

Oakland Development Activities Meeting

July 31, 2019

Hosted by OPDC at 294 Semple Street

Project: Forbes Avenue street furniture

Presenter: Mike Madden, InnovatePGH and Nina Chase, Merit Chase Landscape design firm

The presenters are seeking feedback to refine plans moving forward. See slideshow for proposal.

This project is a pilot. They will be replacing trash receptacles with a different type, not installing new ones. There will be no different work expected from city crews.

Q: Has the university offered their property for seating?

A: Yes, we are discussing plans with them. We decided to focus on this part of the business district to activate the space.

Q: Will the furniture be blue and gold?

A: We are open to various ideas.

Q: Will you coordinate with bus stops to support transit service?

A: This will be smaller in scale than new bus stops.

Q: How will you address accessibility issues? Many sidewalks are narrow in places.

A: Presenter reviewed a slide to describe things on the sidewalk and how designer is working on that. Everything will be consolidated into a designated furniture zone. Having everything together in one space will allow a path for walking. There will be movable seating between Atwood and Meyran because there is more space there.

Q: Is there any opportunity for better vegetation? Vaults are an issue.

A: There is not much opportunity for many trees because of underground utilities and vaults. Best solution is to increase the number of planters on the street. They will screen and buffer from traffic. Different planting pallet.

Q: Will you need a special permit to put furniture on the sidewalk?

A: We need approval from Art Commission.

Q: Will the furniture be skateboard proof?

A: Materials can withstand heavy use. Block bench comes with option for arm rest, planters are steel.

The Art Commission meeting will take place at the end of August. Installation is planned for spring 2020.

Q: How do you plan to address graffiti that may occur?

A: Powder coated steel is good material, as it is not completely flat. Graffiti removal is part of maintenance strategy for this.

Q: Are you worried about people stealing movable table and chairs?

A: OBID learned from theft incidents of items at Forbes and Bouquet plaza. We may plan to take them in each night.

Q: Air quality?

A: Strategic with placement regarding traffic.

Q: Sennot Square sidewalk under the overhang would be a great place for seating/tables. Planters a great idea.

Q: What is the process of presenting this to Art Commission? Will you present this slideshow or present more information?

A: We will present more detailed scale drawings with measurements for the commission, but these are the pieces we will present.

Q: What about liability for businesses in the case of vandalism, for example, using items to break business windows.

A: I believe that OBID will carry the insurance. We will check.

Q: Cameras everywhere in Oakland