

Comments re: Downtown Streetscape Plan

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To: Oak Bluffs Planning Board <planningboard@oakbluffsma.gov>

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Good morning,

I have been attentive to the Streetscape Plan from its beginnings, attending meetings and forums and commenting on many issues. I thank the committee for its work over a long period of time on this important plan. There have been many opportunities for public input all along the timeline and you have been very accepting of ideas. Now that we are down to the final planning for the Circuit Ave/Kennebec Ave/Lake St areas, I would like to be sure that my comments are on record.

While I am not totally pleased with the final plan (I would like to see parallel parking ALL along Circuit Ave and wider sidewalks for pedestrians to enjoy), I understand that the compromise of half and half will work for more people. I hear many people who are worried about parallel parking, but I think the real issue here is concern about change. If we remember the years of strong opposition to the roundabout, but now look at how well it performs for our traffic needs, I think we can see an example of resistance to change with a final positive result.

Another issue that has been included in the planning process is the accessibility afforded by wider sidewalks. The current sidewalks are almost impossible to maneuver with wheelchairs. They are even difficult for strollers. Families with members of all ages and abilities will be able to walk and shop on Circuit Avenue more safely and comfortably with the changes that are planned.

I have heard several comments by the experts during the process of planning for streetscape changes referring to other towns who made pedestrian-friendly changes and saw many positive results for businesses as well as the public experience. Most people will adjust to a different way of parking and the advantages for pedestrians will be more than worth it. Pedestrian-friendly towns have been noted as not only improving the atmosphere and enjoyability, but also improving the economic rewards to the businesses of the area. I am including a link to an article describing these benefits:

<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/1/16/why-walkable-streets-are-more-economically-productive>

This planning process has been long and inclusive. I commend those involved for their time and commitment. And I urge you to proceed with the Streetscape plan for Circuit Ave/Kennebec Ave/Lake St. as it now stands. Please do not delay. We need some forward thinking action to make us "Proud to be from OB."

Thank you,

Kathy Laskowski

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