

10-07-2024 Municipal Services Committee

Q&A Follow Up for Design Recommendations

Public Hearing held at 09-23-2024 MSC

Melrose Avenue, Bell Avenue, Bellaire Court, Alexander Street

General Questions Common to All Streets

1. Trees. How are decisions made on which trees to remove and which trees to save? Can DPW provide detailed information on individual tree decisions? Can trees be left up for construction to see if they survive, rather than cutting them down at the start of construction?

- a. DPW knows that healthy trees are a valuable asset to the community at-large and to immediate neighbors and strives to save as many trees as is warranted based on several factors including existing conditions, during-construction activities, and post-construction conditions.

At the start of the DPW design process, the Project Engineer and City Forester assess each tree using guidelines developed by the International Society of Arboriculture for best management practices for managing trees during construction. The ANSI A300 Part 5 standard is also a tool used to help guide the planning and development phases of these projects. Poor condition and ash trees equal automatic removal. After that, factors considered include species, age, size of tree relative to width of existing and proposed terrace, proximity of trees to existing and proposed street/curb, and root orientation. Staff keep in mind that roadway construction requires 12 to 18 inches excavation behind existing curb and proposed curb, to a depth of about two feet. This can result in extensive damage to nearby trees, so trees with a short healthy life expectancy are strongly considered for removal at the start of construction. In some cases, certain trees may be evaluated as likely to have a longer healthy life expectancy if the proposed street is being narrowed; in such cases, the City Forester is more likely to designate a tree to be saved if the design recommendations support a narrower street.

- b. DPW has shared City Forester contact information with inquiring neighbors (Mike Stanonik, 920-832-5941). The City Forester is available by appointment to review individual tree scoring onsite as may be requested.
- c. As stated above, DPW does try to preserve trees predicted to have a relatively long healthy life span after construction. When the City forester determines a given tree is unlikely to have a relatively long healthy life span after construction, the decision will be made to remove the tree; this is done so that the tree does not interfere unnecessarily with efficient construction activities, does not represent an elevated risk for falling as a result of poor health after construction, and to support a process whereby a new tree can be installed in a timely manner to support long-term goals for street tree populations.

2. Conditions During Construction. How will the construction project address accessibility concerns for property owners, emergency vehicles, trash/recycling collection? Can projects be phased in a way to help minimize inconvenience to neighbors?
 - a. All streets under discussion involve 2025 Underground Construction and 2026 Pavement Work. Underground Construction projects have typically proven relatively easy to travel into and out of project limits. Although trenches are typically backfilled at night, driveways may not be available for hours at a time. Coordination involving the contractor and City inspector is common. The 2026 paving work presents more access challenges than underground work. At times, the street will be inaccessible. DPW issues a mobility questionnaire before the project commences. Parking permits are issued to people who can walk and DPW will work with individuals with limited mobility. DPW completes these types of projects every year, and DPW's process has proven very successful in finding reasonable accommodations to work out access needs while still getting the project done efficiently.
 - b. Refuse and recycling collection. When a road is closed, garbage trucks typically cannot get in. Standard procedure is to roll containers to the nearest side street. Bellaire Court is an example of a more difficult street to manage. Some special phasing may be appropriate in certain circumstances to minimize inconveniences, and staff will certainly review these options when developing project specifications. A typical time frame for lack of garbage truck access is 4 to 6 weeks, but perhaps two additional weeks if street construction is phased.

Melrose Ave. (Alexander to Ballard)

Proposed: 26' f-f, parking on one side only

Existing: 32' f-f, parking on both sides.

1. Why is the street being narrowed? So many cars parked on street, don't know how that can go to only one side.
 - a. Melrose Avenue is defined as a local residential street with average on-street parking needs per the Complete Streets Design Guide, with a preferred cross-section matching the proposed design.
 - b. The Complete Streets Design Guide adopted by Council on April 3, 2024, and available to view on the City website, was the primary tool used to determine the appropriate design cross-section. The guide identifies the design principles behind the Complete Streets policy documents and the recommended cross-section based upon those principles.

Bell Ave. (Summit to Richmond)

Proposed: 26' f-f, parking on north side only

Existing: 32' f-f, parking on both sides.

1. Why is the street being narrowed? Is it saving costs, saving trees, or increasing safety? Does narrowing a street make it safer? Is parking on one-side-only adequate?
 - a. Bell Avenue is defined as a local residential street with average on-street parking needs per the Complete Street Design Guide, with a preferred cross-section matching the proposed design.
 - b. The Complete Streets Design Guide adopted by Council on April 3, 2024, and available to view on the City website, was the primary tool used to determine the appropriate design cross-section. The guide identifies the design principles behind the Complete Streets policy documents and the recommended cross-section based upon those principles.
2. Since commercial property on Richmond Street have delivery trucks, some semis seem inclined to making a circuit on Bell Avenue. Will the City adequately enforce the parking restrictions?
 - a. DPW will sign No Parking areas per City standards and has staff to enforce parking restrictions. When notified of recurring violation issues, Parking Enforcement staff can often increase enforcement to help prompt behavioral changes.
3. For buildings with minimal setback from the project limits, will the contractor protect private property from damage?
 - a. Project specifications will direct the contractor to avoid damage to private property outside of the approved project limits, and identify the contractor as responsible for damage resulting from any contractor failure to follow project requirements.
4. Will proposed changes affect the ability of the City to effectively remove snow?
 - a. DPW will enforce known parking violations that interfere with snow removal operations. DPW anticipates parking changes from both sides to one-side only will not have any significant impact on snow removal operations. Citywide overnight parking ban remains in effect.

Bellaire Court (Atlantic Street to cul de sac)

Proposed: 26' f-f (parking on north side only)

Existing: 27' f-f

1. Why is the project needed, considering it seems so disruptive to the existing trees?
 - a. The sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and water main are aging, and the water main size is below current design standards for new water main. The pavement and curb & gutter are in relatively poor condition and will be in worsened condition after the 2025 underground construction is completed.

2. Can the proposed street be converted to one-way traffic as a way to narrow the street and reduce the need to remove existing mature trees?
 - a. DPW could consider the one-way traffic request further, however, it would not result in a narrower street. Appleton Fire Code identifies a minimum street width of 26 feet for emergency vehicles where one-side-only parking is provided, which is the current design.

Alexander St (Melrose to Glendale)

Proposed: 26' f-f, parking on one side only

Existing: 32' f-f, parking on both sides.

(No questions at Design Hearing)