

“Placemaking”

State Street 700-800 Block & Library Mall

Steve Hiniker, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
Matt Covert, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
Steve Schaefer, Brittingham Boathouse

Placemaking

State Street 700-800 Block & Library Mall

Overview and Introduction

The 700 - 800 blocks of State Street are the primary gateway between the UW-Madison and the heart of the city's State Street commercial district. Exciting and creative design features can transform the space - which intersects with Library Mall, East Campus Mall, and Park Street - into a significant public gathering place for Madison's students, residents and visitors. Equally important, the project's design must take into account how the university community, residents, and visitors experience the space as they move through it to other destinations.

As the Project for Public Places has found, "successful public spaces have four key qualities: they are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is a sociable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit."

The Library Mall is culturally and historically important to the University of Wisconsin Madison and to the community. The Mall is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a portion of the Bascom Hill Historic District. All design features should highlight this cultural landscape.

All of our Placemaking suggestions are intended to expand upon the exciting options suggested by the consultants and to create a successful public space, to recognize the Library Mall's cultural and historical significance and to conform to the core design principles of timelessness, flexibility, durability and ease of maintenance.

Executive Summary

To accomplish the objectives of creating a successful public space, the State Street 700-800 Block & Library Mall design should include the following elements:

- **Winter Use – Library Mall Ice Skating Rink** - Including a winter ice skating rink in the Library Mall area would transform the space into a community destination and would extend the public use of the space throughout the winter months.
- **Shade and Seating Structures** - Like every great public space, the Library Mall and 700 and 800 blocks of State Street need comfortable and inviting shady areas and moveable shade structures for people to see friends, meet and greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers.
- **Redesign the Fountain** - The Library Mall fountain should be replaced or significantly modified. The consultant's Oval design should include replacement of the current fountain with a surface water feature which incorporates lighting and programmed surface water jets.
- **Bicycles** - The success of the project is predicated upon achieving a sustainable balance between pedestrian and bicycle uses of the space. To accomplish this important goal the design should include (1) an alternate bike route around the 700 – 800 blocks of State Street and the Library Mall; (2) additional artistic bike racks; (3) bicycle valet and covered bike rack systems in the adjacent parking ramps; and (4) a bike repair facility.
- **Program Coordinator** - A permanent programming staff position should be included as an essential element of this project for the purposes of coordinating the “social landscape” and Placemaking activities in the space.

We greatly appreciate the Committee, the consultants and the staff's consideration of our proposals. Thank you.

Placemaking Suggestions

Incorporation of the following Placemaking elements as components of the State Street 700 – 800 Block and Library Mall project is intended to assist the Committee, consultants and staff's efforts to capitalize upon the history, potential and inspiration of this space. We hope these suggestions improve the creation of a successful public space and that their implementation will enrich Madison's social landscape.

1. Winter Use – Library Mall Ice Skating Rink

Including a winter ice skating rink in the Library Mall area would transform the space into a community destination. It would also extend the public use of the space throughout the winter months. Ice skating on the Library Mall has a longstanding UW – Madison tradition, as described in the UW Cultural Landscape Inventory. From about 1910 through the early 1940s, in the winter the Library Mall was often flooded for hockey games and ice skating. In 1954 and during the post-war efforts to redesign the Library Mall, the UW Figure Skating Club wrote to the UW Regents and requested that an outdoor skating rink be included on the Library Mall. The students were so passionate about the skating rink project that they offered to help construct the rink during their Christmas break. Unfortunately, the Regents denied the students' request for an ice skating rink.



Ice-skaters on Lower Campus, date unknown. The Red Gym is visible in the background. Photo caption: "**Women's Physical Education activities—ice skating.**" University of Wisconsin-Madison Cultural Landscape Inventory, January 2010, Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System p.33.

Incorporating a surface flooded ice skating rink in the Library Mall celebrates the historic significance of this space for wintertime student and community recreation activities.

Small urban ice skating rinks are extremely popular in many successful Placemaking projects. In the winter months, Canal Park in Washington DC converts the gathering area around the summertime interactive water fountain into a skating rink.



Canal Park - Washington DC

Arrow Park in Milwaukee is also a small urban rink whose size fits well into the space available for a potential rink in the Library Mall area. Millennium Park in Chicago, though larger than the others, demonstrates the value that an urban ice skating rink can bring for year-round public space uses.



Millennium Park – Chicago



Arrow Park – Milwaukee

The Library Mall ice skating design should employ a flexible, easy to maintain and Madison time-tested winter surface flooding technique. Unlike the Millennium, Canal and Arrow Park rinks, the Library Mall ice skating rink does not require installation of an expensive underground refrigeration system. In fact, the only costs of a flooded surface rink are water and a drain. Every winter, the Madison Parks Division successfully creates and maintains surface flooded ice skating rinks throughout the Madison parks system. Of the 12 ice rinks maintained and run by the city, nine are surface-flooded. The Library Mall ice skating rink design should utilize our local and historically time-tested surface flooded ice rink technique.



Westmoreland Park in Madison: a surface-flooded ice rink

Finally, food cart vendors would invariably sell hot food and drinks to the ice skaters and spectators. Many food cart operators asked the city for extended hours and seasons, and an ice rink on Library Mall would provide them with a new market.

2. Shade and Seating

Currently, the Library Mall lacks any shade structures or comfortable seating and the recommended removal of old and diseased trees substantially reduces available shade along the 700 and 800 blocks of State Street. Like every great public space, the Library Mall and 700 and 800 blocks of State Street need comfortable and inviting shady areas and structures for people to see friends, meet and greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers. This fundamental precondition is essential for people to enjoy the public space and to partake in other activities.

Comfortable, movable seating and shade structures are critically important and should be incorporated into the project design for the Library Mall in the form of movable tables, umbrellas & chairs and additional trees. Tables, umbrellas and chairs can be easily moved to accommodate different sized groups of numbers of people and to individually accommodate their seating arrangements. These temporary chair, table and umbrella systems also allow expansion of the seating capacity for large scheduled events and quick removal and storage at the conclusion of events or in the event of inclement weather.

Lastly, flexibility is a core design principle for this project. Tables and chairs and shade - including umbrella systems - are simple, inexpensive and very effective features with which to convert a pass-through space into a destination. For a public space intended to serve a wide variety of people, interests and activities, simple and flexible seating and shade features offer the greatest return on a very modest initial investment.



Berlin Plaza

Replacing the old and diseased trees and adding trees along the perimeter of the Library Mall will also add needed shady areas for visitors to enjoy the space.

3. Redesigned Fountain

The Library Mall fountain should be replaced or significantly modified. The current Library Mall fountain was built in 1958 with a generous donation from William Hagenah. Unfortunately, the fountain has been a problematic feature of the Mall since its construction. Over the years, maintenance and other mechanical issues have plagued its operation. The spray pattern of the Library Mall water fountain and water conservation issues are also long-standing problems. During the past thirty years, the fountain was inoperative for long periods of time. Mr. Hagenah's legacy is best honored with the construction of a well-functioning contemporary water feature.

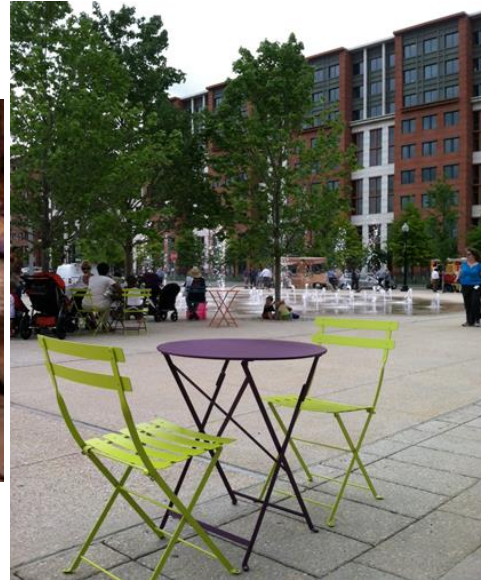


Library Mall Fountain

The consultant's Oval design should include replacement of the current fountain with a surface water feature which incorporates lighting and programmed surface water jets. The consultant's Great Lawn design contemplates removal of the existing fountain and replacement with a waterfall feature located along the Memorial Library. Either water

feature - a surface water jets and lighted fountain or a waterfall - would accommodate both summer uses and a winter ice skating rink on the Library Mall.

Canal Park's interactive water fountain with programmable water jets are embedded below the paving surface anchors on the southern end of the Park and it provides an example of a water feature that could be incorporated in to the Library Mall design. During the spring, summer and fall the ice skating feature is removed and returns to a public gathering place with tables and chairs and umbrellas.



Similarly, Provo, UT's Pioneer Park also incorporates a splash pad surface water feature which provides a place for visitors to play and to rest on a warm summer's day.



The surface jet and lighted water feature also allows incorporation of historic and cultural art into the surface tiles which should highlight the cultural and historic significance of the Library Mall.

4. Bicycles

The success of the project depends, to a significant degree, upon incorporation of design features which facilitate a sustainable balance between pedestrian and bicycle uses of the space. Specifically, the design should include (1) an alternative bike “Preferred Route” around the 700 – 800 blocks of State Street and the Library Mall; (2) additional artistic bike racks; (3) bicycle valet and covered bike rack systems in the adjacent parking ramps; and (4) a bike repair facility. All of these features are intended to reduce overall bike traffic and to help achieve a reasonable balance between pedestrian and bike uses of the space.

Artistic Bicycle Racks.

New artistic racks should replace the current bike parking structures and should be placed in a manner that creates a “welcoming” “creative” and “playful” gateway to the space. The additional artistic rack should encourage bicyclists to park their bikes in safe, convenient and appropriate locations and the artistic racks should also celebrate Madison’s commitment to bicycling and to providing safe public spaces for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Current bicycle parking on the 700 and 800 blocks of State Street and the Library Mall is woefully inadequate and unsightly. Additional bike rack space is needed and current proposals call for significant rack structures at entry points to the public space.



Memorial Library

Effective artistic bicycle parking structures must possess the following attributes:

- Multiple lock points to accommodate a wide variety of bicycles, riders, and lock setups
- Minimum separation of 2 feet between bike stalls to allow riders to easily pull bikes in and out of racks
- Capacity of 10 to 15 bikes per rack unit



Designing the bike racks as more than mere functional structures adds to the attractiveness of the space and communicates Madison’s commitment to bicycling as a convenient and popular mode of transit. It also offers an opportunity to “brand” the public space and to develop a unique identity which associates it with State Street and with the University community. This effort could take the form of on-street bike corrals that replace a car parking spot with a colorful frame which are consistent with the branding theme (above left) or development of unique, clever installations - potentially in partnership with student design teams – which reinforce the special sense of place (above right).

As a simple initial step, we recommend that the bike parking design incorporate available local technology and products, to add color and artistry, e.g., a branded bike rack system (right). These parking systems are available from a local manufacturer in multiple colors and custom designs with branding plates. Artistic bike racks help communicate themes about the special nature of this public space and also convey a message that bicycles and bicyclists are welcome and valued users of this public place.



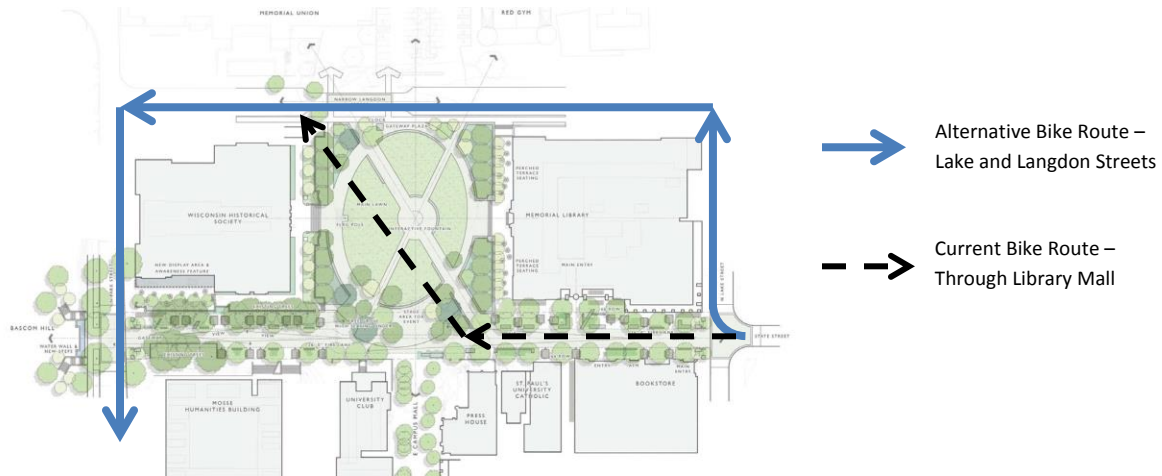
Covered Bike Parking and Bike Valet. The design should include valet and covered bike parking systems. A system of covered bike corrals for daily use and valets for special events located in the adjacent parking structures should reduce bike traffic through the space and should help achieve a sustainable balance between pedestrian and bicycle uses on the 700 – 800 blocks of State Street and the Library Mall.



The Lake Street ramp and Helen C. White ramp are perfect locations for valet services and for covered bike corral areas. If designed appropriately, these racks systems offer bike commuters more security and protection from the elements as well as accommodating a greater number of bikes per square foot than the exterior rack systems.

At the University of Arizona in Tucson, the university's parking and transit services recently opened an on-campus, all-day bicycle valet service for students and employees. In Washington DC, fans arriving by bike at a Washington Nationals' baseball game can check their bikes at a valet service operated by the park staff. The service is free, although tips are encouraged. A similar service is offered during San Francisco Giants games by the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. At Chicago's Willis Tower, the management company offers a bike valet service for people working in the office tower. The service is located in the underground parking garage. In Madison, the Wisconsin Bike Federation offers free bike valet service at local events including the weekly Concerts on the Square, Badger football games and the Taste of Madison Festival, among others. Incorporating covered bike parking areas and bike valet services into the State Street 700-800 Block & Library Mall project will increase the space's appeal as a destination and will facilitate a reasonable balance between bikes and pedestrian use of the space.

Alternate Bike Route. The design should include a safe and convenient "Alternate Bike Route" to encourage westbound State Street and Library Mall "pass through" bike traffic north onto Lake Street and west onto Langdon Street. A properly designed alternate bike route for bicyclists traveling from State Street to the Memorial Union, to Helen C. White Library or to the Lakeshore Path (below) would significantly reduce bike traffic on the 700-800 blocks of State Street & the Library Mall. Implementation of an alternate route should decrease bicyclist pass-through traffic and decrease conflicts with pedestrians using the 700-800 blocks of State Street & the Library Mall.



Bicycle Repair Shop. The UW-Madison provides a bicycle repair shop in the lower level of the Helen C. White parking ramp. The project should also include an additional small temporary, movable, low-maintenance, freestanding bike repair stand, similar to the “Information Booth” structures used by Downtown Madison, Inc. A freestanding bike repair shop located on the 700 block of State Street would slow down bike traffic on the 700-800 blocks of State Street and the Library Mall, increase the project area’s status as a destination and raise Madison’s profile as bike friendly community.

5. Program Coordinator

A permanent programming staff position should be included as an essential element of this project for the purposes of coordinating the “social landscape” activities of the completed project and to synthesize the different regulations, missions, interests, etc., of the organizations with jurisdiction over the uses of the space. The ultimate success of the Placemaking aspects of the State Street 700 & 800 Block & Library Mall project depends upon the inclusion of a long term programming staff position as part of the redevelopment project. The staff person’s responsibilities should specifically include the coordination of the maintenance of the space, responsiveness to users, music, art, community events, and educational, etc. activities in the redeveloped space.

Thank you again for consideration of our recommendations. Needless to say, we are available to meet and to answer questions about these proposals.

- Steve Hiniker, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, hiniker@1kfriends.org
- Matt Covert, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, mjcovert@1kfriends.org
- Steve Schaefer, Brittingham Boathouse Renovation, schaeferlawoffice@TDS.net