



TWO-WAY STREET CONVERSION



Two-Way Street Conversion as a Downtown Revitalization Tool

Traffic Engineers have evaluated the conversion of streets from one to two-way and it will work on a practical level. Staff and consultants have identified and modeled turning movements, traffic flow, loading zones, and on-street parking on Church and Main Streets.

One-way streets allow for greater traffic and higher automobile speeds, while two-way streets provide the same functionality, while also increasing pedestrian safety and business visibility, essentials for successful downtowns.

According to research, over 100 cities in America have converted to two-way as a method of traffic calming in their downtown core.

Economic Vitality

The most important reason for changing the traffic flow of a downtown is to improve the economic well-being of the commercial district and, more specifically, to boost the visibility and accessibility of the retail segment. In this regard making the circulation system more “customer friendly” is a prerequisite in increasing the retail of downtown and appealing to investors and merchants who are interested in coming to main street.

Safety

Two-way conversion improves the livability of a neighborhood by significantly reducing crime due in part to more “eyes on street”. A study in the City of Louisville found three years after the conversion crime dropped 23%. Auto theft dropped 36% while robberies dropped 42%.

Increased Property Value

Due to overall economic vitality and crime reduction, property values in the downtown area see an increase. Property owners take pride in ownership and neighbors demand property cleanliness and upgrades to building facades. Livable streets equal neighborhood prosperity especially when coupled with proven infrastructure improvements, such as street trees, public art, and street lighting.

Pedestrian Movement

Changing the downtown environment better serves pedestrian movement for residents and visitors. Two way streets are perceived to be narrower thereby slowing traffic which allows for more visibility to drivers. For instance, at 30 mph, the driver begins to see things at the road’s edge; and at 20 mph the foreground comes into focus. At 15 mph, motorists see pedestrians and other elements on adjacent buildings. This translates into safer streets for pedestrians.

Bicycle Movement

Two-way traffic also reduces conflicts between autos and bicycles as traffic speeds are slower and allow for bicyclists to remain with the flow of traffic. All-way stops further the decrease in conflicts as driver awareness is elevated when they look to the left and right before proceeding.

Loading Zones

Loading zones will be identified on a per block basis to serve deliveries to the businesses. These zones will be designated with signs and enforced by Parking Management staff. An all-day loading zone is proposed on Commerce St. where drivers can then access the elevator in the midtown deck.