



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Memorandum

To: Matthew Gallagher, Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee Chairperson, and BPAC members
From: Lewis Kuhlman, AICP, BPAC Secretary
Date: April 27, 2016
Re: **Neighborhood Greenway Concept Plan's Consistency with the City's 2015 Transportation Vision**

After the City developed a Transportation Vision in 2015, the Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) began planning a concept for a King Street Neighborhood Greenway. City staff struggled to reconcile crossing King Street at West Avenue with safely while retaining the street network advocated for in the Transportation Vision document. This memorandum demonstrates that the intersection designs in the concept plan are consistent with the transportation vision because bicycle and pedestrian safety is a higher priority than automobile access.

The City's Transportation Vision is "to become a beautiful, livable, vibrant, historic, city between the rivers, bluffs, and marsh that is the economic, educational, medical, social, and cultural and transportation hub for the region." The accompanying document goes into further detail of what that would look like. While restoring and retaining the street network was a prominent theme, safe and comfortable walking and bicycling appeared more frequently. While preventing through traffic and left turns on King Street at West Avenue would disrupt automobile traffic, it would improve pedestrian and bicycle crossing. Participants in the visioning process disliked unsafe bike routes and obstructive roadways like West Avenue. Safety comes before access in the vision, and even so, limiting the definition of access to only apply to automobiles undermines potential access gains for other modes.

Even the intent of retaining the street network is to promote safe, comfortable walking and biking. Long blocks promote speeding which is dangerous for crossing bikes and pedestrians. That would not be the case at King and West. Since there is no traffic signal, the refuge island won't encourage automobiles to go faster. Disconnected streets promote congestion by focusing traffic on one street, also making them difficult to cross. That likely won't be the case here either. Main Street and Cass Street are more heavily-traveled parallel routes and will likely not see much additional congestion. Automobile at the intersection could still all turn right and the City would not lose any right-of-way.

"Based on the vision, the city will prioritize changes that result in outcomes like safety, walkability, bike friendliness, access, slower driving speeds, few vehicle-miles-traveled, complete streets, and beauty; and not prioritize conventional ideas such as reduced delays for motorists, high speed roads, high levels of service for motorists, abundant and low-cost automobile parking, and fighting congestion through road widening." This statement confirms that safe, walkable and bikeable routes are more important than car crossing. Alternative routes would likely be more challenging to design due to their discontinuity with the rest of the planned bicycle boulevard network or greater traffic volume and width. The King Street Neighborhood Greenway concept plan is supported by the Transportation Vision and creates the best possibility of a safe, comfortable biking and walking route from downtown to the UW-L campus.

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