

Neighbors,

We wanted to share with you some important news about the project known as West Avenue Phase II.

We were able to secure a much better project. We can say with confidence that no other neighborhood got a project as favorable for the residents as ours. The target starting date is April 2023 for the Northern side of the project (14th street to 17th Street).

Here is a quick recap about the accomplishment we were able to secure together as a united group.

1. Under the previous city manager, we were able to remove the connection fees and we also had the city to agree to pay for the relocation or work on any fire connection impacted by the project.
2. The pumps and the related components were moved from the middle of Lincoln Rd to the parking lot next to the post office. This was more than just an esthetic win. By relocating the pumps next to the parking lot, we will no longer need to excavate on Lincoln Rd as deeply as it was first planned with an excavation of several floor below ground. This means the impact on the work to be done will be greatly reduced.
3. Earlier this year, the city agreed to cover all the cost of the harmonization on private land. This means no expense to the residents. To be clear it stipulates that we are going to put back or replace in kind what was affected on your private property.
4. The city also agreed to offer a complimentary clean-up for all existing drains or wells on private property. It will be up to the resident to maintain this drainage system after the work is done.
5. The new project includes 17 additional wells which improve the quality of the water going back to the bay. All to be locate underground on public land.
6. We were able to negotiate a much more favorable harmonization agreement:
 - the cost of the harmonization agreement will be paid by the city.
 - Residents don't have to pull a permit for any part of the job anymore.
 - You now have the right to bring the city to court if you are unable to resolve a project related issue with the city.
7. You will receive a Q&A document which mentions the resolution process to fix problems resulting from the project before having the option to go to court.

Because of the concessions we were able to secure with the harmonization agreement, the city is not willing to allow additional negotiation per property for the harmonization agreement BUT the key document for you to review is the Exhibit B where the plans must list all the work to be done with your property harmonization. Make sure you go over every detail with the project team.

As we experienced so much delay, the project team agreed to meet twice with each property owner. After that, if the property owner is not willing to sign the harmonization agreement, they will have to design the project around your property which could make access to your property very difficult or impossible.

For full disclosure we also want to share with you three important items:

A package deal:

The project team reviewed the full project including the street elevation. This is a package deal and not a menu to pick from: We cannot separate the road elevation from the replacement of the underground infrastructure even in some limited locations. There are several reasons for this: an important part of this project is to address sea level rise and part of the funding is based on that. Allowing different elevations would also create difference of levels like the ones currently on West Avenue at 14th Street (Next to the Waverly). In order to prevent the new street from deteriorating the base that support the new street needs to be above the water level. The venetian island is a prime example of early road deterioration without street elevation.

This project almost died several times, and we are at a breaking point now: We cannot continue to negotiate with more delays. We lost and need to secure funding again for the south part of the project (South of 14th Street). The budget exploded compared to what we started with in 2017.

The city put together a priority list for all the neighborhood in the city (50+). West Avenue is currently next on the list, if we do not move forward, our neighborhood will be skipped and go back to the bottom of the list.

Parking:

We need to finalize a plan to secure parking during construction and after construction for the Norther part of the project (north of 14th Street). As this is obviously a permitted project, the contractor has the obligation to meet code requirement for every parking space and radius and maintain a clear view cone at the exit of each property. Some spaces will also be lost on West Avenue because of bike lane and green space requirements.

We could lose about 20% of the street parking (again North of 14th Street). In order to mitigate this loss, we are currently working with the parking department, the contractor and city Staff to come up with solutions.

We will also, most likely ask the commissioners to invest in more parking structures. We wish we could have solved this parking issue sooner, but we are at a point where we can no longer put the project on hold to resolve that part. We have the commitment from all the parties involved to find a solution. We all understand the specific nature of our neighborhood and understand the value of parking. Our goal is to secure a full parking plan before construction starts.

Secure funding gap for the South part of our neighborhood:

As the project became more complex with addition parts, it resulted in a budget completely different from what we started with in 2017. Increases in material costs also came into play and now we have a gap in funding currently available for the full West Avenue project. In order to move forward it was decided to split the project in 2 parts.

The northern part is going to be done first because it is where the pumps and largest components are located.

The city is working on securing additional funding to launch the Southern part of the project (8th Street to 14th Street). We will work with City Staff and the commission to make sure that we can move forward with the Southern Section without additional delays.

There might be a benefit in finalizing the Northern part and then going to the Southern part for our residents. With the original plan, we would have been stuck with 2 different crews working at the same time on 2 projects in our narrow neighborhood. Doing one part after another might be beneficial as far as traffic is concerned.

This has been a long process and we need to continue working together on Parking, but this week we were happy to sign the first harmonization agreement (Hotel Gaythering) because we clearly understand the risk of doing nothing.

Heather and the project team will contact the property owners in Segment 1 and 2 for the Northern part of the project soon to discuss your harmonization agreement. I will make myself available to help you with this process. We can attend the meeting or answer any questions you might have. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

We want to thank all of you for supporting our efforts and get what we believe is the best deal we can get.

We will now fight for more parking in the Northern part and the funding for the Southern part in the same diligent way we did for what we achieved so far.

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

Stephan Ginez and Tim Carr.