

January 13, 2009

To: Alderman Holding, Chairman
Public Works & Services Committee

From: John C. Rooney, Asst. Commissioner of Public Works/Engineering

RE: Item 09-3076

This item pertains to the typical section choice for the reconstruction of WisDOT Project ID: 2290-12-00; State Street (STH 38) – Memorial Drive to LaSalle Street. This project includes the total reconstruction of the right-of-way, from building face to building face, including the removal and replacement of all road, curb & gutter, and sidewalk. The project provides a unique opportunity to enhance the gateway from the newly remodeled train depot, future KRM, and BUS Transit Center to the downtown area. The opportunity to revitalize this important corridor depends on the typical section chosen for the project limits. The typical section is a cross-section slice of the roadway from right-of-way to right-of-way.

The existing typical right-of-way width on State Street is 76 feet in width and is fixed. The existing typical section consists of 52 feet of pavement and 24 feet of sidewalk. West of ML King Drive, the pavement width provides two permanent westbound travel lanes, one permanent westbound parking lane, one permanent eastbound travel lane, and one time-of-day eastbound parking/travel lane.

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has proposed a typical section that minimizes lane width to slow speeds yet still provide the width for the truck traffic in accordance with WisDOT standards. The pavement has been reduced to 48 feet in width to provide one permanent travel lane and one time-of-day parking/travel lane in each direction. Traffic counts have shown the need for only one travel lane in each direction except for peak hours, at which time parking will be restricted. This typical section provides 28 feet of sidewalk space to enhance the pedestrian zone with streetscape amenities including trees; decorative lighting, benches and trash receptacles; trail markers; free-standing planters; paver brick sidewalk treatment, etc.

WisDOT has proposed a typical section that has a bicycle accommodation. The accommodation requires that the pavement width be increased to 56 feet and the sidewalk area be reduced to 20 feet. The increased pavement width still provides one permanent travel lane and one time-of-day parking/travel lane in each direction, but the outside one time-of-day parking/travel lane is exceedingly wide to accommodate bicycle traffic.

In our analysis, the typical section preferred by the CAC provides:

- 1) Narrower pavements which reduce speed
- 2) Shorter crossing length and time for pedestrians
- 3) Maximum sidewalk width to enhance pedestrian zone and create gateway to downtown
- 4) Opportunity to sign and mark Liberty Street as a spur from the Root River Pathway system to the BUS Transit Center and KRM.

The City of Racine is a major proponent of bicycle use, as evidenced by the Root River and Lake Michigan Pathway systems. However, the adoption of the WisDOT preferred typical section for bicycle accommodation provides no connectivity to the pathway system, creates wider roadways and narrower pedestrian zones (sidewalks), which limit greatly our ability to properly enhance this corridor. If the committee concurs with the CAC typical section, the appropriate action would be to approve the typical section as recommended by the State Street CAC.