

AGENDA
CITY OF HARTFORD
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
6:30 P.M.

1. Call to order.
2. Roll call.
3. Public comment period.
4. Western Hills West Homeowners concerns. (Memorandum attached)
5. Parking along First, Second and Third Streets (Memorandum attached)
6. Adjournment

NOTE: "PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES REQUIRING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ATTENDANCE AT THE MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK AT LEAST ONE (1) BUSINESS DAY PRIOR TO THE MEETING."

"MEMBERS OF THE COMMON COUNCIL MAY ATTEND THE ABOVE MEETING. PURSUANT TO STATE EX REL. BADKE V. GREENDALE VILLAGE BOARD; 173 WIS 2D 553, 494 N.W. 2D 408 (1993) SUCH ATTENDANCE MAY BE CONSIDERED A MEETING OF THE COMMON COUNCIL. THIS NOTICE IS GIVEN SO THAT MEMBERS OF THE COMMON COUNCIL MAY ATTEND THE MEETING WITHOUT VIOLATING THE OPEN MEETING LAW."

MEMORANDUM

To: Public Works Committee
From: Jason W. Schall, City Engineer 
Date: 9/17/2020
Re: Western Hills West Homeowners Concerns

The homeowners of the Western Hills West subdivision submitted a letter during the public comment portion of the August 25th Common Council meeting. I have attached the letter for your review. They have several concerns regarding vehicular and pedestrian traffic in their subdivision and would like the City to consider their concerns. After reviewing the list of concerns, the comments from staff are listed below numbered according to the letter submitted.

1. There are "Truck Route" signs posted at the intersection of S. Wacker Drive and W. Monroe Avenue marking the truck route. There is no way of knowing why trucks are turning around at this intersection other than trying to stop one of the drivers and ask them.
2. Pedestrian (children) safety concerns.
 - a. Crosswalks could be placed at the intersections mentioned. However, signs are not required for crosswalks at intersections. A study with traffic counts at the intersections would need to be completed in order to determine if signs are warranted at these intersections. Lights for the pedestrian crossings could be expensive. I do not believe a study of these intersections will reveal enough traffic to warrant signs or lights.
 - b. 4 way stops should only be considered after an engineering study has been completed at the intersections. There are many criteria that should be considered before installing a multi-way stop.
 - c. Speed of vehicles is an enforcement issue. The Police Department could be asked to monitor the speeds along S. Wacker Drive. There are speed limit signs on S. Wacker Drive. I do not think additional signs will make a difference. Every driver should know the speed limit within a city limits is 25 m.p.h. unless posted otherwise. A lower speed limit is not recommended unless the street is in a school zone or located within the boundaries of a park. "Pedestrian Crossing" signs are used to indicate crossings where motorists would not expect them. Intersections are locations where pedestrian crossings are expected.
 - d. S. Wacker Drive has always been designed as an arterial roadway. It is extra wide and there are no driveways located along most of the roadway. It has always been meant to carry this type of traffic. Meeting agendas are always posted and all residents of the City can attend any meeting to voice their opinion on agenda items. The City does not notify every resident individually about every decision made.
3. There would be an expense to planting trees and this should be budgeted if the Committee would like to entertain this request.

August 25, 2020

Western Hills West Homeowners Concerns
Re Truck Route on S Wacker and W Monroe that runs through our subdivision.

As Homeowners of Western Hills West, we are asking the Public Works Committee to consider our concerns regarding the truck route.

We understand your protocol does not allow us to discuss at this meeting, but we are asking you to place us on the agenda of a future meeting.

Concerns:

1. Provide additional signs along the route to state "Truck Route". Per the homeowners the semis come to the end of Wacker at the stop sign at W Monroe Ave and have no idea where to go or why they are in a residential neighborhood. Semis then back up down the road or attempt to make a complete turn and go back down Wacker. Residents feel if the trucks are routed here, they should be directed as such.
2. Homeowners serious concern is the children in this subdivision are not provided any bus transportation to school. Each child either walks or rides their bike to the schools. Here are a couple options from homeowners that may avoid danger to children crossing the street and walking/riding bikes along these streets.
 - a. Could a cross walk be placed at Willow Lane and Wacker Rd at both sides of Willow Ln crossing Wacker? And at Wacker and W Monroe intersection?
 - a. Lines provided at the intersections for children to walk in
 - b. Possible light switch to flash when children are walking across the intersection
 - b. Possibility of a 4 way stop sign at Willow Lane and Wacker & Wacker and W Monroe -- along with the cross walk.
 - c. Addressing the speed limit. It is 25 miles per hour, but most trucks/vehicles barreling through do not follow the speed limit
 - a. More signage with speed limit
 - b. Lower speed limit.
 - c. Children crossing signs
 - d. When this was decided as a truck route -- why were none of the homeowners informed or involved in the decision making? Really any input and help to maintain the integrity of this subdivision along with the safety concern for their children would be appreciated.
3. Would the City consider planting street trees along Wacker to increase the homeowner's privacy and to provide a noise barrier?

Once again, we are very concerned for the safety of our children and maintaining the integrity/values of our homes.

Thank you for your consideration.
Western Hills West Homeowners

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MEMORANDUM

To: Public Works Committee
From: Jason W. Schall, City Engineer 
Date: 9/17/2020
Re: Parking along First Street, Second Street, and Third Street

First Street, Second Street, and Third Street from E. Wisconsin Street to Highland Avenue are narrow streets. Currently parking is allowed on both sides of most sections of these streets. When vehicles are parked directly across from each other, it is difficult for vehicles to drive between them. This is especially true for emergency vehicles, snow plows, and garbage trucks. A picture is attached showing how narrow the streets get and with vehicles parked directly across from each other. The picture shows a DPW pickup trying to pass, which is much smaller than an emergency vehicle. Garbage trucks have had to back down the street because they could not safely pass between parked vehicles. During winter months with snow on either side of the road, the street becomes even more narrow and difficult to pass. Snow plows have also had to back down streets because they cannot pass.

Staff have discussed possible solutions to this issue. The only real option is to eliminate parking on one side of the street. The Fire Chief, Director of Public Works, and myself are all in agreement that this is the only option. The street right-of-way is too narrow to allow building the street any wider without acquiring property or removing sidewalk. Removing parking will most likely upset the residents along these streets. Staff is requesting feedback from the Public Works Committee about how to proceed. Would the Committee like to consider removing parking from one side of the street?

If this is something the Committee would like to consider, the recommendation is to bring this back to a future Public Works Committee meeting after sending letters to the residents along the streets informing them about the proposal and giving them a chance to voice their concerns. This would also allow staff and the Committee to explain the safety concerns with allowing parking on both sides of the streets. Hopefully this would then also eliminate many phone calls to staff and Council members if parking is eliminated without notifying residents.

