

To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: Proposed Transportation Resolution

----- Forwarded by Greg Aucutt/planning/cob on 03/02/2012 09:19 AM -----

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Date: 03/01/2012 06:38 PM
Subject: Proposed Transportation Resolution

To All Concerned:

I understand that there is a proposed resolution to come forward from the Transportation Commission regarding the Fairhaven Urban Village plan. I also understand it includes an exploration of "best locations for pedestrian-only streets--building upon the experience of closing roads during special events," and that one consideration is a "pedestrian-only zone at 10th/Mill...and around the entire block at 11th to Harris."

As a 32-year business owner in Fairhaven with two retail stores and a current payroll of over half a million dollars per year, this greatly concerns me, especially since there has been no open discussion with the business community about this possibility.

It's likely that some who have proposed this have been to Boulder, Colorado, and have seen the lovely and very successful pedestrian-only zone there. Are those folks also aware that in Boulder there was a close tie to a parking plan that now has yielded six parking structures and four parking lots, all within close proximity to the Pearl Street Mall (there is not comprehensive parking plan for Fairhaven)? There is also a well-coordinated public transportation system, with frequent buses. And, have the proposers visited Eugene, Kalamazoo, or Tampa, all of which have had miserable failures with pedestrian-only streets that drove local businesses out?

As someone who has been fortunate to travel in Europe several times, I love pedestrian-only streets, but these didn't spring from someone's head full-grown. They have arisen from cultures that already eschew private auto transportation for public buses and trains, and for bicycles. They also have nearby parking structures or lots to handle autos and even tourist buses. And most important, European cities do real comprehensive planning. I've seen nothing in the planning process for the Fairhaven Urban Village that would suggest any of these issues have been carefully studied or planned.

No one will be well-served by a haphazard plan that suddenly drops

pedestrian-only zones into the neighborhood, without a comprehensive tie-in to the entire Tier One Urban Village plan. When one explores why successful pedestrian malls have worked, one finds some common factors 1) they're short (even Boulder, which is 4 blocks long, has cross-traffic every block), 2) they have a dense population of residents--"captive users," 3) they have a heavy program of activities, 4) they have frequent and well-coordinated public transportation, 5) they have sufficient parking in close proximity, and 6) most have anchors that not only draw pedestrians, but help enclose the "mall."

When considering what will contribute to the future success of Fairhaven in the eyes of residents, businesses and visitors; good transportation alternatives, planned parking and infrastructure development will go much further in delivering what we're all looking for than a pedestrian-only street that sounds like a good idea.

Thank you for considering my comments. I appreciate what you, as community volunteers and public servants, do for our community.

I am a party of record regarding the Fairhaven Urban Village planning process and ask that my comments be entered into the public record.

Best,

Chuck Robinson

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