

**Proposed Broadway Improvements
-DRAFT-**

**Columbia Special Business District
March 9, 2006**

Broadway lacks a showpiece.

The street has no welcome signs, monuments, fountains, towers, or public plazas that set the tone for the street or create a gathering place for people to linger.

Proposed solutions:

- Development of “welcome plaza” at intersection of 4th and Broadway.
Improvements to this area should be a top priority. The SBD has a working plan for a welcome plaza at this intersection and Parks and Recreation has a draft design to integrate this intersection into the Flat Branch Park and trail area. We propose coming together to integrate and update these two proposals, creating not only a welcome plaza but a more pedestrian friendly and attractive entryway. Options include a brick crosswalk, a median or roundabout, a welcome sign, a plaza area, fountain, or other similar amenities. (NOTE: These improvements are the final phase of our Council-approved Beautification Plan.)
- Encourage a similar development at intersection of Broadway and Waugh.
Although Broadway is not as wide at this intersection, it is a key entrance from Hwy 63 and should also be beautified. We propose improvements to this area that are similar to those at 4th and Broadway, but on a smaller scale. Options include a median or pedestrian “waiting” area, more landscaping, and other amenities.
- Install crosswalks and bulb outs/planters at 5th and Broadway.
The goal is to increase the attractiveness and walkability of the west end of Broadway. The new planters and crosswalk should match the existing ones to ensure a consistent look for Broadway. However, this may be an opportunity for a pilot project—planters with a lower profile which still fulfill the same function of protecting those crossing the street. (NOTE: These improvements are the final phase of our Council-approved Beautification Plan.)
- Continued support of renovated city building and plaza on Broadway.
There are some who advocate building a new city hall in an off-Broadway location, such as Ash. It's key that we keep this important community center on Broadway and that the proposed renovation and expansion (including a community plaza on the corner) is completed.



West and east ends of the street are not pedestrian friendly.

Although the central section of Broadway is high density retail, the edges lack density due to surface lots and setbacks. Many of the uses are also inappropriate. Broadway is four lanes at both ends, yet lacks traffic calming devices or adequate pedestrian crossings.

Proposed solutions:

- Welcome plazas or other improvement at 5th, 4th and Waugh (as outlined above.)
Because stoplights are cannot be placed at these intersections, pedestrians need crosswalks, buffers and medians to aid in crossing four lanes. These amenities will also help slow traffic down considerably. The intersection at Waugh has some of these amenities, the one at 4th has none.
- Consider right turns only or a roundabout on 4th and Broadway.
Currently, cars trying to turn left onto Broadway (or cross it completely) have a difficult time. Not only does this increase the risk of accidents but it discourages pedestrians from crossing. Eliminating the left turn option will help “clear” the street for pedestrians. A roundabout would also help slow the east-west flowing traffic.
- Encourage new development/change of use.
Some parcels on the ends of Broadway are either unused or underused. Surface parking lots, vacant lots, lots with set backs and empty buildings all contribute to the lack of density—and therefore excitement—on Broadway. We need to continue promoting historic preservation, encouraging infill development on vacant spaces, and look to new ways to address problem properties (perhaps with assistance from the city.)

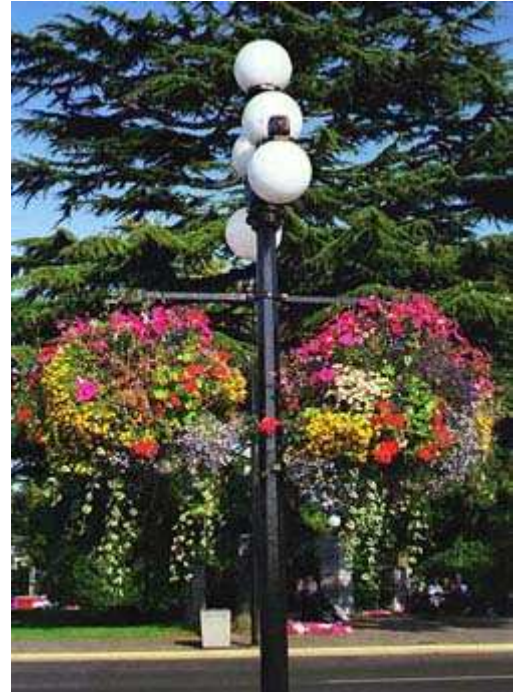


Broadway appears to be primarily concrete and other hard surfaces, with little color and little greenery.

From the perspective of a car, the street is fairly bland. The colorful awnings and signs of 9th Street are not present here and the single color of the canopies overshadows the interesting architectural features and textures of the buildings. The canopies prevent the planting of street trees and shade any potential sidewalk planters.

Proposed solutions:

- Removal of canopy.
As more property owners begin to remove canopies, we cannot become lax about promoting removal incentives. After the “easy” sections are removed, we should consider another round of education and promotion, possible pulling together property owners to discuss removal benefits.
- Council approval of proposed awning and sign regulations.
It’s key that we have regulations which allow for color and individuality. Overall, this diversity will be good for the street—especially after the unremitting gray of the canopy. However, we need to ensure that the new signs or awnings not are so inappropriate they detract from the streetscape. We currently have a working draft of guidelines; finishing this is top priority.
- Replace trees and plant new trees.
We need to work closely with Parks and Recreation to choose and plant trees appropriate to the street. We need species that are tall enough so branches do not block first floor windows. We also need to plant more mature trees so that the street fills in more quickly. We recommend using 4’ x 8’ tree grates rather than the current 3’ x 6’.
- Install hanging baskets on light poles.
Discuss possibility of hanging baskets with Parks and Rec and other city officials. Baskets need to be attractive and able to withstand hot summers. They also need to be high enough to avoid any vandalism. If maintenance issues can be addressed, move forward with installation efforts.
- Install large flower pots mid-block.
Again, maintenance is a key issue here. Pots should be heavy and vandal-resistant (similar to those at Speaker’s Circle on campus.) Because planters are already on the corner, place mid-block for added color and greenery. Take care to place so they do not obstruct a sidewalk cafe.





Activity on sidewalks is limited.

There are limited areas to gather on the sidewalks and Broadway often lacks the liveliness of 9th Street. Much of the activity that does occur is shielded by the canopies, preventing car travelers from seeing the activities and pedestrians from viewing the entire length of the street. In addition, the canopies prevent full use of the extra wide sidewalks.

Proposed solutions:

- Remove canopies and increase sidewalk space.
- Add benches mid-block.
Like planters, benches mid-block will encourage more 9th Street behavior—gathering, strolling, sitting, etc. Benches should be located in a manner that does not obstruct sidewalk cafes.
- Continue to promote sidewalk cafes.
As canopies come down, we need to promote sidewalk cafes as a clear benefit of removal.
- Support the plans to create a plaza in the new city hall.
Although still in the planning stage, this plaza on the corner of 8th and Broadway may contain a fountain and seating area. Combined with FNB's seating across the street, this could become a showpiece and gathering space.



Cars and pedestrians have trouble sharing the streets.

Even with the crosswalk timers, the width of Broadway makes it a more difficult street to cross. Also, cars turning left or right vie for space with pedestrians crossing the street, leading to frustration on the part of drivers and an unsafe situation for pedestrians. This frustration results in both cars and pedestrians rushing through intersections on yellow or red lights.

Proposed solutions:

- Traffic calming devices (such as medians, trees, landscaping) to slow cars before they reach the prime pedestrian strip.
See options for intersections at 4th, 5th and Waugh above.
- Support diagonal crosswalks on Broadway.
Many cities in Europe and the US (ie, Pasadena, CA) have diagonal crosswalks in their downtowns. Lights run in cycles of three—east-west vehicular traffic, north-south vehicular traffic, and pedestrian-only. Pedestrians can cross either way or directly through the center. By separating cars and people, everyone has an easier time. Work with city to determine feasibility of this option or a variation of it.
- Determine feasibility of left turn signals to ease traffic/pedestrian issues.
Problem areas are where 9th and 10th cross Broadway—high numbers of pedestrians will back up traffic on side streets when lead car is turning. Easing drivers' frustration will make it easy for them to share space with pedestrians. Also look into prohibited left turns onto 5th Street and whether this can be changed.

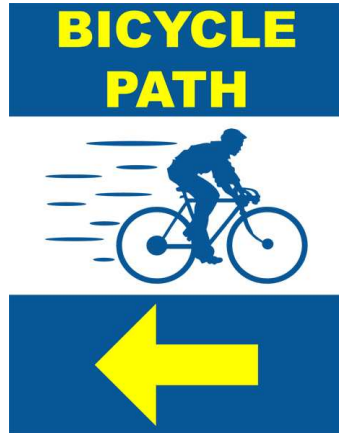


Bike travel is limited on Broadway, particularly in comparison to Ninth Street.

High traffic counts and diagonal parking make biking difficult on Broadway for all but experienced riders. The street is wide but dedicated bike lanes are not feasible. Bike traffic is prohibited on the sidewalks for pedestrian safety but the current signs suggest a more bike-unfriendly atmosphere than is warranted. Finally, there are few places to park a bike on Broadway.

Proposed solutions:

- Work with Pednet and Mayor's Commission on bike travel issues for the District.
We should give these expert groups the lead on this issue, then adapt our amenities to their plan. John Ott and Karl Kruse are on the Mayor's Commission and can work as liaisons if needed.
- Use signage to route tourism or family-related bike travel to a side street (such as Cherry) where traffic and parking obstacles are reduced.
Again, this will likely be part of the planning process cited above but we should work with the Commission and Pednet on ways to highlight bike paths, either through signs, lanes/symbols on the street itself, or other options.
- Consider creative options for bike lanes.
For instance, to avoid the issue of bike/car problems on Broadway, consider placing the bike lane between the sidewalk and the on-street parking, with a curb between the space and the lane. Alternatively, look to using the middle of Broadway as a bike path.
- Remove current "No Biking. No Skateboarding" signs currently located on Broadway.
The signs themselves are very unfriendly and ineffective in preventing this behavior. By encouraging dedicated bike routes through the District, bike travel on sidewalks will likely be reduced. If not, and if the problem increases, consider signs that are smaller, more attractive and friendlier.
- Install bike racks on meters similar to 9th Street. Or, alternatively, look to multiple bike racks in some areas.



The buildings along Broadway look old and unkempt.

The canopies have focused attention on the lower levels of the building, leaving the upper floors in need of repairs such as tuck-pointing, painting and window replacement. Some lower floors have inappropriate or outdated modifications. The majority of traffic on the street is vehicular so any attractive lower levels are not visible to car travelers. Also, the canopies themselves are peeling and graffiti covered, lending an air of disuse to the entire street.

Proposed solutions:

- Continue to encourage canopy removal.
This entails educating owners about the state and federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and other ways to repair and upgrade facades.
- Council approval of proposed sign and awning regulations.



Stores lack visibility and current signage is too small to see from a car.

The canopy hides storefronts and window displays from car travelers, the primary users of the street. Although the current signs work well for pedestrians, their location under the canopy prevents car travelers from locating or discovering Broadway businesses. Finally, what trees are present on the street are so short that they hide the storefronts.

Proposed solutions:

- Encourage canopy removal.
See above.
- Creation of smart sign and awning guidelines.
See above.
- Replace current small trees with taller specimens.
See above.

