

COMMENTS by David Giacalone on the STOCKADE STREETSCAPE PLAN (for the City Council Public Hearing, Dec. 23, 2019)

I thank the Stockade Association Infrastructure Committee for all the work its members put into making this Plan. Much of the Plan is helpful and non-controversial, dealing with the choice of materials for paving, light-poles, and “street furniture”, and selection of new trees. But, as I wrote in [Comments on the Draft Plan](#) last May [use above URL], there are important issues needing further assessment, inclusion or clarification, especially if the Plan becomes City policy. For example:

- The Plan would apparently worsen rather than improve Visual Clutter and Visual Pollution in the Stockade. For example, by turning utility control boxes and other neutral spaces and surfaces into Street Art; and, by failing to recommend fewer banners or to address the growing blight of utility wires massing lower and lower and more entangled as a major part of our streetscape. The Stockade does not need Street Art or Banners to improve its appearance.
- The Plan is too weak on the importance of the dwindling Stockade tree canopy (for the environment, aesthetics, safety, and walkability, and as a tourist attraction). As explained in the posting, the text appears to make it too easy to remove mature trees that are neither dead nor dangerous. (The City Engineer’s extreme policy of removing healthy trees if roots are cut when replacing sidewalks can again be seen with the new sidewalks on Ardsley Road, which has much wider spaces along the curb.*) As a treasured part of any historic district, our mature trees need more protection.
- Without seeking input from Association members and non-member residents, the Plan appears to acquiesce in turning Riverside Park into a bike path, and even making the north half of Washington Avenue part of a bike path (not just a bike lane on the roadway), which would prohibit the use of motorized vehicles from the Historic Society to the River on Washington Avenue.
- The Plan’s safety recommendations should include requesting stop signs at various intersections (including Wash. Ave. at Union and at Front St.), and the use of “No Parking from here to Corner” signs to combat the wider-taller vehicles parking too close to intersections and crosswalks, blocking the sightlines for pedestrians and drivers.
- The recommendation that “tees” be painted in the roadway along the curbs to delineate parking spaces may result in fewer spaces.
- For fuller discussion, with photos, see <https://tinyurl.com/StockadePlan>