



**EAST
POINT
BREEZE
NEIGHBORS**

www.epbneighbors.org

February 10, 2022

Statement on the Washington Avenue Repaving Project

Regarding repaving and restriping Washington Avenue, East Point Breeze Neighbors (EPBN) supports a compromise position that addresses residents' concerns and is viable for Washington Avenue business owners.

EPBN board members hold a range of personal perspectives on the issue of lane configuration. Board members view the outcome of the City's extra outreach as successful because the process included voices from historically underrepresented groups and because two compromise positions were reached.

Background

From April 2021 to February 2022, members of EPBN participated in working group meetings led by OTIS about the repaving project and proposed lane reductions on Washington Avenue. Other meeting attendees included members of interest groups and RCOs, residents of areas north and south of Washington Avenue and east and west of Broad Street, and Washington Avenue business owners. Many different perspectives were presented.

These meetings were necessary because, [as the City has acknowledged](#), neighbors in areas that have been historically underrepresented in city planning decisions did not have access to the digital survey that occurred in 2020. Equity demands that more time and attention be dedicated to listening to these voices precisely because of this long history of underrepresentation and exclusion.

All people at the working group meetings advocated for repaving and for improved safety measures, although people differed on what types of safety measures would be most desirable and possible.

At a community meeting on February 5, 2022, OTIS announced that the City is only considering [modified versions of the 4-lane and mixed layouts](#). The 3-lane only and 5-lane (current) configurations discussed at working group meetings are no longer under consideration. Thanks to new perspectives introduced by the inclusion of a greater range of voices, OTIS ran simulations and determined that the 3-lane only option was not viable. For example, if the Vine Street Expressway were to again be closed by flooding, the resulting gridlock would paralyze traffic on Washington Avenue and adjacent streets. Keeping the current 5-lane configuration, a position advocated by many, is also considered not viable.

Observations

EPBN acknowledges that compromise can be difficult and recognizes that some proponents of the 3-lane only and 5-lane (current) configurations are disappointed with the two available options.

EPBN is pleased that the City, through OTIS, acknowledged that the original survey process was not inclusive and that future community engagements must be more inclusive. In the future, the City must use new processes that begin with centering those people who do not regularly have a seat at the table.

We appreciate the time and effort that OTIS put into listening to voices that they had not previously included.

We appreciate the time and effort of neighbors and business owners who contributed their voices to this process and who collaborated to produce points of compromise.