



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development

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To: Downtown Coordinating Committee
From: Rebecca Cnare and Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development staff
Date: September 15, 2022
RE: Request to Study a Pedestrian Mall in the 400-600 Blocks of State Street

At its meetings on July 21 and August 16, 2022, the Downtown Coordinating Committee (DCC) asked staff to study the possibility of turning the 400-600 blocks of State Street into a pedestrian mall. Staff noted the following:

- a. Such a study is complex and would require the participation of multiple agencies. This effort is not included in the near term work plan for any agency.
- b. Major effort like this are typically initiated by the Common Council approving a resolution authorizing the study.
- c. Little to no funding from the Tax Increment Finance District will be available for several years if changes to the physical layout of the street are desired.

A memo outlining some of the issues discussed at the August 16 meeting is attached as a reference. After further consulting with other agencies, the following critical issues were identified as needing to be addressed prior to further considering a pilot project:

a. Management of the Space

The city has no additional capacity or funds to address programming, marketing, or management of the space beyond its existing commitments. An entity responsible for the management of the space would need to be identified and a plan would need to be a part of the pilot project fully assess the potential for a permanent change.

b. Business Survey

Support for a pilot project would need to be supported by property and business owners and the City would need assistance from the Greater State Street Business Association, Business Improvement District, and/or Downtown Madison Inc. develop and distribute survey to gauge interest. Feedback on issues that will affect business operations - several of which are outlined in the attached memo – should be the focus.

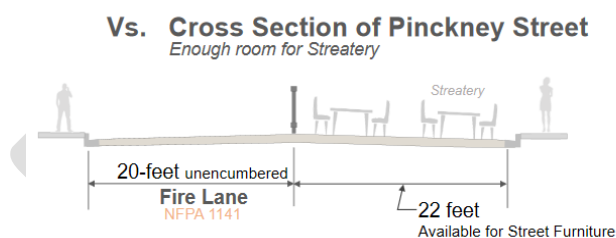
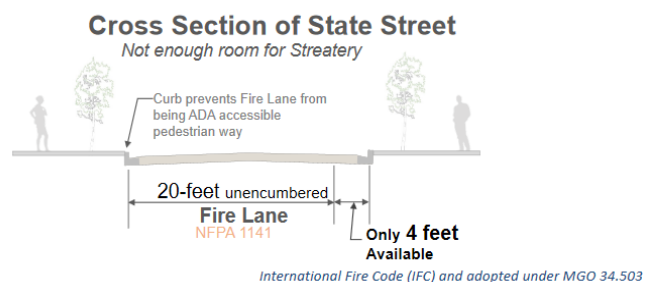
c. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Adherence to ADA requirements is a significant challenge that must be resolved prior to a potential pilot project. For example, Is there a desire for all pedestrians in the street? If so, will there be a mainline sidewalk? If there is no mainline sidewalk then ramps will be required extending into the street approximately 4-feet on each side –how will that affect pedestrians/bicycles in the street?

Attachment: 8-17-22 DRAFT Staff response to DCC questions from 7-21-22 DCC Meeting

1. [Verification of timing for when buses will be removed from the 400 to 600 blocks of State Street.](#)
 - Metro is hoping for a soft rollout of the Metro Transit Network Redesign in June 2023, and have it fully functioning by fall of 2023.
2. [What about delivery issues if the 400 - 600 blocks were designated to be pedestrian only?](#)
 - Deliveries could be confined to certain hours of the day (i.e. early am, to allow direct access to the street – however not all businesses would want the same hours (retail vs restaurant) and there are currently ordinances that limit deliveries over the lunch hour that are not adhered to by delivery trucks.
 - Deliveries could be limited to side streets – but additional loading zones may be required.
3. [What are the City Council issues to consider?](#)
 - Council would have to approve any large street closure
 - There is currently not a mechanism for cafes (and alcohol service) to take up the whole sidewalk/terrace, or to allow for pedestrians, and bicycles to use the street - new ordinance, or amendments to existing ordinances would likely be needed
 - Currently all amenities (bike racks, benches, trash, recycling etc.) are located within the terrace areas. Many amenities would have to be relocated or they would not be usable.
 - Street crossings at Gilman/Broom – new signals/other may be needed to allow cars to cross
 - Funding for physical changes
 - See ADA issues below
4. [What is the position of the State Street merchants regarding a pedestrian mall?](#)
 - Both DMI and the BID have expressed public support, unsure about GSSBA
5. [What can DCC do to prepare for this possibility?](#)
 - DCC reviews physical /policy changes to public areas within the downtown
 - MGO 8.41 “...provide a forum for public information and stewardship regarding the uses of public space in the Downtown Area, and to periodically review regulations and policies affecting the Downtown Area, with particular emphasis on State Street and the Capitol Square, as a high-quality urban space for pedestrians in an environment that promotes healthy businesses.) [\(link to mission\)](#)
6. [Is there a possibility of testing a closure of the street once the buses are removed?](#)
 - Common Council would need to approve any test, due to ADA access, ordinance violations and other considerations
7. [Verification that Fire might be open to alternate widths for fire access.](#)
 - 20 Ft fire lane still required - MGO 34.503
 - Fire/EMS/Police/other access in cases of emergency
 - [Link to 3-18-21 DCC Discussion with Fire Marshall](#)
 - Constraints with fire-lane requirements, a 20 ft lane width only allows 4 feet on one side is available for business use.

- All street closures, such as those for special events and streateries, require a 20-foot fire lane that is free from furniture and other obstructions. The width of this fire lane **cannot be reduced**.
- Unlike the 42-foot Pinckney Street, which is used in many examples supporting the pedestrian mall, State Street only has 24-foot face of curb to face of curb. This leaves only 4-foot available for merchant use on one side, or 2-feet if distributed to both sides.
- The configuration of State Street could be reconstructed to provide a more efficient space for vendors and tables; State Street was reconstructed 15 years ago at a cost of \$15 million.



8. What would need to happen regarding ADA, if bicycles and pedestrians were moved to the middle of the street?

- If there were no accessible sidewalk adjacent to the buildings, ADA compliance would have to be determined for the street. At minimum:
 - i. Access to every door would be required, commercial and residential
 1. e.g. 400 block - 17 doors on the north side, 15 doors on the south side
 2. Some doors could possibly share access, but many buildings have separate doors
 - ii. If a curb remains, ramps and other ADA compliant methods would have to be used to maintain access up the curb to each door.
 1. A re-construction of the street could eliminate curbs, but door access would have to be maintained
 - iii. Cross street access
 1. Pedestrian crossing signals would have to maneuver people from sidewalk on 100-300 blocks to the middle of the street for 400-600 blocks
 2. Pedestrian street crossing signals may have to be relocated for visibility from center of the street.
 - iv. Other accommodations as required

9. Several sidewalks need significant repair, could that be coordinated with an effort to change the street?

- Potentially, although TID funding for any large changes would likely have to wait for several years.