

Streetscape Public Comment

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

To The Members of the Planning Board:

Thank you for all of the work you've done thus far on the Downtown Streetscape project. As the owner of a business on Circuit Ave, I am hopeful that the changes being proposed for the downtown area will result in improved efficiency, pedestrian safety, better use of space and overall beautification, resulting in long term economic growth for businesses in our downtown.

I am in full support of the Streetscape proposal and specifically would support parallel parking the entire length of Circuit Ave, allowing for wider, safer sidewalks and significant enhancements to our downtown.

Some of the most notable reasons for my support of the Streetscape plan are as follows:

- Our sidewalks as they are now are grossly inadequate for so many reasons - this plan will enhance accessibility for individuals in wheelchairs, families with strollers, as well as others with mobility limitations (such as walkers/scooters, etc)
- The streetscape plan was never intended to address the parking issues in our downtown, it is intended to improve and beautify Oak Bluffs. If we choose to prioritize parking over beautification and safety, then we have plenty of alternatives for places to add parking in our town at the expense of safety and aesthetics. But in this plan we are addressing issues related to safety, accessibility and enhancements to downtown - the primary being adequate space and safety on our sidewalks.
- In our busiest months our town experiences an influx of THOUSANDS of people, on FOOT, walking off of any one of the multitude of ferries that unloads in Oak Bluffs daily. The majority of businesses in town rely on these pedestrians to generate the bulk of their sales, compared to those who drive in and park. Parking issues have ALWAYS existed on Circuit Ave - if downtown businesses relied on parking availability to keep our doors open then we would have all gone out of business a long time ago.
- Circuit Ave has always had a parking problem in our busiest months - every successful downtown/main street/city has a lack of sufficient parking. We do not, however, have a parking issue in our off season. We have an employee parking issue in our off-season and that lack of parking is exclusive to Circuit Ave. There is ample parking available on the harbor, on Ocean Park and on the Seawall in our off-season months.
- A net loss of 4 spaces through the entire plan is a more than fair compromise to significantly improve the safety and efficiency of our downtown - especially with alternative parking solutions in the works.
- We have an opportunity to greatly improve the experience of individuals visiting and living in Oak Bluffs. if we do not take advantage of this opportunity we give no reason for people visiting the island not to take their money to other towns on island that provide a better pedestrian experience.
- America's Main Streets are personified by small businesses, local shops and an abundance of pedestrians. If we collectively ask ourselves "What Makes a Good Main Street?" I think we would all answer similarly - it is not "plenty of space for cars" it's "plenty of space for people."

We have a long overdue opportunity to vastly improve the pedestrian experience in our downtown that might not come along again. I fear that if we do not take advantage of that, we could see huge detrimental impacts of that down the road.

I hope you'll consider some of my points raised above, and would like to thank you once again for all of your efforts.

Best,
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