

Downtown Area Citizens Advisory Council
Tuesday, September 1, 2020 7pm ZOOM meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88920367295>
Phone: 877 853 5257 (US Toll-free)
Meeting ID: 889 2036 7295 Passcode: 237766

Attendance: Caroline Arcure, Joseph Arcure, Chuck Bultman, John Chamberlin, Chris Crockett, Jeff Crockett, Don Duquette, Peter Honeyman, Steve Kaplan, John Kotarski, Ilene Tyler
CAC Liaison: Ray Detter
Guest: Susan Pollay

Susan began the meeting by providing an update on the DDA and City pilot projects which are being installed this week. With an aim to create more social distancing space, the downtown pilot projects include three temporary protected bikeways and one expanded pedestrian area. CAC members shared their observations about the traffic impacts on Division Streets as sections of the roadway are being set aside for one of the protected bikeways. Several commented on a concern for traffic delay, and there were also concerns that the bikeway may make it more difficult for car drivers to see bicyclists at the Huron corner. This led to a general discussion about the need for more bicyclist education, as many times bicyclists behave in ways that seem unpredictable to car drivers. Susan said that she would share a link to a pilot project survey so everyone could give feedback about the projects. Besides Division Street, other temporary bikeway locations include Main/Packard and Miller/Catherine, as well as an expanded pedestrian area at State/NU. Because these are pilot projects the aim will be to gather data that can be used in the future.

The group also spent time talking about the University of Michigan students returning to campus. There have been reports of some partying, and general observations about mask wearing during the day versus later at night. It was agreed that everyone should be encouraged to social distance and wear masks to keep the number of COVID cases to a minimum. CAC members noted the UM website "campusblueprint" provides an excellent dashboard where COVID data and trends are updated regularly.

Other impacts from the pandemic were noted, including the slowdown or cessation of new downtown development projects. A contributor to this may be broken or disrupted supply chains for project elements such as windows; another contributor may be the greatly extended timeline to get a city permit. The biggest factor of course is likely the temporary lessening of demand which would otherwise compel developers to quickly complete projects.

Finally, the group talked about the recently completed Downtown Neighbor Guide produced by the Old Fourth Ward. This Guide includes a wealth of helpful information for new downtown residents, including where to find grocery and other retail, as well as city rules on noise and trash.