



WHEATON CITY COUNCIL PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

MAYOR PHILIP J. SUESS

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL BARBIER | COUNCILWOMAN ERICA BRAY-PARKER | COUNCILWOMAN SUZANNE FITCH

COUNCILMAN JOHN RUTLEDGE | COUNCILMAN TODD SCALZO

WHEATON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 303 W WESLEY STREET, WHEATON, ILLINOIS 60187

Monday, May 13, 2019

1. Call to Order

The Wheaton City Council Planning Session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Suess. The following were:

Physically Present: Mayor Suess
Councilman Barbier
Councilwoman Bray-Parker
Councilwoman Fitch
Councilman John Rutledge
Councilman Scalzo

Absent: None

City Staff Present: Michael Dzugan, City Manager
John Duguay, Assistant City Manager
James Kozik, Director of Planning & Economic Development
Paul Redman, Director of Engineering
Arin Thrower, Public Information Officer
Susan Bishel, Public Relations Coordinator

2. Public Comment

Sue Cahalan, 909 S. Wheaton Ave., stated she has lived near the Roosevelt Road pedestrian underpass for 32 years and used to use it daily to walk to downtown Wheaton and church safely. She stated she wishes the City did not let it fall into disrepair, and she does not think the Main and Wesley crossings are safe for seniors and children. Ms. Cahalan stated she learned that a grant could be available for making an underpass that is ADA compliant, and she urged the Council to apply for the grant and make the underpass accessible for all.

Ron Almiron, 455 W. Front Street, spoke in support of repairing or replacing the Roosevelt Road underpass. He stated the underpass is used during the Memorial Day Parade to help families cross Roosevelt safely. Mr. Almiron encouraged the City to seek a federal grant to make the underpass accessible.

3. Approval of March 25, 2019 Planning Session Minutes

The Council approved the March 25, 2019 Planning Session Minutes.

4. Downtown Streetscape Phase 3 Schematic Design and Transition Update

Assistant City Manager Duguay stated the City is moving forward with the schematic design for Phase 3 of the Downtown Streetscape Project. In addition, the City Council previously approved Design

Workshop to design a transition area to blend the new improvements with the areas that do not have improvements.

Manisha Kaul of Design Workshop reviewed the scope of Phase 3, which includes Wheaton Avenue from Wesley to Liberty, Liberty from West to Hale, and Main Street from Wesley to Front and Liberty to Illinois. She stated this design continues the goal of creating wider sidewalks, adding trees with better soil volume, maintaining or exceeding parking, and creating shorter crossings. The plan will use the same materials, site furnishings and wayfinding signage as previous phases of work.

Ms. Kaul reviewed the design plan for Wheaton Avenue. In response to a Council question about the ability to add a bike lane, Ms. Kaul stated the designers looked at incorporating a bike lane, but parking would need to be reduced to provide enough space for a bike lane. Rob Deming of Primera stated engineers looked at this again with City staff and determined the plan would need to remove a lane of traffic or parking on Wheaton Avenue to allow for a bike lane.

Assistant City Manager Duguay stated the project decisions were based on the priorities previously set by the City Council, which included walkability, parking, trees, etc. Because adding bike lanes was farther down the list of priorities and would require tradeoffs that would affect the top priorities, bike lanes were not included.

City Manager Dzugan stated to make bike lanes a priority, the Council would need to direct a different plan with a change to the metrics guiding the plans. He stated adding a bike lane on Wheaton Avenue would require redoing work on Wheaton Avenue that has been done as part of Phase 2, and if the Council would like to change directions, they would need to do so at this point.

Council members discussed alternate streets that could be considered for adding a bike lane.

Ms. Kaul reviewed the design for Wheaton Avenue between Liberty to Front, which includes wider sidewalks on both sides of the street. For the portion of Liberty Drive from West to Wheaton, the plan calls for straightening the geometry of the street, widening sidewalks, and realigning the curb to create 9 additional parking spots.

In response to a Council question, Assistant City Manager Duguay stated the parking spots are able to be added with the curb realignment, and only a small area of grass would be lost.

Similarly, the plan for Liberty Drive from Wheaton to Hale includes wider sidewalks and realignment of parking for a gain of 6 spaces. In response to a Council question, Ms. Kaul stated there is ADA accessible parking available on each block.

For the block of Main Street from Illinois to Willow, Ms. Kaul stated there will be curb bumpouts and a wider sidewalk, and the plan will add one ADA accessible parking spot where none previously existed. For the block of Main from Willow to Liberty, there will also be wider sidewalks, curb bumpouts, and one parking space will be converted to an ADA spot. Main Street from Wesley to Front will see the removal of an existing median to increase sidewalk width on both sides, and a loss of 3 parking spots. In total, Ms. Kaul stated the net gain for Phase 3 is 15 parking spaces, including 3 ADA spaces.

As part of design agreement, Assistant City Manager Duguay stated the designers looked at transitioning the project area to the nearby blocks with elements such as street lights and other amenities. They looked at 15 different segments to develop a roadmap for the whole plan. Assistant City Manager Duguay stated there is a large price tag if the City were to implement all of the options, but City staff recommends at minimum fixing the identified safety concerns as soon as possible.

Ms. Kaul stated they looked at existing conditions and created 5 different types of treatment levels, from the least amount of updates to the most. Type 1 would replace light pole heads and infill trees in the certain areas of the parkway where none exist. Type 2 would add trees, replace the entire light pole and add signage if needed. Type 3 would evaluate existing trees, and improve pedestrian crossings and sidewalks. Type 4 would entail roadway reconstruction, and Type 5 would make the street segments into pedestrian streets.

The evaluation also classified treatments that are more critical, such as hazards with the sidewalks, whether the areas are within TIF boundaries, and then areas that have no urgency to implement but are to provide an aesthetic transition.

Ms. Kaul stated the entire cost for all priorities would be \$2.5 million to complete.

The Council further discussed whether a bike lane could be incorporated on Wheaton Avenue south of Wesley Street. City Manager Dzugan stated City staff recommends moving forward with the design presented for Phase 3 as is in order to keep on schedule for going out to bid, but in the meantime, the project's engineers will look into how it could be incorporated, and what costs would be involved to change the intersection.

In response to Council comments and questions about whether the City could reduce the scope of Phase 4 in order to implement transitional elements, City Manager Dzugan stated the Council will have an opportunity to determine which items are priorities for the Council. He stated the City is currently working out preliminary elements of Phase 4, such as the French Market and how the Prairie Path will be incorporated into the project.

In response to Council questions about the timing of transition work, Assistant City Manager Duguay stated that City staff recommends the high-priority items relating to safety be done with the next phase of work. He stated another element is the alleys within the downtown, two of which are in TIF 2 and are in the Public Works Department's long-term plan to improve.

Assistant City Manager Duguay answered a Council question about the addition of gathering spots as part of the Downtown Streetscape Plan by stating Phase 4 has identified the parking lot leased by RJN as a possible park. City staff members are currently working with DuPage County and Union Pacific, as the County wants the Prairie Path moved off of Union Pacific's Property. These topics will be addressed in Phase 4.

5. Pedestrian Underpass

City Manager Dzugan stated to address the condition of the pedestrian underpass that goes under Roosevelt Road, a report identified 4 options from abandonment to total replacement. The Council directed City staff to conduct a survey of residents to seek their opinion on the options. City Manager Dzugan stated approximately \$400,000 is budgeted for repairs.

For the survey, City staff sent paper copies to households within ¼-mile radius of the underpass and a digital version that was open to all residents. Approximately 66% percent of respondents said they would use the underpass if it were reopened. Upon reviewing the results, City staff is seeking direction on how the Council would like to proceed.

Public Information Officer Thrower stated the City had great engagement with the digital survey and paper survey. The results showed approximately 90% of respondents were aware of the underpass, and the people who said they used it mostly responded that they used it while exercising, while walking, or to reach the downtown.

The main focus of the survey was to key in on what the community wants to be done with the underpass. Public Information Officer Thrower stated more than 60% of respondents want to see it reopened. The people who stated they didn't use it before, it was because it was not close to where they live, or they use the traffic light instead. Some comments received through the survey were that respondents would rather see the money used elsewhere on issues such as flooding or streets.

In response to Council questions about the availability of federal grant funds, Director of Engineering Redman stated the City could apply for a grant but would need to make it bike-accessible. He stated the best-case scenario would be an 80-20 split of costs, where the City would be responsible for approximately \$467,000. The next cycle to apply is in early 2020, and the City would need to complete Phase 1 engineering before applying, which would cost approximately \$115,000. Director of Engineering Redman stated the project might need to use the existing right-of-way or possibly land acquisition. In response to Council questions, Director of Engineering Redman stated it is likely Roosevelt Road would need to be closed during a portion of construction, and the earliest the City could receive funding would be 2024. He stated he would recommend altering the bike plan to include this as a route in order for it to be considered at this location in the application.

Some Council members expressed the desire to explore the accessible option and try to get a federal grant, citing a longer lifespan for new construction versus lining the existing underpass, the ability to connect all parts of the City, and providing a way to cross Roosevelt that is also accessible to people in wheelchairs, on bikes, or using strollers.

To answer a question about the ability to line the underpass and still apply for federal grant funding, Director of Engineering Redman stated the City would not be precluded from being considered for a grant if it first makes necessary repairs to reopen the tunnel. He clarified that the grant could not be used for making improvements within the current structure; it would have to be a completely new structure in order to make it ADA accessible, and the City would abandon the current underpass.

The Council discussed whether the current location of the underpass is the location with the most need.

In response to a Council question, Director of Engineering Redman stated the City would be disqualified for grant funding if the City used its own funds and then hoped to be reimbursed for costs. Director of Engineering Redman stated at least 20% of the construction costs would be the City's responsibility, in addition to engineering costs, which could reach \$1 million.

The majority of the Council spoke in favor of Option 2 (lining the existing structure and reopening it), with two members in favor of Option 5 (applying for a federal grant and creating an ADA-accessible new underpass).

6. City Council/City Staff Comments

Mayor Suess encouraged interested residents who live in the North District boundaries to apply to be appointed to the unexpired North District City Council seat.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Bishel