

**Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project
Aesthetic Committee Meeting
Summary October 20, 2022**



Project:	Brent Spence	<i>Groundbreaking by Design.</i>
Purpose:	Urban Aesthetics/Guidelines	
Place:	First Financial Bank Conference Room (6 th and Madison, downtown Covington)	
Meeting Date:	October 20, 2022	
Prepared By:	David Reed	
Attendees:	Mayor Joseph Meyer	City of Covington
	Ben Oldiges	Advisory Committee Member
	Emily Wolff	Advisory Committee Member
	Sarah Allen	Advisory Committee Member (representing Susan Smith)
	Steven Hill	Advisory Committee member
	Diana Martin	RL Record LLC
	Andrew Wilhoite	City of Covington
	Nicole DiNovo	Human Nature
	Gary Wolnitzek	Human Nature
	Gary Valentine	KYTC - CO
	Stacey Hans	KYTC – D6
	Glen Kelly	Qk4
	Lindsay Hoskins	Qk4
	David Reed	Qk4

1. Introductions

Gary Valentine provided a brief introduction and project update, reporting that the current Progressive Design Build project delivery method will target a final Contractor selection by June of 2023, and will allow the process of refining Urban Aesthetic Guidelines to be extended to a similar timeframe. Gary presented a current summary project overview, which included a review of the existing roadway design details, and highlighted the proposed surface roads, collector/distributor network, interstate ramps, and mainline interstate corridors. Gary also presented a series of 3-dimensional renderings, depicting images of the proposed project corridor from varied aerial perspectives, highlighting proposed views within downtown Covington. Mr. Valentine spoke briefly about noise walls - as some of the images depicted views with and without proposed noise walls – and indicated that there would be a separate emphasis on noise wall presentations and ample opportunity for the public to weigh in on the issue of appropriateness. Where supported by study analysis, noise walls will be budgeted for inclusion, but the community will ultimately determine what noise walls are built.

2. Streetscape Details

David Reed provided an overview of the proposed streetscape conditions for each of the downtown street corridors, including the impacted areas of 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 9th, Pike and 12th Streets. These streetscape concepts were detailed to

reflect a continuation of the City's Streetscape Guidelines and dimensioned the functional areas beyond the roadway travel lanes, including amenity zones, principal pedestrian zones, and buffer zones for each of the subject corridors. These concepts also included recommendations for how roadway intersections and pedestrian crosswalks could be improved to offer enhanced striping and surfacing treatments, with areas of raised crosswalks proposed to offer traffic calming and create a much safer pedestrian and bicycle crossing environment. A detailed example of this was highlighted for the Pike and Lewis intersection, where an accessible pedestrian ramp was proposed as a replacement for the existing conditions defined by a steep concrete stairway which the committee identified as hazardous and unsightly. This proposed ramp would connect to the existing crosswalk serving the St. Johns School and provide a safe and accessible route for parents and students to access the lower Lewis Street corridor and neighborhood.

The committee questioned whether street trees could be accommodated in both the buffer zones and amenity zones, and Mr. Reed responded indicating that trees would need to be supported by a minimum of 3-foot planting zone-width in either the buffer or amenity zone.

Mr. Reed also provided an overview of proposed bike path improvements, which were focused on expanding the existing bike path network and exploring the completion of linkages identified in the City's bike and trail master plan. The primary focus of the proposed improvements included a new north-south multi-use path, which would extend north from 12th Street and provide a linkage to the Riverfront Commons Trail. This proposed improvement would include nodes of connectivity at 12th Street, 9th Street at the south end of Goebel Park, the Goebel Park pool area, and at the north end of Goebel Park which is the gateway to the Mainstrasse area. This new corridor would also provide opportunities for future bike path network expansions with connections at 9th Street to extend further west toward Devou Park; and connections along 5th Street to be extended further east to Bakewell, and further north toward the Riverfront Commons Trail. The northern portion of the proposed bike path would be supported by a road-diet segment of Crescent Avenue, where travel lanes would be reduced to create a new bike path corridor along the east side of the roadway, and where intersections at 3rd, 4th and 5th would be reconstructed to minimize crosswalk length and offer a safer route for cyclists and pedestrians. The connection to Riverfront Commons Trail would occur at the end of the existing floodwall between Western Avenue and Spring Street, where a maintenance access gate currently exists.

The committee questioned why the bike path could not be extended east along 5th Street, and Mr. Reed responded indicating that initial plans would include a path along 5th Street up to Philadelphia, but that any continuation east along 5th Street or north along Bakewell would need to be supported by travel lane modifications or right of way expansion, given the limited space available along the existing streetscape in these areas.

3. Goebel Park Concepts

Gary Wolnitzek provided an overview of the impacts to Goebel Park, and offered two alternative conceptual plans for consideration, which were based upon feedback from an earlier September meeting with Parks staff and other committee members. The overview included an illustration of the changes in height which would occur as part of the project – where new northbound lanes would be constructed above the existing interstate structures and increase the scale of the interstate where adjacent to Goebel Park. The expanded footprint of the interstate – primarily along the new portion of Jillians Way – was also illustrated, where project improvements around the existing pool would be as close as 50 feet. This “pinch point” would allow for the construction of the proposed 10' bike path, with some areas of landscape buffering remaining on either side of the bike path.

4. Alternative Recreational Use Areas Under the Interstate

Gary Wolnitzek also presented a series of exhibits which depicted possibilities for expanded recreational use and enhanced visual aesthetics for areas under the interstate – within the open space areas immediately west and north of Goebel Park. These concepts were oriented around a theme focused on the Willow Run Creek corridor which once existed within the footprint of the interstate (now within a sub-surface combined sewer facility along the interstate corridor). Five primary use areas were defined, including Riverfront Commons, Riverlink Park, 5th Street Sports Park, 9th Street Gateway, and the 12th and Pike Community Connector area. Unique concepts for each area were proposed

and featured a variety of improved aesthetics and potential use areas and functions. The Commons and Riverlink areas north of 5th Street represent larger open space areas beneath the interstate, and were envisioned as more transitional use areas, characterized by passive use areas connected by an interior pathway network and dominated by larger areas of landscape enhancement; whereas the 9th, Pike and 12th Street areas represent much smaller areas under the interstate where gateway and community focused use areas are supported by areas of expanded decorative pavement, where a flexible use area can be created to serve a variety of possible community functions as well as to support community gateway features and other welcoming opportunities. The central area south of 5th Street and immediately adjacent and to the west of Goebel Park was presented as a large area for active ball courts and sports venues, offering relocation and expansion of facilities impacted within Goebel Park, as well as offering alternative locations for parking, restrooms and possible relocation of parks maintenance and service functions which currently occupy valuable land use areas within Goebel Park. Overall, these concepts were presented as alternative opportunities for areas under the interstate which are typically underutilized or community eyesores, and images were focused on depicting the difference between generic areas void of character and aesthetic value, contrasted with richly colored and textured open spaces of practical use, improved aesthetics, and higher community value.

5. Community Connector, Gateways and Greenspace Analysis

Gary Wolnitzek wrapped up the presentation with a discussion of the Community Connector area at 12th and Pike, an overview of Gateway opportunities, and a summary of the Greenspace Analysis which had been prepared to evaluate the project impacts on existing tree canopy. More detail was provided regarding the details of the existing parking lot between 12th and Pike which serves the County Building, and the flexible open space opportunities that exist at each end of the lot. Gateway opportunities throughout the downtown area along the corridor were identified for future use and consideration by the city. A greenspace analysis was presented which quantified the areas of canopy loss, estimated how this canopy loss could be mitigated through new tree streetscape plantings, and also identified areas of possible greenspace expansion where trees and green infrastructure (sustainable stormwater infiltration features) could be introduced along the corridor as part of the project.

6. Next Steps

The presenting team agreed to provide the review committee with a copy of the presentation immediately following the meeting (completed next day).

The review committee is planning to meet internally on or about November 2; and would like to schedule another group meeting on November 16, where they will share their review comments and define the areas of further discussion preferred (a meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, November 16, at 2:30 pm, at the First Financial Bank Conference Room).

End of Meeting Notes