DATE February 25, 2011

to Members of the Transportation and Environment Committee:
Linda Koop (Chair), Sheffie Kadane (Vice Chair), Jerry R. Allen, Tennell Atkins,
Carolyn R. Davis, Vonciel Jones Hill, Delia Jasso, Pauline Medrano, Ron Natinsky

SUBJECT The Better Block Project

At the Transportation and Environment Committee Meeting on Monday, February 28,
2011, the Street Space Collaborative Group will brief the committee on “The Better
Block Project - The Living Charrette”.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Jill Jordan, P.E.
Assistant City Manager

C: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
Mary K. Suhr, City Manager
Thomas P. Perkins, Jr., City Attorney
Deborah Watkins, City Secretary
Craig Kinton, City Auditor
Judge C. Victor Landrie, Administrative Judge
Ryan S. Evans, First Assistant City Manager
A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
Forest Turner, Assistant City Manager
Jeanne Chipperfield, Chief Financial Officer
Edward Scott, Director, Controller’s Office
Frank Librio, Public Information Office
Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager – Council Office
Theresa O’Donnell, Director, Sustainable Development and Construction

“Dallas-Together, we do it better”
The Better Block Project

“The Living Charrette”

Andrew Howard, A.I.C.P.

Jason Roberts

City of Dallas
Transportation and Environment Committee
February 28, 2011
Before...
After the transformation:
Tyler Street becomes a Place
ART IN OCTOBER
CELEBRATING THE DALLAS ARTS DISTRICT
“The two most inspiring movements in transportation are Cyclovia and Better Block.

- Andy Clarke, League of American Bicyclists

“Better Block envelopes thirty years of research and experience in creating great public space into a weekend experience.”

Fred Kent, Project for Public Spaces
Michael Walker: We can have ‘better blocks’ all year if we make a few key changes

Published 18 February 2011 11:06 AM

Jane Jacobs, urban activist and author of The Death and Life of Great American Cities, once said, “Cities are like bodies, and streets are the arteries.” As Dallas continues to grow and redevelop, it is important to remember this comparison that our streets are, in essence, the lifeblood of our city.

Most of the time, we view our roadways in Dallas as nothing more than massive arteries pumping tens of thousands of cars from point A to point B or, conversely, clogged with congestion, hardly bringing life to their surroundings. Single-use roadways — only designed for the movement of cars — can literally strangle the life out of the neighborhoods that surround them. It is only when we create streetscapes that are attractive to a multitude of users — automobiles, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians — that we start to
Gourmet food trucks spice up the Dallas Arts District

By SHERRY JACOBSON / The Dallas Morning News
sjacobson@dallasnews.com
Published 01 November 2010 08:54 AM

What was that good smell coming from downtown Dallas on Sunday afternoon?

Maybe it was the tangy Korean BBQ or the curried pumpkin soup wafting sweetly from the Arts District, where five food trucks made a tasty but rare foray into downtown Dallas.

Parked along Flora Street between the Dallas Art Museum and the Meyerson Symphony Center, the
Broad Ambitions
Residents promote, celebrate Broad Avenue revival

JONATHAN DEVIN | Special to The Daily News

Its title may sound like a Woody Allen movie, but an innovative, two-day street festival in a resurfacing Midtown neighborhood may draw in new businesses via bike traffic.

“A New Face for an Old Broad,” to be held from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, will temporarily exhibit Broad Avenue as a connector between the terminus of the Shelby Farms Greenline and Overton Park.

“It’s easier for any of us to imagine a local food co-op, farmers’ market or a movie theater down Broad Avenue with vendors from Enchanted Florist to prepare for this coming fall’s “All Fours Pub.”

Sarah Newstok of Livable Memphis walks down Broad Avenue with vendors from Enchanted Florist to prepare for this coming fall’s “All Fours Pub.”
A Better Block on Broad

Borrowing the idea from Bike Friendly Oak Cliff and their A Better Block Project, advocates at Livable Memphis temporarily redesigned Broad Street to show what the block could look like if transformed into a walkable, bikeable art district destination. With assistance from an Advocacy Advance grant and city support, Livable Memphis temporarily re-made the street with more pedestrian space, bike lanes, traffic calming and temporary pop-up art, coffee and bike shops.

“The temporary redesign of Broad Avenue is a physical representation of how city streets can be designed as safe places for all road users,” says Memphis’ Bikeway/Pedestrian Coordinator, Kyle Wagenschutz, “the ability to experience world-class bicycle facilities and high-quality pedestrian walkways helped over 13,000 people develop a greater sense of clarity about what the vision for Broad Avenue is.”

While such commercial districts already exist in Cooper-Young, Overton Square and near the University of Memphis, Broad Street’s connection to the new Memphis Greenline makes it particular accessible by bike. In a city previously known for it’s disregard for cyclists, advocates and the city’s new (and first!) bicycle coordinator are making great strides.

Efforts like these can show the desire for changes to street design and the impacts they can have. With the high turn-out
Projects aims to offer a preview of permanent makeover for Mount Rainier area

By Daniel Leaderman
The Gazette
Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mount Rainier officials and business owners envision transforming a city block littered with vacant storefronts into one with art galleries or cafes with outdoor seating, plants lining the sidewalks and musicians performing -- at least for a day.
Building a better block
By LISA GRAY Copyright 2010 Houston Chronicle
June 25, 2010, 4:36PM

"It was this punk-rock, stick-it-to-the-man thing," says Jason Roberts, the ringleader of the Better Block Project. "We flouted every law we could."

Roberts, an indie-rock musician and bicycle activist, lives in Oak Cliff, a south Dallas neighborhood built around a streetcar line, which gives it a bone structure similar to the Houston Heights. But Oak Cliff's reputation is much rougher. In the '70s, when Oak Cliff's schools were desegregated, many of its white residents fled to north Dallas. These days, most of the neighborhood's commercial streets are a rundown jumble of tire stores and taquerias, a nonplace you drive through as fast as you can.

Oak Cliff is, in other words, like much of Houston.

"Dallas and Houston are both the same way," Roberts says.

"They're good for cars. They suck for people."

Roberts wanted Oak Cliff to be like ... Europe.


He wanted, in other words, the kind of city that Dallas ordinances discourage. So on April 10, he and a dozen of his artsy friends did their best to stick it to the man.

They took control of a ratty, semi-abandoned block in Oak Cliff. And — in your face, city council pigs! - they made that block a really nice place to hang out. A place with coffee and pastries and gift shops.

"We were hoping the police would shut us down," says Roberts. "We wanted to get that on film."

Speedy wasteland
How To: Build a Better Block

By: Allison Arieff of GOOD

June 15th, 2010

2 COMMENTS
Better Blocks

- Memphis, TN
- Oyster Bay, NJ
- Waco, TX
- Ft. Worth, TX
- Houston, TX
- San Antonio, TX
- Miami, FL
- Mount Rainer, MD
- Cleveland, OH
• South Dallas Based, MBE, WBE
• Planning, Engineering and Community Relations
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