



D Avenue Improvement Project

Designing for stormwater, pedestrian, and pavement needs

Summary of D Avenue Neighbor Walking Tours

January 28 and February 10, 2017

Project area site walking tours were held on Saturday, January 28 and Friday, February 10 for neighbors located along D Avenue between 10th and State Streets. A few neighbors living nearby also attended. Twenty neighbors attended the Saturday morning walk and ten neighbors attended the Friday afternoon walk. Invitations had been mailed to all property owners and neighbors adjacent to D Avenue.

Project team members at the walking tours included:

- City staff: Rob Amsberry, Katy Kerklaan, and Megan Phelan
- Consultant team: Gabe Crop, Nick McMurtrey, Sarah Koska, Mary Larkin, Kate Forester, and Kristen Kibler

The walking tours provided an opportunity for the city and consultant project team to meet with and learn from neighbors adjacent to D Avenue, prior to beginning design work.

The purpose of the walking tours was to:

- understand and discuss the current public and private uses of the right-of-way;
- view the public right-of-way/property delineations;
- discuss potential changes to how the public right-of-way is actively used along frontages;
- identify constraints and concerns related to the project and;
- gather neighbor feedback on initial concepts for accommodating stormwater improvements, travel lanes, and a pedestrian path within the public right-of-way.

Each walking tour began with introductions on D Avenue near 10th Street. Participants were then led east along D Avenue, making six key stops to discuss what was happening in the public right-of-way and how improvements might be accommodated. Concept drawings unique to each stop were distributed, illustrating site constraints and potential configurations for travel lanes, parking, pedestrian access, and stormwater management features. These potential configurations were temporarily identified on the ground using wooden lathe, spray paint and property stakes. At each stop, the project team gave an overview of the field conditions and possible design concepts. Following that overview, the public was invited to ask questions, discuss concerns, and submit feedback using a comment sheet. Project team members documented comments and suggestions from neighbors on a phone app and paper. Photos were also taken of specific locations to document neighbor concerns or suggestions. The group also made stops outside of participants' homes if they were not at the "scheduled" stops.

The design team will conduct additional or follow-up visits with select property owners in the field, notably those unable to attend either of the scheduled walking tours. These follow-up visits will serve as tools to further evaluate the feasibility of concepts before moving into design. The project team will use existing condition information, technical data, and neighbor feedback to begin design work for stormwater, pavement, and pedestrian access improvements along D Avenue. Neighbors adjacent to D

Avenue, as well as the broader community, will be invited to an open house to comment on plans late this spring or summer 2017. Finalized design plans are anticipated to be complete in the fall of 2017.

The key themes summarized below resulted from the walking tours, and will inform future design. Site specific comments at individual properties were also documented during the walks and will be reviewed as design progresses. These key themes had a broader level of support among the walking tour participants.

Key Themes from Walking Tours

Stormwater is a problem – Participants recognize there are specific locations experiencing major stormwater runoff and localized flooding issues. The need for stormwater solutions is understood and supported.

The public right-of-way is significantly wider than the existing paved roadway, and is being utilized by neighbors – The right-of-way area available for making improvements is generally 60-feet wide, and using the full width may encroach the public space uncomfortably close to individual residences. Many neighbors were surprised to see where their property lines were located relative to the paved road. Where possible, neighbors commented on their noteworthy private improvements and identified specific needs that were being met within the right-of-way. These needs include parking, driveways, bus stops, and landscaping/screening (fences) of windows or yards. Team members noted these needs and will work to accommodate them with design to the extent possible.

Safe pedestrian access is desired, especially for children – There was near unanimous participant support for a new pedestrian path as part of the project. Participants acknowledged some neighbors will likely continue using the street for walking, but that a dedicated pedestrian path offers a safer route for many, notably kids traveling to school.

A pedestrian path on one side of the road is adequate – There was little interest for a new pedestrian path on both sides of the road, since it would increase the overall width needed for improvements. Neighbors recognized that the path should limit alternating sides of the road as much as possible, since pedestrians generally cross the street one time along their route. There was desire to separate the vehicle travel lanes from a new path, using parking, planting, or stormwater management facilities between these two uses. Generally, participants felt the path seemed to make more sense on the north side of D Avenue between the 10th Street and 5th Street due to reduced constraints from existing mature trees, parking and frontage improvements. Between 5th Street and State Street, the south side of D Avenue seemed the most logical for a pedestrian path, where there was already an existing sidewalk.

New curbs along the street are discouraged – Most participants indicated that pavement transitions between the road should occur without curbs. Gravel parking should be utilized in accordance with First Addition Neighborhood (FAN) policy to retain country lane character and minimize impervious surfaces. Replacing existing curbs along the corridor at the Library and the State Street intersection are acceptable since these areas have a less rural feel than the remaining corridor.

The width of the pavement/travel lanes should remain narrow – There was no desire for wider travel lanes through the corridor. Ten or eleven-foot travel lanes generally exist today and would be preferred by the adjacent neighbors.

Traffic speed is a concern – Design elements that calm traffic and remind drivers they are passing through a residential neighborhood are welcomed. These may include a meandering, or gently shifting

road, and travel lanes that feel narrower in places. All neighbors were opposed to the installation of speed bumps.

Parking needs vary from house to house – Some neighbors indicated their frontage was heavily used for parking, while others mentioned their parking was unused. A handful of owners mentioned they welcome more parking where it is currently unavailable.

Limit vegetation impacts to maintain corridor visibility – The vegetation along the 10th Street Green Street project was referenced as creating constrained visibility. Most participants seemed inclined towards lower, yet aesthetic plantings for vegetation along D Avenue.

Long-term planning for trees is important – There are key locations where trees might be impacted by a new pedestrian path or stormwater feature. Many participants wanted to see healthy, native trees preserved and added. Many participants also agreed that the loss of nuisance trees or those nearing the end of their lifespan may be necessary for improvements, but impacts to healthy trees should be avoided when possible. To address this issue, an arborist will inspect the trees within the corridor and prepare an assessment of their findings.

Native plants are preferred – Many neighbors expressed a desire for native plantings that would be lower maintenance and supportive of habitat.

The 4th Street intersection at D Avenue will have a different look – D Avenue at the library already has a curb and urban aesthetic. Because the library attracts more people to this intersection, participants agreed that sidewalk on both sides of D Avenue was appropriate. Improving the southeast and northeast intersection corners would provide symmetry for the pedestrian crossings, and provide traffic calming. The existing curb and sidewalk near the library should be retained, however the existing sidewalk width could be modified to accommodate new stormwater improvements. This intersection is a likely crossing point for pedestrians.

The area between State and at 1st street along D Avenue is an entrance to the neighborhood – Neighbors don't want to encourage or invite drivers using State Street onto D Avenue, but they do want this access point to function as a residential gateway. The project should employ visual cues to announce this gateway and calm traffic. Various ideas shared included a tiered forest canopy between State and 1st Street, and a bench at the 1st Street intersection.

Other tour topics mentioned, but not fully explored:

- Street and pathway lighting
- Planting palettes or colors
- Beautification or aesthetics
- Compatibility with other developments
- Potential of future redevelopment of properties at State Street
- Using alleys or other streets to manage stormwater
- Screening of properties
- Reusing existing sidewalk
- Cost
- Safety (especially at State Street)
- Construction materials for path/sidewalk or parking areas
- Types of stormwater retention
- Community inspired gateway, community space, or bench