

RESOLUTION - Reconstruct Monroe Street as a “Green” Street **(with footnotes)**

WHEREAS, Monroe Street’s reconstruction schedule has been repeatedly delayed, with negative impacts, including significant delay in implementing pedestrian safety initiatives that should be effectively addressed as soon as possible; and,

WHEREAS, there is significant demonstrated support for designing the reconstruction of Monroe Street according to principles of sustainability (incorporating features of multi-modal “complete streets,” creative place-making, walkability green infrastructure, etc.)¹; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Madison Sustainability Plan², adopted as a guiding document, articulates goals that are supported by “green” street design that incorporates principles of sustainability, including:

- Encourage infiltration, where appropriate, through the use of pervious surfaces, the creation of rain gardens, bio-swales and other natural water purification methods.
- Pilot the use of “green” infrastructure techniques and incorporate them into standard street and building design, where appropriate.
- Promote projects that increase infiltration and aquifer replenishment, where appropriate.
- Use linking parks, bike trail system, and stormwater management systems to expand trail recreation, physical activity, and nature study opportunities. Link all parks and open spaces to the maximum extent possible.
- Redesign streetscapes and other built areas to incorporate non-traditional green space (pocket parks, rain gardens, etc.) to create more open space.
- Plan and create walkable neighborhood opportunities for Madison’s increasing population. Upgrade walkability in already built out neighborhoods.
- Improve opportunities for physical activities through sidewalk, signage, safe routes, lighting and bike paths.”
- Expand the number of neighborhoods and commercial centers where sustainable transportation choices enable mobility without a car.
- Promote and provide incentives for biking, walking and public transportation use.
- Implement complete streets that are designed to enable safe and convenient travel for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders, motorists, children, older adults and the disabled.
- Encourage development of projects that serve our community and ecosystem by maintaining high design and environmental standards, creativity and community involvement; and,

WHEREAS, the Monroe Street Commercial District Plan³, adopted as a supplement to the City’s Comprehensive Plan in 2007, recommends calming vehicle traffic, enhancing walkability and multi-modality, and promoting a “community character” and the “greening” of Monroe Street; and,

WHEREAS, The Wingra Watershed Management Plan⁴, developed by City Engineering, Friends of Lake Wingra, and Strand Engineering identifies a “Monroe Street Reconstruction with Green Features” as an “opportunity for incorporation of green features such as bioretention planters and

¹ E.g., <https://www.cityofmadison.com/sites/default/files/city-of-madison/engineering/documents/MonroePIM1GroupComments.pdf>

² <http://www.cityofmadison.com/sustainability/sustainPlan.cfm>

³ <https://www.cityofmadison.com/planning/pdf/monroe.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/stormwater/wingraplan.cfm>

bioretention bumpouts for traffic calming/pedestrian refuge to provide both infiltration and stormwater quality improvement” that would help reach the established goals for improved groundwater flow and phosphorus control; and,

WHEREAS, the City, in order “to ensure that streets are designed to enable safe access for all users, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders, of all ages and abilities, to be able to move safely along and across the street” has adopted a Complete Streets resolution⁵ “reaffirming the City’s commitment to Complete Streets and directing staff of various agencies including but not limited to Planning & Development, City Engineering, Traffic Engineering and Metro to follow to the extent possible Complete Streets concepts.” ; and,

WHEREAS, the 2015 “Madison Bicycle Transportation Plan for the Madison Metropolitan Area and Dane County”⁶ and a 2015 report⁷ of the Platinum Bicycling Committee of the Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission emphasize the desirability of accelerating the construction of dedicated bike lanes and other improvements for bicycles, including “elimination of sidewalk bike routes by providing convenient alternate routes and/or bike lanes; and,

WHEREAS, studies show that businesses in walkable commercial areas often do better than in areas catering mainly to automobile traffic, and “all the evidence seems to suggest that walkable retail is on the upswing, and likely to grow over the next several decades.”⁸ ; and,

WHEREAS, investment in green infrastructure, which “uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and create healthier urban environments” is increasing nationally, because of its “broad community benefits...including improved air quality, reduced energy use, mitigated climate change effects, and enhanced economic and social impacts.”⁹ ; and,

WHEREAS, local professional designers, urban planners, landscape architects, public process specialists are committed to helping design a sustainable Monroe Street; and,

WHEREAS, there are significant challenges to balancing sometimes conflicting issues, including those associated with traffic, parking, pedestrian safety, business vitality, green space, and water quality protection, which require well-designed processes for stakeholder engagement, creative problem-solving, and dispute resolution; and,

WHEREAS, the factors above create a unique and timely opportunity to explore new and innovative ways to plan and implement the reconstruction of streets like Monroe Street, recognizing that streets are public spaces that serve multiple functions, and that therefore the design process calls for effective, broad engagement by the public and by experts from many disciplines, including urban planners, landscape architects, ecologists, and participatory process specialists, as well as civil and traffic engineers,

⁵ <https://madison.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1068354&GUID=0D8D388F-1566-453A-8933-429A95FB294C>

⁶ http://www.madisonareampo.org/planning/documents/Final_BTP_2015_web.pdf

⁷ <https://madison.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=4097100&GUID=FC86E176-07B8-4821-BA12-BC6693C99C99>

⁸ <http://activelivingresearch.org/business-performance-walkable-shopping-areas>

⁹The Green Infrastructure Collaborative
(http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/upload/greeninfrastructure_collaborative2014.pdf).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Engineering Division is directed to work with the City Traffic Engineering Division, the Planning Division and the 13th District Alder to create an inclusive process with stakeholders including representation from Monroe Street Merchants Association, Public Health – Madison & Dane County, Friends of Lake Wingra, Wisconsin Environmental Initiative, Vilas Neighborhood Association, Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association, UW-Madison Departments of Landscape Architecture and Urban and Regional Planning, and other interested parties; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the City Engineering Division is charged with developing a detailed plan and timetable for the planning and design process to take place in 2016 and 2017 in consultation with the involved City Departments and stakeholders.