

State Street Considerations

2020-02-11

We believe Transit should be our front door, not our back door.

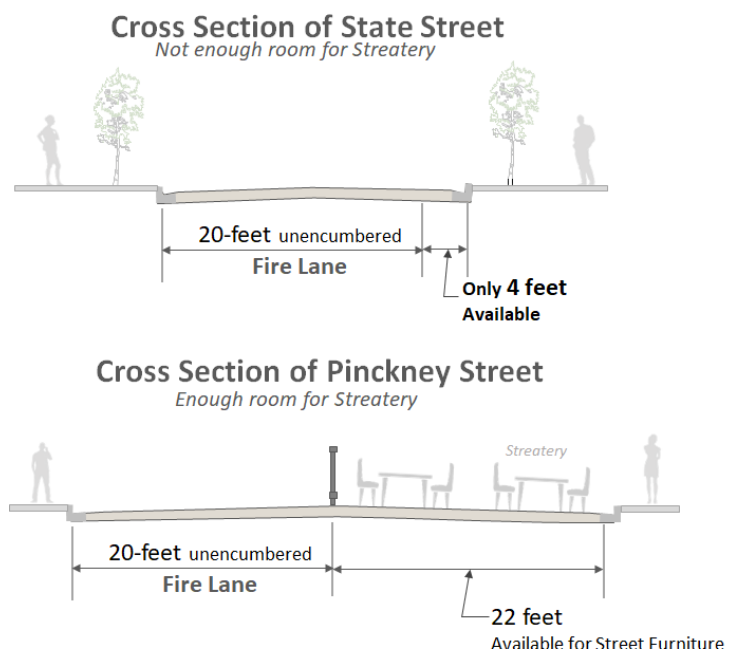
- Transit helps relieve our roadways of traffic congestion. It provides affordable access to jobs, services, shopping and venues for those without a vehicle.
- Many employees need direct access to transit. And transit serves a higher percentage of low income people and people of color. Removing transit from State Street increases their trip duration.
- World class pedestrian malls, such as Times Square, have first class transit directly serving them.
- With the \$160 million BRT, the City is making its most significant transportation investment in decades. Implementing BRT has brought riders and investment to BRT corridors in numerous cities throughout the US. Removing State Street from the BRT route would make this project less effective and prevent businesses from receiving the benefits.
- State Street businesses and venues will benefit from 5 to 10 minute BRT service. This service will link our community to State Street venues, such as Overture Center or Orpheum.

Metro Transit supports city businesses

- Metro Transit is planning to relocate five routes off of State Street this summer to relieve bus congestion. Current bus service on State Street is about 30 percent less than it was before the pandemic. The proposed route changes will further reduce the number of buses between 25 to 30 percent on a daily basis, and almost 40 percent during the evening peak.
- The BRT investment with electric buses will directly connect State Street businesses to Madison's east and west sides. BRT investments in other cities have fostered significant corridor investment, such as Cleveland's Healthline on Euclid Ave.

Constraints with fire-lane requirements, only 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 illustrations supporting the pedestrian mall, State Street only has 24-foot face of curb to face of curb. This leaves only 4-feet 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. Yet State Street was just reconstructed 15 years ago at a cost of \$15 million.



Pedestrian mall challenges

- Research literature cited in Downtown Madison Incorporated's report (Cole Judge) indicated that 89% of the 200 pedestrian malls they reviewed had failed.
- State Street currently has several pedestrian only environments; 700-800 State Street Mall/Library Mall, Frances St Plaza, Peace Park, and the Top of State. All are experiencing some challenges, in regard to abandoned property, behavioral problems, and safety concerns after dark. These are similar to challenges that were cited in DMI's research literature.
- State Street as a pedestrian only promenade could attract patrons, but it also could broaden the area of challenges faced by the other pedestrian only areas of Downtown Madison. The absence of buses and riders during some periods, such as winter evenings, could attract more unwanted activity. Decreasing vehicle access could also make patrolling State Street more difficult and less frequent.
- Many examples of pedestrian mall success stories, including those cited by WSJ, are served by transit on adjacent parallel streets or directly served as transit malls. Conversely, State Street does not have a parallel street network for transit to serve it.

Revenue

- Applying the Sidewalk Café license fees (applicable after April 2022) to the available 4-feet on State Street (ignoring the area needed for the fire lane), could result in an additional \$25,000-\$50,000 in annual license fees paid by businesses.
- These vending license fee revenues are modest when compared to the FTA operational monies lost. Metro Transit would lose over \$100,000 annually in fixed guideway funds with the removal of buses from State Street. This is the equivalent of removing a bus from service – which impacts our neighborhoods.

Equitable Access

- The recently adopted Imagine Madison Comp Plan Land Use Transportation Strategy 7 states *"Maintain downtown Madison as a major Activity Center for the region while improving access and inclusivity"*.
- Removing transit from State Street runs counter to this Strategy. State Street is rendered less accessible to those without a car, largely to benefit those who do have a car.

Transit will be a part of the solution

The challenges facing State Street are unprecedented – online retailing, a once in a century pandemic, and protest activity not seen since the 1960s. Transit, including existing bus routes and the future Bus Rapid Transit will be part of the solution. The 4-feet of usable space by businesses comes at the high price of lost transit access, diminished transit service, and reduction in Federal funding. We would like to work with the business community to foster business health and unlock the potential benefits of BRT. We believe that transit should be our front door, not our back door.