

September 17, 2021  
Department of Public Works – City of Indianapolis  
Health by Design Public Comments on Broad Ripple Ave. Improvements



Good afternoon, Jenelle,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public input on the Broad Ripple Avenue redesign. A member of our Health by Design team, Taylor Firestine, attended the open house on September 8th, and we wanted to take the opportunity to share our collective feedback on the design. In addition, we wish to acknowledge the professionalism and transparency displayed during the meeting, by both DPW and Lochmueller Group staff members in attendance. This undoubtedly set the tone for the robust but respectful public comment that followed staff's presentation.

To begin, we must reiterate the critical importance of including more greenery – particularly bioswales and street trees – in the overall project, as voiced by members of the public during last week's open house. Bioswales and street trees are key components to an urban corridor like Broad Ripple Avenue, with high walkability measures and adjacency to a major waterway. Inclusion of bioswales in the design would complement the planned subterranean stormwater improvements slated for this project by creating short-term reservoirs to collect stormwater runoff and mitigate flooding during heavy rain events. Bioswales containing native plantings also soften the hardscape, improving the visual appeal of the corridor while filtering litter, road salts, and other debris prior to reaching our waterways. According to Indiana University's Hoosier Resilience Index, Indianapolis is expected to experience as many as 17 "extreme precipitation events" (average number of days per decade when daily precipitation is two inches or greater) by the 2050s—compared to 13 today.

Likewise, street trees are relatively inexpensive assets that provide a multitude of health, safety, and economic benefits. Street trees create a sense of enclosure for pedestrians, buffering them from traffic and providing a comfortable microclimate that invites pedestrians to mingle and fosters vibrancy of the corridor. According to the Hoosier Resilience Index, Indianapolis can expect as many as 89 total days of "extreme heat events" by the 2050s compared to 32 today. Street trees are essential in lessening the negative impacts of urban heat island effect and ensuring city residents and visitors can comfortably walk to their daily destinations. Street trees also promote traffic calming by psychological effect. Motorists perceive narrower lane widths on streets with trees, thereby slowing motor vehicle traffic. This is another crucial piece in promoting a safe and walkable neighborhood commercial corridor. If street trees prove too cost prohibitive or aren't feasible due to infrastructure constraints, we would propose extending the planned tree-lined median (east of the Monon) to continue westward to N. College Ave. (replacing the planned center running turn lane).

Beyond that topic, we have several other suggestions, outlined below. We also support the recommendations offered through the Broad Ripple Village Association. We propose:

- Raised intersections at all signalized intersections on Broad Ripple Ave. between College Ave. and Compton Ave. to calm traffic and signal that pedestrians have primacy in the corridor.
  - These intersections would include Carrollton (depending on the shift of metered parking anticipated for that street), Guilford, Winthrop, and Compton.

- Ericka Miller indicated during the meeting that the Monon Trail crossing would be elevated, which will be a major safety improvement.
- High-visibility, continental-style crosswalks in place of the planned decorative thermoplastic crosswalks depicted in the project renderings.
- Working closely with IndyGo to install permanent benches or canopies (where none currently exist) to protect waiting passengers from the elements, as part of the expansion of sidewalks.
- Coordinating with the Broad Ripple Village Association to ensure that the final design accommodates street furniture (presumably under their purview), including bike parking, benches, trash receptacles, planters, etc.

As a general comment and for future projects, please make sure that future design renderings include ADA curb ramps, as well as scale figures that depict persons using mobility devices or wheelchairs. These were noticeably absent.

We're excited for the improvements planned in the Broad Ripple Avenue corridor and applaud DPW for integrating this project with priorities identified by the community, most notably the RiverWalk.

Please let me know of any follow-up questions for us. We look forward to seeing how the project evolves based on the feedback you receive through this public engagement process.

Take care,

Kim

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