

THE RETURN TO TWO WAY STREETS – COPIES OF RESEARCH ARTICLES
PREPARED FOR “THE SIDNEY TOURISM IMPROVEMENT GROUP” (STIG).



ADVANTAGES OF TWO-WAY STREETS

- Generally slower traffic speeds therefore the crashes can be less severe.
- No lane changing crashes and generally fewer red light running crashes.
- Eliminates indirect routes, which reduces travel distance (and potentially fuel consumption)
- On-street parking arrangement more traditional and expected (as opposed to having it on both sides in same direction).
- Creates direct emergency vehicle access to and from downtown.
- Two-way streets create a less confusing circulation pattern that is more intuitive to all users, particularly visitors.
- Provides more direct access and access options to destinations.
- Traffic speeds are generally lower and therefore can contribute to a friendlier pedestrian environment.
- Can improve pedestrian perception of the street as less of a barrier.
- Allows equal exposure of all adjacent businesses to passing motorists.
- Potentially allows for more traditional streetscape.

***“One Way Or The Other?” Ward, Nicholson and Koorey presented to:
The Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand, April 2013***



MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

Downtown Revitalisation Case Study

Produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Provincial Planning Policy Branch and Municipal Finance Policy Branch

Government of Ontario. Winter 2011



IT'S A TWO-WAY STREET

Location: Vancouver, Washington state, U.S.A. (population: 164,500)

Program: Downtown revitalization

Tool: Street conversion from a one-way to two-way street

Context: A great deal of time, effort and investment were being put into revitalizing the city's downtown, which had been in decline for many decades. While there were a number of successes – restored parks, a new hotel, nearby shopping centre and mixed-use buildings– Vancouver's Main Street, formerly the primary commercial centre, remained stagnant. That is, until city council opted for a simple and inexpensive solution – convert Main Street from a one-way to a two-way street. With a number of revitalization projects in place, the addition of yellow paint, new signage and traffic lights changed the street ambience almost overnight. The number of people visiting Main Street increased significantly and new businesses opened. Main Street merchants are happy with the result. According to Vancouver's Downtown Association, which added 32 new members in 2009, "the two-way street not only reduces confusion for people visiting downtown, but more importantly, it's one of the catalysts facilitating people's re-entry into the area and helping to revive a once lively urban life."

Contact:

Ms. Lee Rafferty, Executive Director

Vancouver's Downtown Association

811 Main Street, Vancouver, WA 98660

Phone: 360-258-1129. Email: director@vdausa.org



Extract from: “One-Way To Two-Way Street Conversions As A Preservation And Downtown Revitalization Tool”: A Thesis Presented to the Graduate School of Clemson University and the Graduate School of the College of Charleston

“As a vehicle stops at or enters an intersection the driver has excellent visibility of the storefronts on the far side of the cross street. On one-way street networks, precious storefronts exposure is lost when one direction of travel is removed, causing one side of every cross street to be partially eclipsed from view”.

Even opponents of one-way to two-way conversions admit that two-way streets may provide better visibility based on the type of business. “Specialty stores that rely on impulse sales and depend on high margins per sale do better on two-way streets, since only half their potential customers would see them on a one-way couplet.” The stores along most small historic commercial streets are exactly the type of businesses that do better on two-way streets. Furthermore, there is evidence that very successful nationally known chain retailers of coffee and books choose locations on two-way streets because of increased exposure and accessibility. The direction of travel on a street greatly influences the exposure of storefronts and signs to vehicular traffic”.

Table 3.1
Partial List of Municipalities that have converted One-way to Two-way Streets.

Alma, Michigan Lansing, Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan Lubbock, Texas
Anniston, Alabama Miami, Florida
Baton Rouge, Louisiana Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Berkeley, California Minneapolis, Minnesota
Buffalo, New York New Haven, Connecticut
Charleston, South Carolina North Little Rock, Arkansas
Colorado Spring, Colorado Portland, Oregon
Dallas, Texas Sacramento, California
Danville, Illinois San Francisco, California
Denver, Colorado San Jose, California
Dubuque, Iowa Sheridan, Wyoming
Gardner, Massachusetts Toledo, Ohio
Great Falls, Montana Wailuku, Hawaii
Green Bay, Wisconsin Walla Walla, Washington
Hickory, North Carolina Washington, Missouri
Holyoke, New Jersey West Palm Beach, Florida
Lafayette, Indiana Woonsocket, Rhode Island



One-way or two-way streets more efficient? It depends on what you measure

Posted on February 11th, 2013 in [News](#)

By [Chris Spahr](#)

The debate over one-way versus two-way streets has been ongoing for more than half a century in American cities. Counter to prevailing engineering wisdom, a [new study](#) finds two-way streets may be more efficient, if one is measuring getting people to their destinations.

Many [cities](#) have recognized that two-way streets provide substantial benefits to downtown neighbourhoods for a variety of reasons:

- **Two-way streets are better for local businesses that depend heavily on their visibility to passersby.**
- **Two-way streets have been found to be safer than one-way streets. One-way streets correlate with higher speeds and decreased levels of driver attention. Pedestrians prefer crossing two-way streets since drivers tend to travel more slowly on them, and vehicular conflicts are more predictable.**
- **Two-way streets are much less confusing for downtown visitors than one-way streets. Visitors driving in a two-way grid network can easily approach their destination from any direction.**

Various cities, including [Dallas](#), [Denver](#), [Sacramento](#), [Tampa](#), and [Cedar Rapids](#) have converted or are currently considering the conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets.

While there has been much agreement on the economic, safety, and liveability [benefits](#) of two-way streets, traditionally traffic engineers and transportation planners have felt that one-way streets serve traffic more efficiently by allowing for a higher vehicle moving capacity. However, [Vikash Gayah](#), of Penn State University, argues that the concept of “trip-serving capacity” is a better metric of network efficiency than vehicle moving capacity.

Gayah defines trip-serving capacity as the maximum rate at which people reach their destinations. While current research and conventional wisdom suggest that one-way street networks are more efficient than their two-way counterparts, this study shows that one-way networks are sometimes less efficient because they restrict the rate at which people reach their destinations.

Using the new metric of trip-serving capacity, Gayah [compared](#) one-way streets to several types of two-way streets (those with full left-turn lanes, those with left-turn pockets, and those that banned left turns). The study found that for short trip lengths (e.g., in small cities), the additional time spent traversing street grids associated with one-way networks created a lower trip-serving capacity than that of two-way networks. Over longer distances (e.g., in larger cities) one-way streets perform better but never exceed the trip capacity of two-way streets with banned left turns. In other words, the two-way network with banned left turns *always* has a higher trip-serving capacity even when trips are long.

Gayah encourages urban planners and traffic engineers to examine his trip-serving capacity concept when considering converting to two-way streets. “Since residents prefer two-way street networks for a variety of reasons, converting a one-way street network to a two-way operation can improve both efficiency and liveability of cities.”

[Chris Spahr](#) is a Graduate Assistant with SSTI.



Complete Streets Spark Economic Revitalization

More than a decade ago, streets in downtown West Palm Beach were designed so drivers could quickly pass through without stopping. The properties downtown were 80% vacant, the city was \$10 million in debt, and street crime was common. In an effort to revitalize a barren downtown, the mayor looked first to transportation investments, such as pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, and streetscaping. Today, West Palm Beach boasts a booming, safe downtown with an 80 percent commercial occupancy rate. Commercial and residential property values along the improved corridors have soared.

Incomplete streets restrict economic development

In today's landscape, retail and commercial development is often accessible only by automobile along roads that have become jammed even on weekends. Potential shoppers are left with no choice but to fill up the tank and drive. For many, that can mean staying home. This is particularly true for seniors; research shows that "half of all non-drivers age 65 and over – 3.6 million Americans – stay home on a given day because they lack transportation." The economy cannot reach its maximum potential when buyers are unable to reach retail destinations. Lack of transportation options also affects the workforce. In a 2006 Airport Corridor Transportation Association report on employment centres outside Pittsburgh, 30% of employers responded that transportation was the number one barrier to hiring and retaining qualified workers. Although bus routes serve a portion of the centre, more than 50% of employees responded that there was no bus stop convenient to home or work. Other employees noted that they didn't use public transportation because bus stops in the area had no sidewalks to safely reach their destination. The lack of a network of complete streets in and around this activity centre makes it difficult to attract and retain employees. Incomplete streets hinder economic growth and can result in lost business, lower productivity, and higher employee turnover.

Complete Streets create viable, liveable communities

Creating infrastructure for non-motorized transportation and lowering automobile speeds by changing road conditions can improve economic conditions for both business owners and residents. When Valencia Street in San Francisco's Mission District slimmed its traffic lanes to slow down cars and accommodate other users, merchants reported the street changes enhanced the area. Nearly 40 percent of merchants reported increased sales, and 60 percent reported more area residents shopping locally due to reduced travel time and convenience. Overall, two-thirds of respondents described the increased levels of pedestrian and bicycling activity and other street changes improved

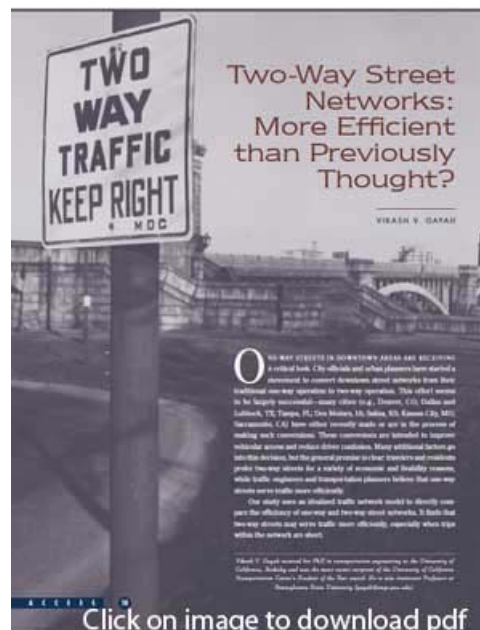
business and sales. A network of complete streets is more safe and appealing to residents and visitors, which is also good for retail and commercial development. Street design that is inclusive of all modes of transportation, where appropriate, not only improves conditions for existing businesses, but also is a proven method for revitalizing an area and attracting new development. Washington, DC's Barracks Row was experiencing a steady decline of commercial activity due to uninviting sidewalks, lack of streetlights, and speeding traffic. After many design improvements, which included new patterned sidewalks, more efficient public parking, and new traffic signals, Barrack's Row attracted 44 new businesses and 200 new jobs.

Economic activity on this three-quarter mile strip (measured by sales, employees, and number of pedestrians) has more than tripled since the inception of the project. Complete streets also boost the economy by increasing property values, including residential properties, as generally homeowners are willing to pay more to live in walkable communities. In Chicago, homes within a half-mile of a suburban rail station on average sell for \$36,000 more than houses located further away. Similarly in Dallas, the new public transportation rail line helped spur retail sales in downtown Dallas, which experienced sales growth of 33 percent, while the sales in the rest of the city grew 3 percent.



Two-Way Street Networks: More Efficient than Previously Thought? by Vikash V. Gayah

One-way streets in downtown areas are receiving a critical look. City officials and urban planners have started a movement to convert downtown street networks from their traditional one-way operation to two-way operation. This effort seems to be largely successful—many cities (e.g., Denver, CO; Dallas and Lubbock, TX; Tampa, FL; Des Moines, IA; Salina, KS; Kansas City, MO; Sacramento, CA) have either recently made or are in the process of making such conversions. These conversions are intended to improve vehicular access and reduce driver confusion. **Many additional factors go into this decision, but the general premise is clear: travellers and residents prefer two-way streets for a variety of economic and liveability reasons, while traffic engineers and transportation planners believe that one-way streets serve traffic more efficiently.** Our study uses an idealized traffic network model to directly compare the efficiency of one-way and two-way street networks. It finds that two-way streets may serve traffic more efficiently, especially when trips within the network are short.





The Return of the Two-Way Street

Why the double-yellow stripe is making a comeback in downtowns.

BY: [Alan Ehrenhalt](#) | December 2009

Over the past couple of decades, Vancouver, Washington, has spent millions of dollars trying to revitalize its downtown, and especially the area around Main Street that used to be the primary commercial centre. Just how much the city has spent isn't easy to determine. But it's been an ambitious program. Vancouver has totally refurbished a downtown park, subsidized condos and apartment buildings overlooking it and built a new downtown Hilton hotel. Some of these investments have been successful, but they did next to nothing for Main Street itself. Through most of this decade, the street remained about as dreary as ever. Then, a year ago, the city council tried a new strategy. Rather than wait for the \$14 million more in state and federal money it was planning to spend on projects on and around Main Street, it opted for something much simpler. It painted yellow lines in the middle of the road, took down some signs and put up others, and installed some new traffic lights. In other words, it took a one-way street and opened it up to two-way traffic.

The merchants on Main Street had high hopes for this change. But none of them were prepared for what actually happened following the changeover on November 16, 2008. In the midst of a severe recession, Main Street in Vancouver seemed to come back to life almost overnight. Within a few weeks, the entire business community was celebrating. "We have twice as many people going by as they did before," one of the employees at an antique store told a local reporter. The chairman of the Vancouver Downtown Association, Lee Coulthard, sounded more excited than almost anyone else. "It's like, wow," he exclaimed, "why did it take us so long to figure this out?" A year later, the success of the project is even more apparent. Twice as many cars drive down Main Street every day, without traffic jams or serious congestion. The merchants are still happy. "One-way streets should not be allowed in prime downtown retail areas," says Rebecca Ocken, executive director of Vancouver's Downtown Association. "We've proven that."

The debate over one-way versus two-way streets has been going on for more than half a century now in American cities, and it is far from resolved even yet. But the evidence seems to suggest that the two-way side is winning. A growing number of cities, including big ones such as Minneapolis, Louisville and Oklahoma City, have converted the traffic flow of major streets to two-way or laid out plans to do so. There has been virtually no movement in the other direction.

Minneapolis opened its First Street and Hennepin Street commercial areas to two-way traffic on October 11, hoping to pump some life into a stagnant corridor. It's too early to draw any firm conclusions, but the early responses were mixed. First Street is home to several nightclubs, and some of them complained that bringing in two-way traffic made it difficult for bands with large trucks to park. "The city has royally screwed us," one club manager declared. The city basically shrugged those complaints off. Its planners claimed the club owners were making self-interested arguments that ignored the common benefits of a healthier street life. Before World War II, one-way commercial streets were pretty rare in the United States. People frequented downtowns in which buses and streetcars negotiated two-way traffic, and they got off to shop at the stores that lined both sides of the street. Those who drove could park right along the sidewalk.

After the war, a couple of things happened. Civil defence planners, taking seriously the threat of nuclear attack, worried that residents trying to escape would create gridlock on the crowded two-way streets, imprisoning themselves in smouldering cities and causing many more casualties. The arterial streets were the only escape routes they had. Making them one-way, on an alternating basis, would speed things up and save lives. Or so it was thought. But atomic bombs were only one factor that made civic leaders and transportation planners partial to one-way streets in the post-war years. They were worried about congestion, period. Some thought that the frustrations of moving through downtown the old-fashioned way were driving people to do their shopping in the suburbs. More mobility might mean more customers. Others, in those pre-Interstate days, cared mainly about the satisfaction of the suburbanites themselves. These people were using the arterial roads to commute in and out of the city, and there was little dispute that one-way streets could get them back and forth more quickly.

By the 1970s, though, there were new urban realities. Large portions of the Interstate Highway System were built, so nobody would have to flee the Soviets on gridlocked city streets. More important, downtown retail customers were shopping at suburban malls no matter what the local chamber of commerce did to try and stop them. Downtown had begun its long, familiar decline. The one-way streets fashioned in the 1950s and 1960s were still pretty good at whisking people out of central cities, but far fewer area residents wanted to enter the cities in the first place. Many downtown one-way streets became miniature speedways that served largely to frighten anyone who had the eccentric idea of strolling down the sidewalk. Anyone who travels a lot to the centre of big cities has had an experience like this: You arrive at night, and start looking for your hotel. You find it, but you can't drive to the entrance because the street is one-way the other way. Finally you come to a street that goes the way you want, but once you get close again, the signs won't allow you to make the turn you need to make. You can waste 20 minutes this way. And as you keep driving, you notice that the streets are empty anyway. Any reason that might have existed for turning them into single-purpose speedways simply did not apply anymore.

Meanwhile, local governments were slowly learning that the old two-way streets, whatever the occasional frustration, had real advantages in fostering urban life. Traffic moved at a more modest pace, and there was usually a row of cars parked by the curb to serve as a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles. If you have trouble perceiving the difference, try asking yourself this question: How many successful sidewalk cafés have you ever encountered on a four-lane, one-way street with cars rushing by at 50 miles per hour? My guess is, very few indeed. So over the past 10 years, dozens of cities have reconfigured one-way streets into two-way streets as a means of bringing their downtowns to life. The political leadership and the local business community usually join forces in favour of doing this. There are always arguments against it. Some of them are worth stopping to consider.

Among the critics are traffic engineers and academics who were taught some fixed principles of transportation in school decades ago and have never bothered to reconsider them. Joseph Dumas, a professor at the University of Tennessee, argued a few years ago that "the primary purpose of roads is to move traffic efficiently and safely, not to encourage or discourage business or rebuild parts of town Streets are tools for traffic engineering. "If you agree that streets serve no other purpose than to move automobiles, you are unlikely to see much problem with making them one-way. On the other hand, if you think that streets possess the capacity to enhance the quality of urban life, you will probably consider the Dumas Doctrine to be nonsense. That is the way more and more cities are coming to feel.

There are other arguments. It's sometimes said that more accidents occur on two-way streets than one-way streets. The research that supports this claim is decades old, and to my knowledge, has not been replicated. Even if you accept this argument, though, you might want to consider that, at slower speeds, the accidents on two-way streets are much more likely to be fender-benders at left-turn intersections, not harrowing high-speed crashes involving cars and pedestrians. Finally, there are complaints from fire departments that it takes them longer to reach the scene of trouble when they have to thread their way around oncoming traffic, rather than taking a straight shot down a one-way speedway. I can't refute this, and in any case, I don't like arguing with fire departments. But I have to wonder how many people have died in burning buildings in recent years because a fire truck wasn't allowed to use a one-way street.

I wouldn't argue that two-way streets are any sort of panacea for urban revival, Vancouver's experience notwithstanding. And I understand that they are not always practical. Some streets simply are too narrow to have traffic moving in both directions; others have to be designated one-way because their purpose is to feed traffic onto expressways. What I would say is this: When it comes to designing or retrofitting streets, the burden of proof shouldn't fall on those who want to use them the old-fashioned way. It should be on those who think the speedway ideology of the 1950s serves much of a purpose half a century later.

MAIN STREET



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Look Both Ways: Restoring Two-Way Traffic to Main Street

By John D. Edwards and Linda Glisson | From *Main Street Story of the Week* | November 30, 2011 |



Many factors combine to make Main Street economically successful. One important aspect is the traffic pattern. One-way streets are efficient but they are not customer friendly or easy to navigate – especially for tourists and infrequent customers. Circulation becomes more complicated as motorists often have to drive a few blocks before they can turn around and get back to where they wanted to go.

A major concern of organizations working to improve traditional commercial districts is to boost retail sales, and, more specifically, to increase the visibility and accessibility of their offerings. In this regard, making traffic circulation more “customer friendly” is a prerequisite to increasing the retail segment of the business district and appealing to investors and business owners who are interested in your Main Street district.

Retailers aren’t the only businesses dependent on easy-to-understand traffic operations, however. Service operations and professional offices also rely on a circulation system that is easy to understand and to navigate.

Another perception that affects the success of your commercial district is “Does it feel exciting? Are there lots of people?” That indicates a certain degree of congestion. One-way circulation is so efficient at moving traffic that the streets may feel empty! A commercial district needs to have a certain level of traffic congestion so that it appears busy.

How fast cars travel through your district is another issue. Any successful Main Street district will have considerable pedestrian traffic, and where pedestrians are present, speed limits should be low—15 to 30 miles per hour. One-way streets, especially one-way road pairs of 10 to 15 blocks in length, tend to encourage higher speeds, usually 35 to 40 mph.

Why Convert to Two-way Streets?

When should a community consider converting a street or network of streets from one-way to two-way traffic? The most important consideration is whether it will help the commercial district revitalization effort. If the area affected by the conversion is a retail district that is experiencing a comeback, then a conversion may be warranted. If, however, the area adjacent to the one-way street is primarily office, warehousing, or industrial, with high peak-hour traffic, then a conversion may not be worth it.

Perhaps the most important reason for changing the traffic flow is to improve the economic well-being of the commercial district. West Palm Beach, Florida, for example, saw \$300 million in private investment after city hall invested \$10 million in converting to two-way streets and improving the streetscape.

Lafayette, Indiana, instigated the change as a result of major transportation infrastructure projects. The plan for converting the one-way streets was not without concerns about loss of parking spaces and the cost of installing new traffic signal lights and signs. When the city did an actual traffic count, however, it found that the downtown didn't need so many traffic lights or stacking lanes.

After the conversion, downtown was "easier to get around," said Director of Development Sherry McLauchlan. "Because it is our historic downtown and we are trying to build our tourism market, it is easier for out-of-towners to find their way around."



Downtown Oregon City is in the process of converting its Main Street back to a two-way street. Based upon two years of work that included a range of downtown revitalization efforts, federal and Oregon Department of Transportation grant funding, as well as recommendations by numerous consultants, the city will stripe a new centre line down Main Street in order to return the street to its original circulation flow. A two-way Main Street will simplify the circulation system downtown and provide more efficient access to on-street parking and side streets in the downtown core. Click [here](#) to view a video animation produced by Funnelbox Production Studios in downtown Oregon City that guides visitors through this new circulation pattern.

“A two-way Main Street works in downtown Oregon City because we’re welcoming visitors off of Highway 99E and making driving downtown a simpler and more intuitive process,” said Lloyd Purdy, director of Main Street Oregon City. **“Downtown Oregon City is evolving into a retail and restaurant friendly marketplace, not just a centre for creative professionals. A two-way Main Street becomes a unifying characteristic of our downtown marketplace. It’s a physical connection that benefits all downtown.”**



Eliminating one-way streets would revitalize downtown Brooksville

Monday, May 20, 2013 4:30am

The time has come to take back our streets, to take back our town. They were snatched away from us — at least control of them was — at 8 o'clock one evening in March 1993, when the state Department of Transportation abruptly changed the traffic flow on Broad and Jefferson streets in downtown Brooksville from two-way to one-way. By the time it happened, no locals liked the idea — not City Council members, not drivers, not business owners. Too bad, DOT 's engineers said: We've already spent the money on planning, the city had asked for this way back when (which, unfortunately, was true) and, most of all, one-way streets would improve traffic flow on State Road 50, U.S. 98 and U.S. 41. So, just like that, Brooksville became a place roads went *through* not *to*. The shops and historic courthouse became scenery glimpsed from the windows of whizzing cars and rock trucks. And whizzing vehicles don't mix with strolling humans.

How many times have I heard, in the past 20 years, that to cross Jefferson Street is to take your life in your hands? Too many times to count, which means that even if it's not technically true — I don't remember any walkers killed or seriously injured by motorists in downtown Brooksville — it sure feels that way. And this new traffic pattern sure made it harder for Brooksville to bring about one of the small-town revivals that were starting to gather momentum all over Florida. Why is there more going on in some of Pasco County's traditional downtowns than in Brooksville? Well, New Port Richey, which briefly considered realigning busy streets for one-way traffic 20 years ago, decided not to. A truck route carries federal highway traffic around Dade City, not through it. A rational traffic pattern didn't bring life to these towns, but it did make liveliness possible. It's the one thing that has to happen before anything else can.

You'll also hear this from Cliff Manuel, chairman of the Brooksville Vision Foundation, which has been trying for three years to revitalize downtown and so far has accomplished next to nothing. Manuel sounded fed up at the group's meeting last week. The foundation has to do *something*, he said. It has to choose a goal and accomplish it — now! After the meeting, he said restoring two-way flow through downtown is one of the projects he had in mind. He suggested that the foundation push the city to hire a consultant to come up with a plan for two-way streets that it can take to the DOT .

I don't know if this is the right way to proceed. But this is right: Brooksville has to do something about its one way streets other than grumble about them. And it should do it quickly. For one thing, the DOT now seems more committed to walkable downtowns, more aware that cities don't work like cities if their sidewalks feel like the shoulders of freeways. It's learned that if all towns are just a place that highways go *through*, there won't be anywhere for them to go *to*.



Hamilton

Hamilton 'Must' Convert Streets Back to Two-Way: Architects

Following a long history of advocacy for liveable streets, the Hamilton Burlington Society of Architects has delivered a strongly written demand that Council convert downtown streets back to two-way traffic.

By [Ryan McGreal](#)

Published May 31, 2013

The [Hamilton Burlington Society of Architects](#) (HBSA) has thrown down the gauntlet in a letter to Hamilton City Council today, calling on the City to convert its one-way streets back to two-way. The letter opens by stating, "**We firmly believe that we must eliminate many of our One-Way Streets in order to bring back quality to those streets and our downtown**". After defining "great streets" as desirable public places that facilitate safe interaction and support community, the letter states, "One-way streets are designed to carry huge volumes of vehicles at high speed. One-way streets through a downtown have a huge negative impact on the quality of our urban commercial and residential neighbourhoods." The letter blames one-way streets for deterring pedestrians, hurting businesses and creating noise and air pollution. It specifies that both local streets like Hughson, King William and Rebecca and major arterials like Main, King and Cannon "must" be converted back to two-way "in order to promote urban commercial viability and improvements to quality of life in residential neighbourhoods."

Taking aim at opponents of two-way conversion, the letter states, "Those who oppose street conversion limit commercial success and quality of life for those living and/or working in Hamilton's downtown core." This is a refreshingly strong, bluntly-written letter from a professional organization, but in the case of the HBSA it follows a long history of advocacy for more liveable streets in Hamilton, dating back to a [design charette in 1996](#) that first called for two-way conversion and other pedestrian and cycling improvements. The letter also follows an inspiring recent exercise of community engagement in which the HBSA hosted a workshop, [public lecture](#) and direct actions on [tactical urbanism](#). Tactical urbanism is the principle that community transformation can come from low-cost, low-risk changes that can be measured and iteratively improved. The workshop inspired a group to install DIY bumpouts at Herkimer and Locke, and after an initial [negative reaction](#), the City has since responded with a new [pilot project](#) to test more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.



THIS IS DOWNTOWN OREGON CITY

‘Two Way Main Street’

Look Both Ways in Downtown OC

Posted by Lloyd Purdy on 7 November

[Two-way traffic soon to be restored to downtown marketplace.](#)

Within the next two weeks, downtown Oregon City's Main Street will convert back to a two-way street. Based upon two years of work that includes a range of downtown revitalization efforts, Federal and ODOT grant funding, as well as recommendations by numerous consultants, the City of Oregon City will stripe a new centre line down Main Street in order to return the street to its original circulation flow. A video animation produced by *Funnelbox Production Studios* in downtown Oregon City guides visitors through this new circulation pattern.

A two-way Main Street simplifies the circulation system in downtown Oregon City and provides more efficient access to on-street parking and side streets in the downtown core. The biggest change this year will be along Main Street between 6th and 9th Streets, which had been a one-way stretch of road when downtown was host to Clackamas County's administrative offices.

"A two-way Main Street works in downtown Oregon City because we're welcoming visitors off of 99E and making driving downtown a more simple and intuitive process," said Lloyd Purdy, Director of the non-profit downtown revitalization program MSOC. "Downtown Oregon City is evolving into a retail and restaurant friendly marketplace, not just a centre for creative professionals."

A two-way Main Street circulation system will connect future development on what used to be 1st through 5th Street (currently Willamette Falls Development Site) to the downtown core and to infill development opportunities north of 10th Street. "A two-way Main Street becomes a unifying characteristic of our downtown marketplace," said Purdy. "It's a physical connection that benefits all downtown."

The conversion back into a two-way Main Street wraps up the first phase a multi-phase, multi-year project that could ultimately culminate in more than \$4 million in streetscape enhancements downtown from 5th to 15th Streets. The City of Oregon City working with ODOT and the non-profit downtown revitalization program, *Main Street Oregon City*, competed for and was awarded nearly \$2.4 million in Federal and State funding for streetscape improvement infrastructure projects focused on making downtown Oregon City more pedestrian and visitor friendly. An animated video illustrating the new circulation system of downtown Oregon City can be seen by [clicking here](#).

LEXINGTON, KY

Horse Capital of the World



Kentucky.com

Lexington considering return to two-way streets

Published: August 4, 2012

Vine Street is one of the eight one-way streets that the city is considering converting to two-way as part of efforts to revitalize downtown.

CHARLES BERTRAM — Herald-Leader By Beverly Fortune and Amanda Hancock — bfortune@herald-leader.com

In the 1950s, the police department converted Lexington's Maxwell, High, Second, Short, Mill and Upper streets to one-way. Roughly 20 years later, city planners made that same switch on Main and Vine streets. It was the era of Urban Renewal. Downtown retail was beginning to erode with the development of suburban shopping areas such as Southland and Eastland. Turfland Mall was being opened and Fayette Mall was in the planning stages. "They thought going to one-way would make downtown more friendly to business. That was the main consideration, not about increased traffic flow," said Chris King, the city's director of planning. More than half a century later, some city officials see one-way streets as a flawed policy, and they are talking about reversing the changes made decades ago to downtown streets. Scott Shapiro, senior adviser to Mayor Jim Gray, says downtown revitalization is the current goal. "The city has spent \$27 million on its Downtown Streetscape. A number of businesses are investing in downtown. We have Thursday Night Live. We have all this energy. It's like a sports car all gassed up and ready to go," Shapiro said. "What it needs is a key. What other cities have found is two-way streets is that key." The Downtown Master Plan as well as the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan call for two-way traffic. In 2007, Urban County Council approved a study on how to convert the four pairs of one-way streets to two way streets. In 2009, council approved having streetscape consultant Clete Benken, along with the design firm of Kinzelman Kline Gossman, do a detailed design of Main and Vine that would eventually allow both to become two-way streets.

At that meeting Councilman Jay McChord said one-way streets were "a failed policy." In an earlier council discussion, Councilman George Myers wanted to know, "What would be the problem with just doing it? Everyone knows one-way streets are outdated and behind the times."

Using a \$465,000 federal grant, the city hired Stantec consulting engineers in May to work out detailed plans for converting four pairs of one-way downtown streets to two-way: Main and Vine, Upper and Limestone, Second and Short and Maxwell and High. The study will assess the ability of downtown's street system to accommodate current and future traffic if streets were converted. It also would help determine whether conversion can reduce driver confusion and improve access to business. "What differs from the last study in 2007 is if there are issues we want to know what are the creative solutions. That's a big part of this study," Shapiro said. Stantec will have meetings with downtown stakeholders, as well as three public meetings. Tom Creasey, a civil engineer and a Stantec project manager, says public input is a key part of this. Feedback also is important, so the firm will make its findings public as it looks at individual pairs of streets. "We won't just release everything at the end," Creasey said of the study, which is scheduled to be completed in May.

Revitalization

Adam Kirk, traffic engineer with the Kentucky Transportation Centre at the University of Kentucky, said an advantage of one-way streets is traffic flows much faster. "That can be a disadvantage as people travel through downtown," Kirk said. "The belief is the slower you travel, the more you stop, the more you see adjacent businesses, the more you visit them."

That is why, primarily, two-way street conversion is driven not so much from a traffic standpoint, but from downtown revitalization. Phil Holoubek, a developer of Main & Rose condominium and mixed-use project on East Main Street, said, "My question is, do we want to let a traffic engineer determine the future of our downtown, based solely on what is best for cars without any regard for economic development initiatives? "Or do we want to build a world-class downtown that is as friendly as possible to pedestrians and retailers... even if it means we take two extra minutes to drive through downtown?" With one-way streets, "It is harder to attract retail because it limits who will stop at your business," Holoubek said. Starbucks, for example, needs drive-in morning traffic. Grocery stores need drive-home afternoon traffic. "Main & Rose was a perfect location for a grocery, but we are on a one-way street with traffic headed in town in the morning. As a result, we never could get a grocery," he said.

Not everybody thinks two-way streets are a good idea. However, some people opposed to two-way streets a few years ago have had a change of heart. Five years ago, the Fayette County Neighbourhood Council asked neighbourhood representatives if they favoured or opposed changing one-way streets downtown to two-way. "There was overwhelming opposition," said Emma Tibbs, former council president. The same question was posed to representatives three months ago, and the vote was almost 50-50 in favour of changing to two-way. "I was frankly very surprised," Tibbs said. Neighbourhood representatives today are younger, and many are from suburban neighbourhoods, Tibbs said. She thinks support for two-way streets speaks to a wide range of people who are interested in the vitality of downtown. "It's not just the downtown folks who care about what's going on downtown," she said. "The things being planned for downtown like the arts and entertainment district has engaged the interest of a wide range of folks in the community."

There are trade-offs Renee Jackson, president of the Downtown Lexington Corp., frequently tells people that one-way versus two-way streets is all about setting priorities. "If your priority is to slow traffic and create an environment where people want to linger, buy and open retail business, then two-way is the proven better model." But it's not without trade-offs. "Two-way streets slow traffic a little. But create gridlock? I don't think it will," she said. Business owner Mary Ginocchio, owner of Mulberry & Lime gift shop at 216 North Limestone, supports going two-way. "I almost feel like I should give an award to new customers who find our parking lot on the first try," she said. "And traffic in front of the shop just whizzes by."

Two-way streets will be good for businesses while helping connect the University of Kentucky with Transylvania University, said Adel Rayan, owner of Happy Falafel at 105 Eastern Avenue. "Take Limestone as an example," he said. "The north end has higher-end restaurants. The south end has college restaurants. If people could travel back and forth very easily, look how you're connecting those two ends. And all the businesses along that stretch would benefit." It's a trend Mayor Gray and other two-way street supporters have looked at conversions in several other cities, including Minneapolis and Charleston, S.C.



Charleston, South Carolina

Charleston has converted at least four streets from one- to two-way. "So far, we've had nothing but positive feedback," said Michael Mathis, transportation project manager in Charleston. "There was a little bit of pushback at first. But I think it was people who oppose change in general."

Chris Price, president of Prime South Group, a downtown development company in Charleston, said, "Typically, one-way traffic is a thoroughfare that gets people from point A to point B. It doesn't encourage people to stop, to shop, to go eat." To have a vibrant downtown, "You've got to have people who live there, work there and socialize there. Two-way streets slow traffic, create that atmosphere of a neighbourhood where everybody wants to be," said Price, who grew up in Lexington and is familiar with both cities.

Upper King Street, part of the major corridor through downtown Charleston, was "pretty much dilapidated, didn't have a lot of activity. Upper King was all one-way," he said. The city changed Upper King to two-way, added stop lights and the rebirth began, Price said. "It's gone from a substandard area to be the hottest area in downtown Charleston." With this success under its belt, Charleston is making plans to convert two more major corridors to two way.

Hundreds of streets in cities from Rochester, N.Y., to Minneapolis to Berkeley, Calif., are going to two-way streets for reasons similar to Charleston, said Shapiro, on Mayor Gray's staff. Motorists drive slower on two-way streets. Two-way streets eliminate confusion and make it easier for drivers to find their way around and create a more positive environment for pedestrians and cyclists. "The lessons of other cities is what our consultants and we are certainly looking at," Shapiro said. "With streets across the country being converted back to two-way, there is a reason that is happening. There is a track record."

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