

Statement regarding the Franklin Boulevard Redesign

Councilmember Jenny Spencer

February 12, 2022

Upon further review of the [Franklin Boulevard Rehabilitation project](#) that was presented to the community last summer, I found that I had lingering questions. Those questions included:

- Had the following City Departments and Divisions reviewed the project and provided their consent and approval?
 - Public Safety
 - Police
 - Fire
 - EMS
 - Public Works
 - Snow Removal
 - Waste Removal
- Are there any other communities in the U.S. with streets that include a series of seven (7) traversable mini-roundabouts?
- Was the City prepared to assume maintenance responsibilities for the traversable mini-roundabouts, since larger vehicles will consistently mount the roundabouts to negotiate left turns?
- Without raised splitter islands, would north-south traffic be calmed sufficiently to safely enter intersections with the traversable mini-roundabouts?
- What are the on-street parking reduction impacts associated with the tapering that leads into the traversable mini-roundabouts, as well as the off-set crosswalks?
- Was the community aware that at each intersection with a traversable mini-roundabout, crosswalks would be set back about 20' on all 4 sides from their current locations?
- Could speed tables be integrated into the project up front, rather than at a later date - especially on the stretches of Franklin Blvd. west of West 65th Street?

In November and December 2021 and continuing through January 2022, I engaged in internal conversations with the City's office of Capital Projects as well as Traffic and Planning to explore these questions. In addition, I suggested that the City consider delaying the Franklin project by a year in order to (a) re-examine the number of traversable mini-roundabouts and (b) consider adding in speed tables and/or speed cushions up front, rather than at a later date.

My Cleveland City Council colleague Kerry McCormack (Ward 3) and City project leaders support the project in its current form. Their concerns around delaying the project include: difficulty with Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) coordination; challenges with sequencing an upcoming Dominion Energy gas line replacement on Franklin; and the cost of inflation that would make the project more expensive next year. Partners also believe that the current project represents a substantial improvement to Franklin, and that the community will enjoy important traffic calming impacts in alignment with the City's [Vision Zero](#) initiative. In addition, [the commitment made in the memo](#) previously issued by Councilman McCormack and me still stands: the project will be evaluated one year after completion to ensure that traffic calming has been achieved. Therefore, the project will proceed on its current timeline of going to bid this year (2022), with a 2023 completion.

(continued on next page)

For those of us who are not engineers or traffic calming experts (like myself), I have found the details of the Franklin rehabilitation project to be surprisingly complex. The City will update the project website (www.westfranklincl.com) with new information - for example, the parking assessment that shows a total of 101 on-street spaces will be removed on Franklin and side streets due to installation of the traversable mini-roundabouts. The City is also developing and will execute a communications plan to help residents understand the changes coming to the street and how to navigate them.

I believe it is important that residents - especially those who have not participated in the community process to date - be made aware of these details. Please share the link to this memo with others, or contact me with questions at jspencer@clevelandcitycouncil.org.

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