

**BUFFALO NIAGARA MEDICAL CAMPUS – PHASE III  
ALLEN STREET EXTENSION AND REHABILITATION  
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING #4  
D’YOUVILLE COLLEGE CAMPUS CENTER  
MARCH 1, 2016 @ 6:00 PM**

**ATTENDEES FROM THE DESIGN TEAM:**

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**The following outline summarizes discussion during the March 1, 2016 meeting – 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the D’Youville College Campus Center, Blue Lounge.**

**PROCEEDINGS:**

- Michael Finn, the City Engineer for the City of Buffalo, began the Presentation by introducing the members of the design team and describing the following key point:
  - The alternative that Bergmann Associates and the City of Buffalo presents is a combination of the wide range of public input response heard over the past two years. The City’s desire is to develop consensus around the structure of this alternative (flexible nature of the design, driving lanes, curb location, sidewalk width, etc.) so that we will proceed to final design. Final design will include decisions on surface treatments and there will be opportunity for public input at a workshop in early summer 2016.



- Kelly Thompson then presented the attached PowerPoint in its entirety with an update of the preferred alternatives for Phase A and Phase B:
  - The design team met with the BNMC Stakeholders on multiple occasions for the Phase A Pathway design and developed the design shown during the presentation.
  - Based on the project objectives, public feedback, and engineering studies, the design team evaluated the alternatives to identify a preferred alternative for Phase B. The preferred alternative chosen was Alternative A.
  - Photo Simulations of the proposed corridor displayed key elements of Alternative A, including curb line modifications, pedestrian zone flexibility and roadway material upgrades.
  - Parking will be maintained at current levels along Allen Street.
  - The design team presented three curb location modifications to the typical section along the roadway (Elmwood eastbound, Delaware eastbound/westbound and Main eastbound).
  - The PowerPoint Presentation and other related material, including the design scroll, will be available on the project website, <http://www.allenstreetextension.com/>
- Dave Granville, Buffalo Arts Commission, gave a brief introduction to the public art portion of the project.
  - The community is encouraged to volunteer their time and ideas to help progress the public art aspect of the project. Dave Granville can be contacted via email at [dgranvilleus@yahoo.com](mailto:dgranvilleus@yahoo.com) for more information about the Art in Public Places Program.

### **QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:**

Michael Finn and Kelly Thompson fielded questions and comments in a group forum after the presentation. The questions, comments and necessary responses are gathered below:

Question 1A. The public art part that you are talking about now goes from the Medical Campus to Franklin? Will there be another public art piece from Franklin to Wadsworth?

Question 1B. Just to clarify, all you're doing next summer is Main Street to Franklin and the rest of it, even though you talked about it, isn't funded?

Response:

- The project funding will cover the cost to construct Phase A (Pathway) of the project from N. Oak to Washington. The remaining funding will be used to begin construction of Phase B on Allen Street at Main Street and progress westbound as far as the current funding will allow. Initial cost estimates by the design team reveal the potential to reach Franklin Street or Delaware Avenue depending on final materials chosen for construction. The public art installation will therefore be contained in the Phase A and Phase B portion that is constructed.
- Additional funding would allow construction to be completed from the point where Phase B is ended westbound to completion at Wadsworth Street. Similarly, 1% of the additional funding would be reserved for public art in the remaining portion of Allen Street.



Question 2. Could you re-explain the current and future width of Allen Street? How are you gaining frontage at the store fronts without shrinking the roadway?

Response:

- The existing width of Allen Street is 36 feet from curb to curb, except between Delaware and Elmwood where it is narrowed to 32 feet. The new pavement section will be 22 feet from curb to curb (mountable curbs); however, there will be two 8 foot flexible parking lanes on each side of the roadway. Therefore, the travel lanes and parking lanes combine to create a width of 38 feet. The mountable curbing transition allows the parking lanes to be at the same grade of the sidewalk. The moveable bollards afford flexibility to expand the sidewalk width from 12 feet to 20 feet if the parking lanes are temporarily blocked off.

Question 3. Was snow taken into consideration at all?

Response:

- Snow removal is a challenge we are responsible to address. A similar cross section is in use on cars on Main 500 Block currently; which is maintained through a maintenance agreement with Buffalo Place to remove snow. We will be working with the City of Buffalo Streets Department to address snow removal on Allen Street.

Question 4. Are you planning on installing paid parking meters? Parking should be paid along all of Allen Street to raise money for future repairs and prevent people from leaving their cars for long periods.

Response:

- As part of the project, we are currently proposing to maintain metered parking on Allen Street. The City of Buffalo Parking Commissioner will determine the retention or any changes in parking regulations.

Question 5. Are there any statistics about how much ridership is on the #7 bus route along Allen Street? I rarely see more than 2 people on the bus at any given time. Is that worth as many parking spaces and as much thought to accommodate that bus? Since there are buses on both Virginia and North Streets, why not get buses off of Allen Street.

Response:

- The design team has obtained ridership data from NFTA and has accommodated existing stop locations as part of the preliminary engineering analyses. There is a standard distance between bus stops that the NFTA maintains. The design team will continue to collaborate with NFTA on the accommodation of users' needs and opinions.



Question 6. I'm concerned about the right turn lanes. It seems like we should be narrowing the street at intersections instead of giving more Right of Way to people that are turning right, because they don't always look to the right for pedestrians before going. We don't want people to be able to go faster, it's not your fast way to work. What is the rationale for the turning lanes? Won't it increase flow and speed? Adding big turning arrows and signs makes Allen seem like an arterial, when it should be designed as the pedestrian area it is.

Response:

- The analysis shows the right turn lane is necessary to minimize vehicle queuing into the narrow section of Allen Street. Because of the heavy right turn movement, the turn lane is extended to the end of that block so that the queuing will not have such a negative impact on vehicular operations, especially during peak periods.
- Widened curb lanes at Delaware and Main Street both in the eastbound and westbound direction will allow buses to pull over and may allow vehicles to maneuver around queued left turn vehicles.
- Turning lanes improve traffic operations and allow vehicles to travel through the intersection without significant backups, but since it is a signalized intersection those vehicles may still have to slow or stop while making the turn.
- Under the complete streets mandate as required under federal funding, there is a balance of operations and safety needs for all users, including vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles. There are minimum operation levels that are design requirements that must be met.
- The existing bus stops already prohibit parking for a standard distance in order for the bus to safely board and drop off passengers. Therefore, the design alternative does not further remove any existing parking spaces.

Question 7. It needs to be thought about from the perspective of how to get people out of their cars and not focusing on decreasing vehicle delays instead of reducing car trips. In some cities, the roadway is narrowed at intersections so that cars have to queue behind the bus so that transit becomes a better option.

Question 8. I applaud your efforts on this project and it looks like you have taken a lot of the concerns from last time into consideration and come up with a good compromise solution. But some pieces of the design could be improved to make it more pedestrian and bicycle focused.

Question 9. This presentation was much better than the previous three because you are clearly explaining the reasoning behind decisions and how the project will evolve.



Question 10. I'm concerned about the bollard plan. Being a property owner, it is hard to maintain the sidewalk with snow, leaves, garbage, etc. Who will be in charge of moving the bollards, how will we be notified, and what will be done with vehicles that are parked there? It seems like an odd solution for a street that isn't focused on pedestrian events other than one big festival.

Response:

- For now the City of Buffalo will be responsible for the bollard maintenance, but this could be assumed by the Allentown Association or another community group. Before we can give the responsibility of removing parking, there will need to be a process in place for how that will be done. There will be a decision and notification process put in place, similar to how parking is temporarily removed for construction with 24 hour notice before any change is made on the roadway.
- The roadway design will not only support the Allentown art festival, but some business owners have expressed interest in the possibility of more sidewalk space for things such as sidewalk cafes and sales. The design alternative allows flexibility of utilizing the bollards to restrict parking to extended sidewalk zones on a block-by-block basis. This would allow parking in other areas while closing parking to extend the sidewalk areas in certain blocks.

Question 11. Is there a timeline in place to get funding for the second phase of the project?

Response:

- The design will be completed for the entire length of Allen Street including a cost estimate to complete the work. With the total cost estimated, the City will work with our partners to apply for funding. The design will be completed by the end of this year. Because the project will be designed to be "shovel ready" for the entire stretch of Allen Street, it may help in obtaining the additional funding necessary to rehabilitate the entire stretch of Allen Street.

Question 12. There are a lot of bars all along Allen Street, beer trucks park there illegally every day and cause traffic problems because cars cannot get around. You can't steal one inch from the width of Allen Street.

Response:

- The design cross-section actually provides an additional foot of width to each side of Allen Street.
- Delivery trucks parking restricts passage. A possible solution may be dedicated loading areas that are the length of a delivery truck. This system of "dedicated loading zones" has been implemented, with success, by the City of Buffalo in its Cars on Main Street 500 and 600 Block Projects. We can also work with those business owners to develop periods of time so that they can be staggered and follow the City of Buffalo Ordinance for loading times.

Question 13. Is there a possibility to heat the walkways in the medical campus area and recycle the water in some way, instead of having people go out and shovel the whole pathway? For pedestrians to easily get through, it will have to be cleared.

Response:

- The BNMC will be responsible for maintaining that pathway. This suggestion may be passed on to their group for consideration.



Question 14. There is a lot of opportunity for a pilot project with smart phone technologies for parking spaces on Allen Street that would reduce people's needs to circle the block looking for parking. It would be a good idea to put conduit in the ground now across and along Allen to facilitate future communication cables.

Question 15. There are curb ramps to cross Allen not at major intersections, and I hope they will be striped and some sort of reminder to motorists to stop for pedestrians. For the pedestrian signals on the pathway, those could be automated because people don't always push the buttons like it's designed for. Some consideration should also be given to bike blocks for priority bike turning.

Response:

- We are considering the appropriate use of technologies where plausible. There will be dedicated pedestrian signals at all signalized intersections along Allen Street. The design team will further investigate additional technologies and the potential for bike block (bike boxes at signalized intersections) usage.

Question 16. Do you have a total parking count for what is there now and in the plan? We counted 160 and there are more cars than that parked through the weekend. It doesn't seem like you're putting the same amount back.

Response:

- There are 120 legal existing parking spaces on Allen Street and the proposed design plans to maintain the same level of parking spaces. The parking spaces may vary depending on vehicle size and driver usage. The design team conducted an advanced parking study, which revealed vehicle numbers exceeding the 120 existing parking spaces during weekend night periods due to vehicles squeezing between parking signs (three vehicles often are able to fit in spaces dedicated with two parking meters) and vehicles parked illegally. The proposed design has bollards to bookend the parking spaces at the end of each block to avoid illegal parking at corners, which creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians and vehicles turning onto Allen Street from the side streets.

Question 17. Because of all the vehicles that come from the traffic circle down Wadsworth to get onto Allen, it is very difficult to make a turn from Mariner onto Allen, which is necessary because Mariner is one way toward Allen. With all of the vehicles backed up at the Elmwood intersection it is impossible to make a left turn onto Allen. There are often cars or trucks parked very close to the intersection so it is difficult to see, in addition to beer trucks and school buses. I saw a bump-out at Mariner Street on the drawing, is that going to keep cars from parking too close?

Response:

- Yes, the bollards that bookend the parking spaces at the end of each block will prevent vehicles from illegally parking at the corners where the side streets intersect Allen Street. There is a problem with visibility, and the bump-outs will physically prevent vehicles from parking there illegally.
- In regard to the beer truck issue, there is existing ordinances about when deliveries can be made and the fact of the matter is they just get ignored because there has never been a conversation on how to change it. We have talked about using this project as an opportunity to bring in not just the bars but also distributors and discuss with them about how to change. We have an opportunity to change behavior as part of this project.



Question 18. I have a personal theory about the traffic volume on Allen coming from Richmond. During rush hour, if you've ever gone east on North Street you can see that the light at Elmwood gets very backed up because you can't make a left there. To avoid that, it is much easier to go to Allen Street to make the right turn onto Elmwood. If just the signal timing can be modified to give North Street more time, it could get easier for vehicles to make the turn onto Elmwood and improve the backup.

Response:

- The City of Buffalo will look into ensuring the timing coordination at this location is adequately maximized.

Question 19. To modify the behavior on Allen Street as the core of our neighborhood, we should push traffic to other streets that are more major connectors. We should narrow Allen Street to emphasize that it is focused on pedestrians, and improve operations on North Street so vehicles stay off of Allen.

Response:

- The challenge is to properly balance the user needs on Allen Street without negatively impacting surrounding roadways. Operation issues, such as those raised in question 18, would only worsen if vehicular movement is directed away from Allen Street.

Question 20. What if you didn't have the turning lane on Allen and looked at volumes on Summer and North? In the spirit of changing the way people use Allen. Is there some quantified information that we can look at on that?

Response:

- We have looked at the area from North down to Virginia, and it's difficult to encourage traffic to not be impacted by what we do on Allen Street. Even if we can improve conditions on parts of Allen Street, it is a great degradation to other streets, particularly the north-south streets. So we try to balance those impacts through the studies.
- We have the data in the draft design report, and it is available at City Hall. We can make that available on the project website as well.

Question 21. Once the medical complex is finished, what kind of increase in traffic can we expect on Allen Street?

Response:

- Our expectations are that the pedestrian volumes are going to be greater. There are not many places to park on the medical campus, so it is not the intent to get more people to drive there. The reason for the pathway connecting the campus to Allen Street is to get more people, especially workers, to walk to Allen Street from the campus instead of driving there. I do not think you will see a great increase in vehicular volume on Allen Street, especially since the road dead ends at Main Street.

Question 22. Some streets, like Park Street, the north side and south side are not lined up, and there is no indication of where you should cross Allen Street. There should be some sort of striping like a dotted line to show where you should go.

Response:

- Safe crossings where the intersections are not signalized requires careful examination. We will undertake that in the Design phase of the project.



Question 23. I sat in on meetings just like this 36 years ago about the great light rail solution for Main Street and we have now put cars back on Main Street, so the one thing I'm struggling with since we rely on traffic, whether we like that drive or not, we are not going to be a bus dominated neighborhood in the next 30 years it's just the reality. We're foolish if we think we're going to need two 20-foot sidewalks on Allen Street by moving the bollards out to prevent people from parking. I get what you're trying to do to make it walkable and pleasant, but I'm nervous that we're getting too creative to accommodate this flexible use. Which isn't really flexible because once you put the bollards out to allow for a café, the café isn't going to go away to put the bollards back for the next weekend.

Response:

- That is a fair concern, but the flexibility allows us to react to what the future holds in the next 30 years and the direction the community takes. The bollards would not be changed every day and night, but there is the potential to have those large sidewalk areas for a period when it is needed for larger pedestrian volumes, storefront sales, or cafes.

Question 24. What below-ground infrastructure changes can we expect? Will there be new water, telephone, etc.? Any changes will have to be coordinated with all the businesses.

Response:

- We have to deal with the storm sewer (all of the receivers in the curb). We will have to connect the drainage structures in the new mountable curb.
- In the final design stage, we will reach out to all the utility companies and work with the Department of Public Works to determine if any public or private utilities will be replaced prior to or during the construction phase.

Question 25. About the street trees, there is a 4 foot width and I know a lot of trees are not allowed to grow to a healthy size. You showed a whole strategy for increasing that size and making them viable real trees that don't die in 5 years. I urge you to design it so that they will actually grow.

Question 26. Large trucks tend to shear off the whole street side of the trees, so there needs to be some consideration to design around where delivery trucks are close to the trees.

Question 27. Is there some way we can limit the tonnage of truck allowed on Allen Street?

Response:

- We do have the ability to limit the size of trucks allowed on a local street, but local deliveries must be accommodated as well.

Question 28. Does the project website have a place for commentary?

Response:

- It is not designed for a large amount of comments, but we do have some comment sheets that you can take tonight and return to us. Also, there is contact information on the website and you can email us at any time.



Question 29. With the workshops that you are talking about early summer, are those going to be like 6-8 weeks away? That is coming up quickly. Will we all be notified when that is scheduled?

Response:

- These meetings will be scheduled closely following the receipt of design approval. We need to have those discussions so they have to be scheduled soon. We want to be able to show you real examples of what you could see along the roadway.
- There will be notices that will be sent out as we have over 300 emails that we blast out when we have notifications.

**NEXT STEPS:**

**Bergmann Associates Team**

- Take the input from the public meeting and make a final design alternative decision with the City of Buffalo.
- Share information gathered from the public meeting on the project website.
- Inform the public of the design feature workshop.

**UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE:**

- The next meeting will be a design feature workshop to be scheduled in early summer 2016.



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