

Bath Front/Elm Street Intersection Streetscape Design Project

Community Stakeholder Meeting

Bath City Hall

September 26th, 2019

12:00 – 1:00 PM

Listed below are community issues, observations, concerns, and ideas raised during the meeting.

Existing Conditions Discussion

- Identification of Brackett's property line is important. There is the potential for a usable space on the west side of Brackett's that could help attract pedestrians.
- In general, the current sidewalks and curb cuts on Elm and Front Street are full of accessibility and tripping hazards.
- A suggestion was made to continue the project study area north on Front Street into the vicinity of Library Park, the hotel, and restaurants beyond.
- A community member from the Pine Tree Society reinforced the need to maintain/enhance access to the building via the stairs and ramp.
- This summer, community members observed that the seating space on the south side Elm Street was used somewhat frequently. It was suggested that some of the users were shoppers at Brackett's.
- There appears to be an issue with vehicles on Elm Street turning the wrong way onto Front Street, despite current signage and directional markers.
- There is a lack of bike lanes/infrastructure in the area. However, Brackett's does currently have a bike rack.
- Summer Street storm drains do not drain properly.
- The Old YMCA site may be developed in the future. Street improvements will need to factor this in – curb cuts, utilities, etc.
- Cars often drive over the curb from the parking lot directly into the Elm/Front intersection which can be very unsafe. This is almost a 4th curb cut from the parking lot.

Elm Street Preliminary Design Concepts Discussion

- 12ft travel lanes would allow to bikes and pedestrians more space. The City has done a complete streets study that incorporates this idea.
- Loading Zone on Elm Street – This space and others like it around the City, were originally created for shipping carries like UPS and Fedex to have a place to park. However, UPS and Fedex report that they don't often get to use the designated spots as they are full with cars. One comment suggested loading areas be moved to the rear of business where possible.
- Street Trees - Empty tree wells are worse than no tree at all. The maintenance required for any number of new street trees needs to be incorporated into the design from the beginning. New tree planting techniques/BMPs need to be utilized to prevent loss of trees from outdated street planting practices.

- Backing up from perpendicular parking on Elm Street is unsafe for bikes and vehicles due to poor visibility.

Front Street Preliminary Design Concepts Discussion – Ideas/Observations/Concerns

- In years past, a community design committee proposed the Idea to close some of the curb cuts on Front Street at Brackett's and create a plaza on west side. Brackett's was not in full agreement with the idea.
- It's best for parallel parking on Front Street to remain as much as possible, for businesses and deliveries.
- In general, the ultimate treatment of the east side of front street along Brackett's is going to be critical for the success of the streetscape.
- Most pedestrian traffic has been observed on the west side of Front Street.
- Pedestrians typically do not walk down the east side of Front Street to enter Brackett's, opting instead to cut across the parking lot diagonally.
- Street trees on the west side of Front Street would be appropriate, but perhaps not on the east side of the street adjacent to Brackett's. The east side of the street could use more of a lower height buffer treatment that could be planted, architectural, or both.
- The current cross walk across Elm Street does not visually point pedestrians north down Front Street. Re-orienting this crosswalk will be critical.
- Screening of Brackett's could be achieved with subtle street tree plantings close to the store, and within pedestrian view corridors when walking north down Front Street.
- Container plantings at vehicle and pedestrian eye level could be a great option to buffer open views of the Brackett's parking lot and provide separation from the pedestrian streetscape.
- Perhaps no sidewalk is needed on the east side of front street adjacent to Brackett's. This could allow move room for a planted buffer on the east side and/or pedestrian space on the west side. As mentioned earlier in the meeting, most pedestrians cut across the Brackett's parking lot to enter the store and do not walk all the way down the east side of Front street. However, ADA accessibility needs to be taken into account whether it be through the parking lot, or down the east side of the street.
- If there is to be a reduction of curb cuts to Brackett's, Brackett's may be more receptive to leaving two curb cut access points to the parking lot, as opposed to one.
- Winter use/snow storage in the area needs to be considered in the new design.
- At grade sidewalk on the east side of Front Street in front of Brackets is may improve the pedestrian experience is multiple curb cuts are required.