



Agenda

University Avenue Complete Streets Study

MEETING #4
Steering Committee

October 29, 2015 @ 4PM – 6PM, City of Morgantown City Council Chambers

The intent of this meeting is to review what we heard from the public outreach and stakeholder collaboration to date followed by a “walk through” of the design concepts for the entire University Avenue corridor as well as design treatments for select segment/intersections.

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions/New members
- What we heard during the September Public Design Work Session and Focus Group Discussions
- Development Status – Community Viz results
- Draft Design Concepts – mapping exercise
- Grumbein’s Island – alternative scenarios
- Next Steps – Committee Mtg/Public Open House (Jan/Feb)

Adjourn

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University Avenue Group Topics – Design Work Session

8-31-15

Bike/Pedestrian Group Topic:

- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are generally preferred to roadway improvements. (“All else being equal...”)
- Need space for lighting
- Beautification and shading needed
- University Avenue is a more preferred bicycle route for inbound travel, but the outbound grade is difficult for casual cyclists
- A Bus Rapid Transit line on Jones Avenue has been discussed; however, the street width and on-street parking are obstacles
- The Campus Connector appears to be a viable option to improve bike and ped connectivity between the downtown campus and Evansdale
- One-way traffic should be considered on Beverly given its width and reduce congestion at the 5-legged intersection
- A bike/ped connection from Jones through the Law School is desirable. A path once existed northwest of the Law School but has been neglected (perhaps gated).
- Where we have wide sidewalks, they walk. More convenient, safe and accommodating.
- Due to the topo challenges, we need to design on-street bikeways as such - bike lanes uphill, sharrow’s downhill. Makes sense.
- We are locked into the mindset of moving cars
- Frank - turn University Ave/Jones to one way pair from Law School to the Loop at the old bridge at Falling Run
- Or – install a two way cycle track on Jones from Law School to College Ave.
- Don – most important issue is “build it and they will come”. Females walking along unlit streets feel that it is dangerous as a pedestrian
- Don - 16% of people in Morgantown walk. Need to invest more in ped/bike amenities.
- Pedestrian crossings – lighting in road. Think differently
- Transit is important. Hospital to downtown needs to be an express route. Improve frequency of transit service
- Grant Ave as a bikeway

The Loop and Grumbein’s Island Group Topic:

The Loop: as presented by Alex Wing

- Grumbein’s – grade separation too expensive. What other alternatives are there?
- Idea is to create a new quad with a pedestrian underpass
- Loop: cutting off Falling Run may, most likely, cause problems at Stewart/Univ. Ave intersection. Need to look at the traffic impacts of this idea
- 45’ – 50’ width is the preferred bridge width to accommodate 5’ bike lanes, two 11’ travel lanes and 5’ sidewalk. Need to incorporate into Design Concepts

- There is some flexibility in the conceptual alignment for the Loop. Control points are the pedestrian overpass at the B&E Building on the south and the Campus Drive intersection.
- The proposed Arboretum will be located northeast of the Loop. Assisted living homes are also proposed in the area.
- Overall width of the Loop “bridge” can be increased to include sidewalks and bike lanes.
- A bike/ped overpass could be possible east of the Loop, connecting College to Stewart Street; it could be incorporated into the design of the proposed classroom buildings.
- Options for connecting Falling Run Road to University Avenue will have to be explored with the Loop.

Grumbein’s: as presented by Alex Wing and Marilyn Gelzhizer

- What’s the Problem? People are “darting around” and crossing where ever they want. Out of control.
- What’s the Problem? Lots of spillback problems by vehicles. Driver frustration.
- Newest idea “Open Space Concept”: completely open for all movements by all modes
- The Open Concept for Grumbein includes bollards to prevent vehicles from exiting the roadway
- There is modeling (simulation) prepared for this by the WVU
- Lots of perspectives have been developed
- Need a pedestrian refuge
- WVU may be willing to take the liability for this section of Univ Ave. That includes maintenance and ownership. But, nothing confirmed.
- Bill – a little skeptical of this Open Space concept. Need to see the model (peak 15 minute). Need to understand pedestrian movements (O & D). Show us a precedent as well.
- Brian – liability issue needs to be addressed. That is, the open space concept does not conform to MUTCD. Will WVU take over ownership and maintenance?
- \$4 - \$5 million cost figure
- Shared Space example: Market Square (Pitts). However, Market Square is a one way traffic circle.
- Maybe look at a controlled, raised pedestrian table (30’ wide) with planter boxed median with holly bushes. Maybe a Hawk signal to control/delineate ped crossing
- ADA compliance? Blind cross access?

Other Topics:

- Engagement is limited in the eyes of Margaret (WVU Professor)
- Margaret – connect Jones to College Avenue
- #1 priority – curvature, road design is challenging near curve north of Beverly
- Work with development community
- If we don’t make consistent improvements, we’ve missed the boat
- Major transit stop at Falling Run. Future BRT
- Ground truth the pedestrian connector
- Transit Operator – will work with Team to develop a consolidated high quality bus shelters along entire corridor.

Planning & Design Themes:

- Make the cross section consistent and predictable as a driver and a pedestrian
- Minimize ROW takings by making trade-offs between cars, bikes, pedestrians and transit users
- Consolidate bus stops into high quality, appropriately spaced bus shelters
- Use dedicated bike lanes and sharrows to provide continuous bikeway along entire corridor
- Design quality intersection treatments to include high-viz crosswalks, ped countdowns, and pedestrian lighting
- Incorporate shaded trees where appropriate
- Minimize ped crossing time, ped refuge and site triangles where applicable
- Create a third concept for the Grumbein's Island to include a pedestrian Table and raised planter island

University Avenue Complete Streets Study

Morgantown, WV
Project Work Session
09/01/15



Sign-in Sheet
(Please Print)

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Sign-in Sheet
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Morgantown-Monongalia
Metropolitan Planning Organization

University Avenue Corridor Study Existing Conditions and Future Directions



August 2015

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ATTACHMENT A.1: Project Symposium Meeting Summary

ATTACHMENT A.2: Polling Exercise Responses (June 22, 2015)

ATTACHMENT B. On-Line Survey Results (as of July 1, 2015)

ATTACHMENT C. Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

APPENDIX D. Mapbook



Morgantown Public Works Department installing traffic signals at the Stewart Street and University Avenue intersection in 1962.

- Source: Tinnell, Shannon Colaiani, Morgantown, 2011, page 24.

Summary of Public Engagement Findings

The appendices to this technical report provide detail on the various public outreach strategies and outcomes from the early parts of the University Avenue Corridor Study. However, the following were consistent themes present in surveys, focus group meetings (10 conducted for this study), the Project Symposium held in June, and walking field audit. These are described as key points, but not necessarily in priority order.

Point #1: The Maintenance and Appearance of the Corridor is Lacking. Sidewalks and roadway pavement alike are frequently in poor condition, showing cracking and edge deterioration. Morgantown has substantial wear placed on its infrastructure due to frequent freeze-thaw cycles, but heavy traffic volumes contribute to maintenance problems as well. In a related sense, a lack of street trees, run-down building facades, and little pedestrian-scale lighting also contribute to an appearance that isn't appropriate for such an important gateway to the University and the City center.

Point #2: The Safety of Pedestrians, Cyclists, Transit Patrons and Automobile Drivers can be Improved. The existing corridor has substandard geometry at several intersections (although the improvements at Beverley should help this location), and pavement markings and signage are deteriorated, inadequate or simply missing. Bicycle infrastructure is largely absent, and sidewalks are typically adjacent to the back of the curb throughout the study area. The area surrounding Grumbein's Island in front of the Mountainlair Student Center was mentioned many times, not surprisingly. However, other locations and crossings such as Campus Drive, Stewart Street, and 8th Street as well as locations farther north were also highlighted as places where improvements to pedestrian and cyclist safety could be made relatively easily.



Figure 1. Project Symposium Participants Identifying Issues and Potential Solutions

Point #3: Constraints Placed on the Corridor from Narrow Rights-of-Way and Building Setbacks, as well as Topography, will Play a Key Role in Limiting Traditional Capacity Expansions. This point speaks for itself, although the ability to improve some intersection locations does exist, and it is these locations that are often the source of crashes and numerous pedestrian-automobile conflicts. Many participants were willing to point out very specific improvements at key locations along University Avenue as well as Beechurst Road (a primary “reliever” route for University Avenue).

76%

of participants thought that the design of the corridor was poor, and that the corridor was unsafe or very unsafe

Point #4. Redevelopment Opportunities Along the Corridor Need to be Kept in Mind as an Important Subtext to Traditional Transportation and Mobility Concerns. While there is ample cause for increased attention to many transportation safety and mobility concerns, people repeatedly came back to the potential for increased private investment focusing on more varied (e.g., not just student-related) housing stock as well as retail investments into the corridor. Similarly, protecting existing communities and linking them back to the University Avenue Corridor were also important to people.

From these findings, the following issues and value statements were derived that are described in the following section.



Figure 2: Project Symposium Participants Learning about the Results of the Existing Conditions Analysis

Issues and Value Statements

Based on the work done through this study, a number of issues and concerns have emerged that will shape the focus of the overall effort. These discussions are described in detail in the attachments that follow the main body of this report, containing information from the first Project Symposium conducted on June 22, as well as polling, surveying and mapping exercises. Additionally, comments from 10 stakeholder interviews and a field audit (also conducted on June 22nd) contributed to the project team’s understanding of the corridor.

The following are five Issue and Value Statements building upon the concerns and comments from the public meetings as well as the project team’s field data collection. Ultimately, all of these issues are combined into a single core Mission Statement. The Issues, Value Statements and Mission Statement will all be used to measure the value of recommendations, for example in the creation of performance measures.



Issue #1: Pedestrian and Bicyclist Considerations Come First

Value Statement: Although automobile travel is substantial – over 18,000 vehicles per day in some places – the corridor is heavily used by students of West Virginia University and residents of the surrounding communities. The vulnerability of these users is high compared to automobile drivers and passengers. Furthermore, substantial increases in carrying capacity of the roadway for automobiles will be costly, potentially damaging to existing developments, and create an unfavorable aesthetic along the corridor. Grumbein’s Island and its high level of pedestrian and automobile conflicts is especially important to call out, but the entire length of the corridor benefits when solutions favor people choosing to use the very limited space for non-automobile travel options. It is better to create an environment where walking and biking are not only encouraged but make the most sense for traveling.



Figure 3: Students Crossing Willey Street

Issue #2: The Safety of All Users is Critical

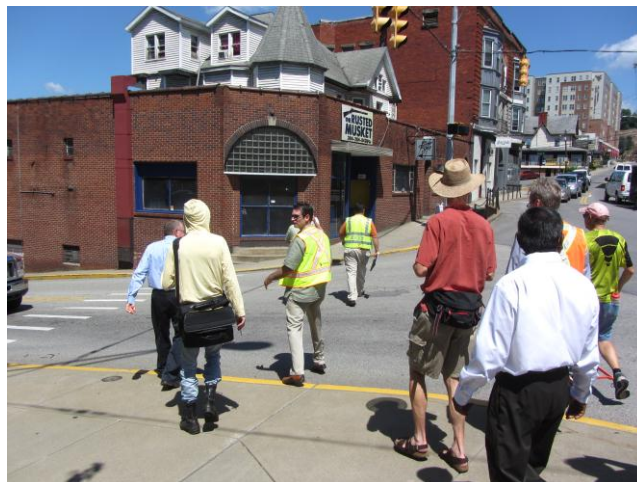
Value Statement: Hand-in-hand with creating pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environments is the concept that the corridor should be safe for everyone to move across and through. Many of the comments received from the public invoked safety-related language, whether it be for a lack of lighting, unsafe design, or poor accommodations for pedestrians crossing the street. The most outstanding example of which is that three-fourths (76%) of the Project Symposium respondents felt that University Avenue is “unsafe” or “very unsafe” today. As traffic pressures mount from redevelopment and intensification of uses within and without the corridor, these safety concerns are likely to increase.

73%

of participants thought that walking was the most important method of travel to improve in the University Avenue Corridor

Issue #3: Automobile Delays in the Corridor Should be Reduced if the Actions Taken are not in Conflict with Other Values

Value Statement: Although pedestrians, cyclists and overall safety come first, ensuring the smooth, if not high speed, movement of cars in the corridor is very important. Frequently, traffic studies focus almost exclusively on quantifying the effects of recurring delay, and then only for cars, not people. One way of integrating across the Issues and Values identified here is to account for traffic delays created by automobile crashes, since any lane closure or partial closure is felt acutely due to the limited range of options and constrictive terrain. Another suggestion is to account for the delay and quality of service incurred by people, whether in automobiles, on foot, cycling, in transit vehicles or using any other mode of transport.



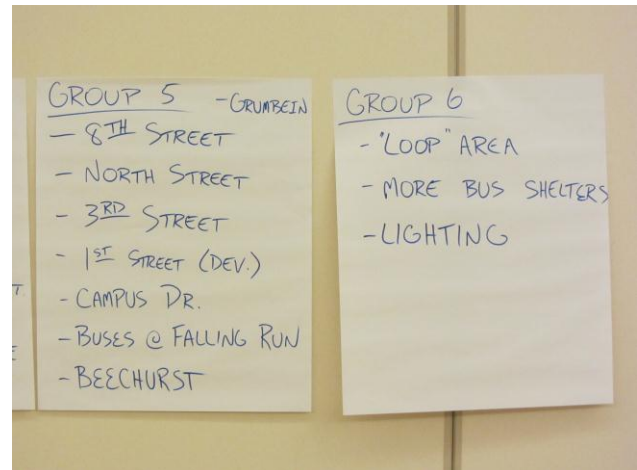
Issue #4: The Corridor has to Support Surrounding Uses through Attractive Design

Value Statement: University Avenue is more than how rapidly it can move people and things through space, it serves as a way of getting to jobs, upholding land values, encouraging favored redevelopment, and making sure that everyone gets to class before

the bell rings. Nearly 88% of the people that were asked in the Project Symposium said that commercial development is a desirable land use type to happen more in the future. Creating an esthetic environment through the use of improved streetscaping details and repair/maintenance is vital to this objective.

Issue #5: Supporting Transit is the Future of the Corridor

Value Statement: The space limitations and future development trends of the University, downtown core, national preferences, and the corridor itself are pushing towards a heavier reliance on public transportation. Morgantown long ago charted a course towards investment in public transportation service of a high quality; updating the PRT and moving towards a BRT (bus rapid transit)-type of service are now high on the list of infrastructure and service needs. In turn, environments that address the first four Issues are well on the way to creating transit-favorable environments.



Considering these five premier issues and their accompanying value statements, an overarching Mission Statement would read as follows:

“The Goal of our project is the promotion of safe, beautiful and more efficient travel for every user in the University Avenue Corridor, and in so doing support existing communities as well as promoting favored redevelopment in the future.”
