

Broadway - Re: Broadway widening comments

From: Broadway
To: Henry Schneiker
Date: 5/29/2013 10:14 AM
Subject: Re: Broadway widening comments
CC: Broadway

Mr. Schneiker,

Thank you for taking the time to think about these options and possible design solutions. I will share these with the Citizens Task Force for their consideration, as well as our project technical team. They are relevant to our current discussions.

We are in the process of working with the Citizens Task Force on identifying different cross-section options, which will be analyzed using evaluation criteria also developed with the Task Force's input. We are looking at a variety of options, which you can see by accessing our web site. (Scroll down to the Public Meetings section for links to different options being discussed/considered for analysis.)

The work we are doing now will be the focus of a public meeting in September (Thursday, Sept. 5). Please save the date on your calendar so you can join us!

We will not be at a point where we will address intersection design, but that will come in later meetings.

We value that you remain interested and watchful of the project and the planning & design process. Thank you!

Best regards,
Jenn

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>>> On 5/16/2013 at 4:08 PM, Henry Schneiker <HSchneiker@HdsSystems.com> wrote:

Hi,

I am the owner of two properties on the North side of the Broadway corridor between Euclid and Country Club. I recognize the need to improve the Broadway corridor. So I have spent a fair bit of time thinking about the problem and would like to make the following observations and suggestions. I think the second option discussed is the optimal solution.

- 1) A three lane architecture with wide areas at intersections and bus pull-outs.

In the space available in the current roadway, you can have 3 full size lanes (east traffic, west traffic and left hand turn lane) plus enough space for bike lanes on each side. With this type of layout, bus pull-outs become mandatory. Further, right hand turn lanes should be included at all traffic lights.

The benefits are: 1) only minimal additional land needs to be taken to accommodate the bus pull-outs and the right hand turn lanes, 2) you get stopped buses out of the traffic lane and 3) you get stopped right turn cars out of the traffic lane when pedestrians are crossing at the light.

The drawbacks are: 1) the overall car capacity is significantly reduced and 2) there may not be enough space for pleasant pedestrian accommodations along the roadway.

I do not view Broadway as a gateway to downtown. Downtown is a mess - no matter how you look at it. Downtown does not need a high capacity artery leading into it because downtown is not large enough to absorb that many people as a destination spot. If and when the Aviation extension to I-10 gets built, I suspect most of the traffic will go directly to I-10 instead of downtown.

This scenario does not seem practical based on the current traffic figures. However, if you are trying to reduce traffic, restricting traffic flow is one way to do it.

2) A five lane architecture with wide areas at intersections and bus pull-outs.

This would yield 5 full size lanes (2 east traffic, 2 west traffic and left hand turn lane) plus enough space for bike lanes on each side and pedestrian accommodations. With this type of layout, bus pull-outs are mandatory. Further, right hand turn lanes should be included at all traffic lights. This requires taking significant land to widen the roadway.

With this scenario, the traffic capacity increases slightly due to: 1) the use of wider lanes that can handle higher speed limits, 2) getting stopped buses out of the traffic lane and 3) getting stopped right hand turn vehicles at stop lights out of the traffic lane. This accommodates the existing traffic requirements and it is not clear that traffic flow will ever increase to the point of needing significantly more capacity.

The benefits are: 1) you have the option to snake the roadway around desirable buildings, 2) you get stopped buses out of the traffic lane, 3) you get stopped right turn cars out of the traffic lane when pedestrians are crossing at the light, 4) businesses, parking and pedestrian accommodations can occupy the remaining space and 5) you have business on both sides of the street making it more inviting as a destination.

The drawback is that you will still have to take a lot of the buildings from one side of the street.

To make a proper roadway with pedestrian accommodations, you will need roughly half of the space between the front and back of the lots on one side of the street to add to the existing roadway. Once you take the front half of the lot, you essentially have to take the back half. This excess space allows many options. One option is to snake the roadway around certain buildings - such as the church just west of Campbell or the Safeway at Campbell. Another option is to use the excess space at the back of the lots to build new buildings and parking lots for shops and restaurants - so that side of the street is not barren. The existing narrow deep lots will be replaced with wide shallow lots.

This scenario provides plenty of capacity to downtown. Downtown is a mess - no matter how you look at it. Downtown is not large enough to absorb that many people as a destination spot. If and when the Aviation extension to I-10 gets built, I suspect most of the traffic will go directly to I-10 instead of downtown.

3) The original plan for the grand 150 foot wide roadway.

This just seems like overkill and a bad idea for many reasons.

First, you have to strip one whole side of the street of all businesses to get the needed land. If Broadway is supposed to be a destination, removing half of the businesses does not seem like a good way to make it a destination spot.

Second, the traffic has not increased to warrant such a wide roadway. And it is not clear it will. That said, my Dad first suggested to the city that they widen Broadway to 6 lanes plus divider back in the 50's and he was told he was crazy - Broadway will never have enough traffic to justify that... And this was back when most of the land was still available for the expansion.

Third, all of those cars going down Broadway have to go somewhere when they reach Euclid. All that traffic going through downtown is poor traffic planning. Tearing down all of the buildings between Broadway and Congress would allow the traffic to pass through downtown. Perhaps the downtown by-pass to I-10 (Aviation extension) will be built and funnel most of that traffic around downtown.

Forth, having two whole lanes for buses is not needed. Bus pull-outs work quite well. Look at speedway between Park and Campbell.

If you are going to do the grand widening, it makes sense to take all of the land from one side of the street. Since there is already a lot of vacant land on the north side of the street, it makes sense to take the remaining north side buildings. Any excess land not needed for the roadway can be added to the lots on the south side of the roadway to give them better aesthetics.

So to recap, I think the second scenario is probably optimal.

Sincerely,

Henry Schneiker.