



Plaza Midwood Neighborhood Association
PO Box 9394
Charlotte, North Carolina 28299-9394

Jan 22, 2017

TAP Committee and Charlotte City Council Members,

The Plaza Midwood Neighborhood Association would like to express our support for implementing a road diet along the full Parkwood Ave / Plaza corridor (all the way to Matheson), and feel it is critical to separate the bike lanes with a physical barrier.

We appreciate all the great work CDOT has done to assess this corridor, seek our input, and rethink the current street design for the safety of all users. While the proposed changes on Parkwood Ave offer a significant improvement, we are concerned that the plan does not address the safety issues on The Plaza where a large number of the pedestrian accidents have occurred.

The criteria used in CDOT's proposal to rule out The Plaza assumes the accommodation of vehicles is the highest priority, but this does not align to our community's priorities. PMNA puts a higher priority on pedestrian / cyclist safety and encouraging alternative transportation, and thinks the benefits of this road diet would be worth the trade-off. These community priorities combined with the city's Vision Zero goal and Complete Streets policies should make The Plaza a strong candidate for a road diet, despite the normal vehicle thresholds.

In addition, a road diet on this 0.6 mile section of The Plaza would create a safe pedestrian connection to the many small and locally owned businesses that reside there. These businesses even have the potential to see an increased revenue due to the improved walkability, slower traffic, and beautification that comes along with a road diet. The CDOT proposal suggested that we wait and rely on redevelopment to create improved walkability and pedestrian safety here, but that means the existing businesses would likely be lost in the process. Plaza Midwood values our small and locally owned businesses and we encourage you to consider the impacts to them.

Extending the road diet on The Plaza will also give more residents access and likely increase usage of the bike facilities. To make the project fully successful, physical barriers should be included between the vehicle and bike lanes along both Parkwood and The Plaza. Studies show that physically separated (protected) bike lanes increase the comfort level for most users significantly. We feel that this is a critical component to ensure residents of all ages and abilities will be able to use the bike lanes and benefit from the connectivity to the greenway and light rail.

Plaza Midwood is a very active cycling and walking community that welcomes this type of change. With this project, Charlotte has a unique opportunity to challenge our historically auto-centric culture and set the tone for future growth in a community that is ready for it. PMNA urges you to push for the road diet, including protected bike lanes, on both Parkwood and The Plaza.

Sincerely,

Plaza Midwood Neighborhood Association
Renee Bradley, Board Member (2016 President)
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