

West Pennway Streetscape Steering Committee Meeting #1

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Irene H. Ruiz Biblioteca de las Americas
2017 West Pennway

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Introduction by Mark McHenry, Parks Director: West Pennway Streetscape is part of a resurgence in the Parks system. It's about connecting the dots between the city's parks.

West=West Terrace / Pennway=Penn Valley Park
West Pennway is a connection and extension of the parks system.

David Dowell introduces the design team, defines the goals of the project. West Pennway Streetscape is part of the historic Parks and Boulevards System designed to connect the parks throughout the city. The improvements are part of the implementation of the Greater Downtown Area Plan (GDAP). West Pennway has an abundance of historical significance and natural resources, especially its century-old trees. Quadruple Bottom Line Diagram spells out design team's goals in four areas, Planet, People, Prosperity, and Parks.

As project schedule indicates, we are a third of the way through Phase 1, just completed Site Analysis. There will be two more Stakeholder Workshops, as well as two Public Meetings over the next two months, dates and locations TBA.

Communication throughout the process is encouraged, by phone, email, or publicly on the West Pennway Blog. westpennway.com

We began Site Analysis with cultural resource accounting, looking at the history of the street, neighborhood, and parks system. West Pennway plan from 1907 shows how the street was cut into the city grid, creating pockets of triangular park space. Images show how street has evolved over the last century. The project boundaries, as we see them extend, into the parts of the Westside neighborhood connected to West Pennway and link West Pennway back under I-35 into the Crossroads district. A number of other streetscape projects are also underway in downtown Kansas City.

Crosswalk to nowhere: used to accommodate Villa del Sol toddler lot.

Pennway's tree inventory reduced over the last 10-15 years.

Larger trees planted on West Pennway in 1912 didn't make it. Sycamores are nearly 100 years old, but not the oldest in the city. Gilham Park and James Avery Park each have very old sycamores, 300 years by some estimates.

Carriage house was located at 20th and Pennway. Horses and buggies used street into the 20s and 30s. Street has always had a very wide right of way, maybe to accommodate this use.

Switzer School – portions date back to 1891

Historic apartment building stands at Summit and Pennway, formerly UCM and Lutheran Church Club.

After Emancipation, house for former slaves was built around Summit street. Andrew Dripps and other Westside property owners were slave owners.

Wealthy Irish immigrants, kept out of other parts of Kansas City, moved to the Westside

1951 flood saw a huge influx of Hispanic residents to the neighborhood, leaving Argentine and other flood-damaged neighborhoods.

Accounting of neighborhood amenities and historic structures.

Traffic Analysis: While West Pennway has low traffic density, there are still problematic intersections. Number of children at Villa del Sol is growing, safety is important.

Problem Intersection: West Pennway, Summit, and 21st

- People ignore traffic rules, dangerous for children crossing
- One way portion of 21st from Madison to Summit is not recognized. Steep hill is dangerous in ice, portion marked as one way for bus and car safety but ignored.
- Right turn lane from Summit to West Pennway is cut into by trucks, pole is frequently knocked over.
- No true measure of accidents: many aren't reported as people involved don't have insurance.

- Could extension of sidewalk/narrowing of street calm traffic?
- Green space by Don Miguel Bakery is parkland.

Map of Watershed from PBA: Water flows downhill in large quantities from both sides of West Pennway, esp. from northeast. Ponds at flat areas along the east end of the street.

20th and Madison

- Lynda Callon suggests location for a retention pond/skate park
- Stormwater runoff potentially unsafe for use in community garden.
- Road is slick and dangerous outside library on 20th street.

Two lane West Pennway often confused as four.

Concerns about integrity of retaining walls, heightened after water main break

Comprehensive solution needed for diamond lots.

Beardsley is important as entrance to, gateway from Pennway. Connection of Holly to Beardsley is confusing, could be removed.

Connect Riverfront Heritage Trail to Observation Park as well.

Missing from West Pennway: True community gathering space, i.e. plazas in Latin America and Europe. There is room for it. Covered pavilion?

Back to School, Fall Festival, Easter Egg Hunt – these activities encourage community gathering

Chess table outside library are frequently used, people eat lunch there, as well as at picnic tables.

Precedent analysis shows examples of innovative stormwater management strategies, signage and wayfinding, streets deviating from the grid, lighting of trees in summer and winter, student projects in urban design and architecture exploring nearby areas of Kansas City.

Thanks to everyone in attendance for their valuable input. Feel free to call and email David directly to discuss the project.