

Hacker, Marsha

From: John Martens [johndmartens@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Monday, November 22, 2010 12:30 AM
To: Phillips, Rob; Hacker, Marsha; Skidmore, Paul; Palm, Larry; lucasdailey@gmail.com; Fixer@chorus.net; jaclyn.lawton@charter.net; rpietz@gmail.com; arcticbook@att.net
Subject: A Comprehensive Plan for Williamson Street

Members of the Board of Public Works,

We think you may be interested in the following opinion of two longtime residents of Williamson Street and participants in the current community planning process.

A Comprehensive Plan for Williamson Street

As we scramble to finalize our individual wants into a plan for the reconstruction of Williamson Street, it has become clear that there is a need instead to seriously consider a more comprehensive approach. What for years had been scheduled as a simple resurfacing, has within the last couple of months morphed into an attempt to incorporate street narrowing, restriction of bike lanes, traffic islands, bump-outs and/or "bulb-outs", underground utilities, revision and replacement of tree species, saving of existing trees, parking restrictions, maximization of infiltration, revision of street lighting, public bike racks, and the incorporation of a myriad of unspecified amenities, with all these needing to be configured into appropriately site-specific plans.

As commendable as the effort of a small but growing number of hard-working individuals truly is, it has resulted in a near-impossible need to properly vet, reach consensus, and then integrate the ever-growing list of community requests. City Engineering, originally in charge of the resurfacing, is making a valiant effort to incorporate all of the above requests, but the scope has expanded to the extent that there is now the need for the broader perspective of city planners, landscape architects, and professional facilitators, and the incorporation of the result into the context of the greater community.

In a recent statement on the great streets of Madison, John Norquist, president of the Congress of New Urbanism, cited Williamson Street as on a par with State Street. In recent memory, State Street has been the beneficiary of at least two well-funded comprehensive plans by planning professionals followed by even better funded reconstructions. Williamson Street has evolved on its own to the point of being a New Urbanist dream street, but the piecemeal tweaking currently proposed by the community would not only overlook an entire spectrum of unconsidered opportunities, but worse, would risk the undoing of what we have already achieved.

At this time, the most sensible approach would be to pause, conduct on a professional level an appropriate survey of all interested and affected parties, consider alternative solutions, and arrive at a final plan that could enhance our

community in ways we cannot currently anticipate. If we cannot find the will, time, or funding to do that, let us simply go back to the original resurfacing plan and direct our energies to doing that as best we can.

John Martens and Sharon Kilfoy

Cumulative 70+ years of Willy Street property ownership/residency/business operation