

Alternatives one and two: Discussion focused on the function of the channelized right onto Williamson St. Brian explained it is necessary for LOS and stated the channelized right creates an island that serves as a refuge area for pedestrians. Chuck pointed out pedestrians and bikes currently need to cross two light cycles, the first of which is often ignored. Discussion focused on access to Machinery Row and entrance placement. Moving the parking lot entrance further east on John Nolen Drive was suggested, which Brian explained would require two signals and would eliminate the left turn out of Machinery Row.

Alternatives three and four: Discussion included whether adding a signal further north on Blair St. would reduce traffic flow, which would also require Railroad approval for at-grade crossing.

### 5. Focus Group Attendees' Alternative concepts

Peter presented a study completed in 2009 by City Traffic Engineering that documented the destinations of vehicles taking the channelized right turn onto Williamson St. Peter stated the study indicates 216 of the total 933 destinations are in the 6<sup>th</sup> district. He explained the study indicates where traffic diversion techniques would be effective.

Peter presented a concept developed by the MNA Traffic Committee. The concept eliminates the channelized right, creating a “choice point” where individual vehicles would decide to take Blair St. or Williamson St. The concept extends the Law Park bike path onto the corner where the channelized right is currently and creates separation between bikes and pedestrians. Peter believes this concept is compatible with the Consultant Team’s alternative one.

Marsha noted paring the MNA concept with alternative one would still require Railroad negotiations.

Discussion included whether going over the railroad track instead of creating a new intersection at Hancock St. was feasible. David explained it is not feasible because it would require a 23.5 foot clearance over the tracks.

Jim offered suggestions for immediate solutions. He stated the grand plan should include building out into the lake to create more greenspace. Shorter-term options should include the following:

- Eliminating the segment of E. Wilson near Ruby Marie and restricting it to bikes and pedestrians.
- Squaring off the channelized right onto Williamson St. and making a one-stage crossing.
- Eliminating left hand turns from Blair St. onto Williamson St., which David pointed out the would be a tradeoff—if that turn is missed, the next chance to turn would be at Broom St.

Larry suggested timing the light at the channelized right to be red when the light at Blair St. is red. He explained this would help to divert traffic to E. Washington and would make crossing easier for pedestrians. Brian explained the current light timing is meant to provide extra time for pedestrians. Larry asked if walk signals could present at all times of the day. Brian explained it would be inefficient for all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists—during off-peak hours.

Meeting attendees summarized their recommendations for short-term improvements:

- Turn one lane on westbound Williamson St. into a bike path
- Extend bike path in front of Ruby Marie
- Remove channelized right onto Williamson
- Retain channelized right to allow for unobstructed pedestrian crossing north-south of Williamson St.
- Consider bike path in street crossing Williamson St. from Machinery Row—would this cause issues at Blount St.?
- Parking in front of Machinery Row and/or bike facilities to slow traffic due to turning into one lane instead of two. Compatible with two-way bike path?