

CONSIDERATIONS IN FAVOR OF CONSTRUCTING A NEW UNDERPASS CONNECTING KENDALL PARK AND THE DCM LOT

Addressing the combined function of Washington Street vehicular traffic and pedestrian passage is critical to ensuring the overall success of the proposed 5th Avenue Development. The 5th Avenue Development has the potential to be a first-class example of a transit-oriented development for the rest of the country, but the potential of the project will not be fulfilled without complete and safe integration into the existing neighborhoods.

When considering a new pedestrian tunnel along the west side of Washington Street, the following should be given consideration.

- **Infrastructure and long term planning goals.** Municipalities that have constructed pedestrian tunnels in the past 10 years include Lombard, Wheaton, Western Springs, West Chicago, Highland Park, Berkley, Bellwood and Glen Ellyn. Naperville should be on the forefront of this trend and should not forego an opportunity to modernize our infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly future that will be less reliant on automobiles and will emphasize public health and reduced vehicle emissions.
- **Safety.** Multiple pedestrians have already been hit by vehicles on the west side of Washington Street, and one child was killed at the intersection of 5th and Washington. The development will bring more cars and residents into the area. A potential parking garage at the DCM lot will increase the potential for collisions unless a safe alternative to cross the train tracks on the west side of Washington Street is provided.
- **Usage.** Currently, pedestrians utilize Mill Street or the pedestrian crossing options on the east side of Washington Street (i.e., east sidewalk at Washington Street viaduct, Ellsworth Street underpass, Loomis Street at-grade crossing). It is anticipated that a new tunnel connecting Kendall Park and the current DCM lot would redirect existing pedestrian traffic to the new safe, comfortable, and convenient route and increase pedestrian activity in the area. In order to further evaluate the need and benefits associated with the tunnel, an analysis of existing pedestrian activity and future usage of the new tunnel should be completed which could include demographics such as school enrollment, population density, Metra ridership/mode share and future parking locations . This study should capture pedestrian and bicycle activity for residents, students, and commuters.
- **Accessibility.** A new tunnel connecting Kendall Park and the current DCM lot would provide safe and accessible passage for wide segments of Naperville's population, including, but not limited to:
 - Local students who would be able to walk and bike to Washington Jr. High and Naper School, likely reducing the number of parents driving children to school.
 - Bicyclists from the immediate and surrounding neighborhoods.

- Safe and practical access across the train tracks for people with disabilities.
 - A new tunnel with improved bicycle storage options at either end would provide commuters with convenient and streamlined access to the stairs to the train station.
 - Access to local business and amenities on both the north and south side of the train tracks, including but not limited to Kendall Park, the proposed 5th Avenue Development, the downtown shopping and dining district, Jewel and business at Mill and 5th, including DeEtta's, EndureIt Sports, the Alive Center, etc.
- **Alternative to Current Sub-Standard Options.** An open and well-lit tunnel separate from any vehicular traffic would be far superior to the current options to cross the train tracks, for reasons including, but not limited to the following:
 - Mill Street – A very narrow and enclosed sidewalk with concerns regarding safety, lighting, flooding and zero parkway between the street and sidewalk on the south end of the underpass.
 - Washington Street – Steep and narrow sidewalks and pedestrian congestion makes passage difficult for bicyclists, strollers and wheelchairs, and impossible if a pedestrian is walking down the sidewalk from the other direction.
 - Loomis Street – At-grade crossing is unsafe and freight trains can cause unforeseen delays.
 - Naper Blvd. – Impractical and unsafe.
- **Overwhelming Support.** A tunnel connecting Kendall Park to the DCM lot is overwhelmingly supported by Pilgrim's Addition, Naperville Station, WHOA and the Naperville Bicycle Club. A tunnel at this location would provide safety, access and connectivity, and would eliminate the need for re-opening the "cow tunnel" at Webster Street. Connecting Kendall Park to the DCM lot would literally and figuratively bring the neighborhoods together, and would strengthen Naperville's status as a forward-thinking community that cares about its people and its commerce.