

FINAL Meeting Minutes  
Oak Park Avenue Streetscape Steering Committee  
Wednesday, April 26, 2023 – 8:30 AM  
Public Works Center

1. Call to Order

Staff Liaison Eric Otto called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM.

Roll Call

Present: Mike Fox, Anan Abu-Taleb, Kim Henry, Liz Holt, Emily Lloyd, Monika Robinson, Tracey Royal, Meg Svec

Absent: Laura Kitsos, Sandra Medina, Frank Russo, Jim Solnes

Staff: Village Engineer Bill McKenna, Staff Liaison/Civil Engineer Eric Otto, John Helfrich (Terra Engineering), Jamil Bou-Saab (Terra Engineering), Manisha Kaul (Design Workshop), Sara Egan (Design Workshop), Renee Ludlam (Design Workshop), Yuchen Wang (Design Workshop), John Harris (a5)

2. Agenda Approval

Member Fox made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Member Royal. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

3. Approval of the Draft March 21, 2023 Oak Park Avenue Streetscape Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Member Fox made a motion to approve the Draft March 21, 2023 Oak Park Avenue Streetscape Steering Committee Meeting Minutes. It was seconded by Member Robinson. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

4. Non-Agenda Public Comment

None

5. New Business

5a) REVIEW SCHEMATIC DESIGN TEST ALIGNMENT

John Helfrich provided background information on the full scope of the project and noted that it will be a full-depth removal and replacement process. He went on to explain the next steps in the process and when community engagement would occur.

- i. Sara Egan explained that the intended outcome of the meeting is an agreement on the basic alignment/configuration for the street and on tree

strategy. Based on feedback received at the previous meeting, “Hemingway” was removed from the project vision and the design goals were updated. She noted that the five key design goals are now 1)be consistent with other downtown districts, with some differentiation, 2)improve safety and accessibility, 3)create more “people space”, 4)express resiliency, and 5)ensure responsible investment and provided further detail about specific objectives to reach those goals.

- ii. Sara Egan and Manisha Kaul provided an overview of the test alignment for the district, with an emphasis on curb width, bump outs, parking spaces, and trees. They explained the standards and guidelines that they followed when creating this initial design and broke it into four different segments to make it more easily digestible. Throughout the presentation, the Committee members asked questions. Below is a summary of the questions and staff responses.

Q: On the resiliency goal, is there anything about our composting initiative?

A: Yes, in our later slides about differentiation we have a discussion about how we can really elevate sustainability and resiliency if that wants to be part of the branding for this district and a way to differentiate.

Q: Is there infrastructure in place to accommodate that? A: We actually made a conscious decision to remove all recycling on downtown because they were 100 percent contaminated by garbage. There was no way to actually recycle that material, so it was essentially wasted space. We could certainly take a look at it, especially considering the new single-use plastic initiative.

Q: In terms of accessible parking, if you say two per block that would be one on each side of the street, right? A: Yes.

Q: We talked about having 15-minute parking, especially in front of the restaurants. Often those people will park in handicap spaces and think it’s ok because it’s short-term. Is that still an option A: Parking will be a whole conversation. For now, it’s just about figuring out those spaces because there are also electric charging stations we need to start looking at. We try to keep the spaces where that might be an option the standard 22 feet so that there is flexibility with parking management in the future to have the space function differently.

Q: Do we have any statistics on accidents at S Oak Park Ave and Pleasant St? A: For these bump outs, we will look at the traffic impacts of that. I agree

that we would have to widen the radius of the one at the northeast corner to allow cars to make that maneuver. For the one on the northwest corner, we would look at how many right-turning cars we have and look at how the performance of the intersection would be impacted by eliminating the slip lane. We'll evaluate all of that once we start looking at where our opportunities for bump outs are. We do look at accident data to see if there are patterns of accidents at the intersections that should be addressed to improve vehicle safety.

Q: Can the traffic control signals be looked at, too? A: Yes, that will be part of the effort here. Signal modernization will be part of the project, but we're not there yet.

Q: I don't see anything on here about bike parking. Is that still an option? A: We are not there yet. We need to focus on these metrics first before we can focus on those supplementary decisions.

Q: So, we're not looking at using any parking spaces for bicycle parking? A: No, we'd use the amenity zone for that.

Q: Why is the bump out so large at South Blvd and S Oak Park Ave? A: The option would be to significantly improve the covered bike parking that already exists there.

Q: Do you get more parking spaces with angles parking? A: You do, but the lane width has to be wider than average so S Oak Park Ave would not be able to accommodate angled parking spaces. It would make it very dangerous, especially since it's such a busy street.

Q: Can the Committee make a recommendation for who the construction company will be so that the emphasis is on getting it done quickly? A: That is not the typical Village policy, but as we get closer we will certainly be looking at how we can get this done as quickly as possible. Because of the extent of the underground work, we will likely be looking at two construction contracts so that we can have multiple contractors working simultaneously to speed up the process. For the streetscape work, we could look at incentive-based or punitive contracts.

The Committee discussed the following topics:

- Challenges of recycling and composting

- Integrating the commitment the district has toward resiliency in the plan and making it interactive
- Reasons why trees might be removed
- Concerns about trees blocking storefronts and ways to mitigate those concerns with decisions made in the design process
- Concerns about flower pot/boxes that are too cumbersome
- How many accessible spaces should be accounted for in the design
- Significant concerns about the dangers of the intersection of S Oak Park Ave and Pleasant St for vehicles and pedestrians
- If bump outs will cause more traffic concerns and back-ups
- Pros and cons of bump outs
- The option of installing temporary bump outs to test how they function
- The possibility of a midblock crosswalk, particularly for seniors
- Whether or not there is a desire for more outdoor dining
- The possibility of increasing the ADA clear zone when possible
- The possibility of removing parking to allow for bike parking, outdoor dining, and additional amenities
- Ways to create a “neighborhood” vibe in the district and make it a destination
- Concerns about the impacts of parking losses on businesses
- Changing the narrative about the Avenue Parking Garage and how design could play a role in that
- The possibility of moving bus stops to prevent as much parking loss

- iii. Sara Egan provided a brief overview of the ways that the district could differentiate itself through lighting, art installations, wayfinding signs, and other materials. She also asked the Committee members to consider what comes to mind when they think of the district and how that could be expressed through different materials and a brief discussion ensued.

## 6. Old Business

Staff Liaison Otto reminded the members of the Committee to complete their Open Meetings Act training and submit their completion certificates to him.

## 7. Adjourn

With no further business, Member Fox made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Member Abu-Taleb. The motion was approved by a unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Submitted by:  
Anna Muench  
Administrative Assistant- Engineering