

City of Appleton – Municipal Committee

Driscoll street Appleton proposal

Reference points from the March 20th 2024 Complete streets policy and Complete streets Guide

Thank you to the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to speak again this evening. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to both former and current Committee members for providing my neighbors and me the opportunity to share our concerns regarding Driscoll Street. This process has demonstrated that, through respectful advocacy and collaboration, individuals with differing perspectives can hopefully work together to identify solutions that serve the broader interests of the community.

Please note that Alderperson Meltzer and Schutz asked for multiple things to be conducted of the staff. 1-vehicle counts for tracking traffic volume 2-parking counts to check within range. 3-was requested of Alderperson Lambrecht to get all studies and \$ numbers for the people to know what costs for this project would be without sidewalks?

Wanted to address a comment made by Alderperson Fenton about more than half of the residents not being reached out to. I wanted to update all here and that are listening that I have gone to every house along with a other resident/homeowner to update them on all the meetings coming up and encourage them to contact Alderperson Schultz with their feelings. I called the apartment owner multiple times and asked many tenants their feelings as well. I was not able to reach the owner but the tenants I spoke with are not in favor of either proposal. All rentals were talked with as well and were told they are not in favor of sidewalks and narrowing of the road on a dead end.

Also had some discussions with fellow Alderpeople and neighboring city residents. Including watching a counsel meeting from Oshkosh, where it was stated the board being in compliance and favoring of the complete streets policy. However, they are deviating/amending to have no sidewalks or narrowing on that street as example. To illustrate that even if there is a guideline and policy in place, the board can deviate from the guide.

We the homeowners and residents of Driscoll street are unity for the greater good of our street and community. I will outline a few points of why the majority of the people feel this way and also why Margaret Biechler, living here since 1972 as well.

We would like the current proposed plan/design amended and rejected or suggest deviations to better fit this dead end structure needs. There are many streets in Appleton that do not have sidewalks. But Driscoll being a dead end road needs to have exceptions in this case. As you were sent the 2 petitions to show over 90% of the 32 properties are not in favor of the adding sidewalks or narrowing of the road. Also many outpours of public comment and emails/phone calls on this matter from all of us.

Recap since last meeting:

* This current proposal - Negatively impact parking availability, traffic flow, emergency vehicle access, snow removal, and overall quality of life for residents. I am also concerned about the financial burden this project may place on homeowners and tenants. She has been living here for over 48 years.

* See page 15 in the guide shows variations to the plan – please give yourself time to review these options before voting on what the staff suggestions. Such as what would happen after the proposal and than many variances for parking to accommodate residents getting their driveways extended since over 13 will not be able to park vehicles in it legally and the hardship for widening them. Money is very tight right now and added expenses not needed does not help.

* There has been residents collecting the numbers as well on parking totals 3x a day as well. Many days the totals are above the amount of spots allowed on one side of the road. With keeping in mind the 4ft on each side of the atrium to stay clear of. Not enough parking for all the apartment along with the street visitors coming. Also pictures.

* There is availability to public transportation on Perkins street by sidewalk already there by the apartments. Which was a concern of an Alderperson in past meetings but solved.

* It is not healthy for all of us the daily stress and unhappiness of living here with the frustration. We love our neighborhood the way it is and many have been here for over 40 years already and it is working great.

* Many of them have bought their homes for the look and feel of the street and being a dead end played a big role in that. We like the rural feel with no sidewalks living in a big city. There is little to no foot traffic here and since it is a dead end road, it does not need sidewalks. This helps with selling homes here and resale value of them. Even a renter I talked to who has lived here 12 years loves the no sidewalks and would not see reasons on why needed.

* The people of the majority also do not want them due to hardships this will cause them as well as the fellow taxpayers in years to come would need to pay for all the repairs of sidewalks in general for all of Appleton. Some others here today will speak to their own hardships.

* I have talked to many runners/walkers and they all told me walking or running down a dead end road would not even be where they would go on that street. Some actually stated they would avoid a dead end road due to not going anywhere. They want to either keep going to the final destination not want to walk/run or ride down and then up the same road.

* This is a dead end street that has a over 40 unit apartment building on it where many park all the times of the day and even overnight. We have proof of over 10-20 or more cars at many given times of the day parking and if switch to one side that would cause cars/trucks to cause a safety concern and driveways being blocked.

* This street is a dead end and has no turnaround area, so when cars, trucks, trash, recycling, along with city trucks used for snow removal and leaf collection they already have issues with the current width of the road and no ability to turn around. This will be increased with the narrowing of the road and parking on one side. There is a duplex right at the end next to the dead end that has a very small area already to park in the driveway. They will not be able to park there 2 vehicles each and have the sidewalk fit the way the plans show now.

* Delivery trucks – Amazon and WG&R etc will not be able to fit when cars are on one side of the road and have normal traffic go through - there is not enough width for them to all fit at the 27” proposal. Also they are currently backing up the entire street which is a safety concern or going into our driveways – which will over time do major damage to the driveways we have to pay for.

* There is proof that shows this street is low enough foot traffic and has no need for sidewalks and also being a dead end street with very high parking.

Please take the time to review the numbers from the staff and our counts. I did a calc and discovered that from 2000 to 2026 our driver count rose over 10% with the totals being 166 in 2000 and now 2026 it was above 450. This is something we are asking for you to review this data together. There is not enough room for all the cars to park on one side. Who would want to walk over half a block with items like groceries to the apartment. Also the 450 or more of cars coming and going up and down a dead end street is far more busy than what a thru street would be. When some of the fellow alders have stopped by to see Driscoll street, they even notice the great amount of traffic coming and going.

We understand the complete street policy & guide which I have now read in its entirety is to be used only as a guide and can be amended and or changed at your discretion to fit the area and personality of the Appleton neighborhood. In fact on page 1 under Deviations it states “The complete streets policy allows city staff to draw from the best known practices available and is not intended to limit discretion in city decision-making. Deviations from the complete streets policy are anticipated and can be requested.

On page 16 of the complete streets guide I was told Driscoll is labeled as a L2 – Residential smart local street. We are asking for this to be reviewed by you the committee before recommendations.

We are asking for your review very carefully and deny current design proposal of listing us as a L2 street that would get narrowing of the road and sidewalks on both sides.

Consider leaving this street the same 32” it is and fix what needs to be done to be up to date. Along with no sidewalks on a dead end street. This exception we are asking for to be amended and set as a special situation in Appleton as this data is not supporting our story in the guide.

Thank you for your time and consideration for the people of Driscoll street and all of Appleton. I would like to thank Ms. Jungwirth and the Public Works staff for revisiting the proposed reconstruction plan for Driscoll Street and for thoughtfully considering the unique dead end situation.