Interdepartmental Correspondence Sheet

# City of Cincinnati

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION MEMO**

**Date:** August 27, 2004

**To:** Mayor and Members of City Council

**From:** Valerie A. Lemmie, City Manager

**Subject:** **Vine Street Bump-outs**

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There is a special meeting of the Neighborhood and Public Services Committee on Tuesday, August 31, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. to discuss the Vine Street bump-outs. This For Your Information memo provides background information on this topic.

**BACKGROUND**

City Council at its session on October 21, 1998 adopted a motion that the Department of Traffic Engineering immediately convert Vine Street to a two-way neighborhood street and incorporate streetscape improvements upon completion of the urban design plan. The motion stated that the intent was to change the street direction as an impetus for stimulating and supporting increased business activity in the area.

The conversion of Vine Street (Central Parkway to McMicken Avenue) to a two-way street was completed in November of 1999, including traffic signals, signs, pavement markings, parking meters, and bump-outs. The design of the streetscape improvements for Vine Street was postponed until the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan was completed, since this plan was intended to provide guidance on desired urban design principles and transportation issues. Also, a Transportation Subcommittee of the OTR Comprehensive Plan was established to study traffic and transportation in all of Over-the-Rhine, including an evaluation of the two-way operation of Vine Street.

The Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan was completed in June of 2002. The Transportation Subcommittee developed several key transportation recommendations including to "Support the study and evaluation of the following traffic improvements, with implementation as

recommended." One of these improvements was a study of Vine Street – "economics vs. safety / one-way vs. two-way / urban design characteristics of both/integration with, and impact on, the entire OTR transportation network, including the potential for future public transportation improvements."

With this recommendation of the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Transportation and Engineering hired Edwards & Kelcey, a local engineering consultant, to perform a traffic flow and safety study. The specific area studied in Over-the-Rhine was bounded by Central Parkway, Race Street, Findlay Street, East McMicken Avenue, and Walnut Street. The primary objectives of the study were to:

1. Evaluate concerns over the safety and convenience of existing two-way traffic operations on Vine Street, and to explore options for improvements.
2. Explore options to improve circulation within the Over-the-Rhine area, possibly by converting certain secondary east/west streets, which are now one-way, back to two-way operations. An important consideration is the issue of on-street parking in the area, particularly on these primarily residential streets.
3. Examine options for improving traffic signal timing and operation on Vine Street, using computer simulation techniques.

This study looked at data for three time periods: (1) before the 1975 Vine Street conversion from two-way to one-way, (2) after the one-way and before the 1999 Vine Street conversion back to two-way, and (3) after the two-way conversion. The intent was to evaluate area traffic flow patterns and characteristics on the directly affected or influenced streets with one-way and two-way Vine Street operations. (A copy of the full report titled *Over-the-Rhine / Vine Street Circulation Study* dated February 2003 is attached.)

The report evaluates many quantitative issues relative to traffic flow and safety and offers several conclusions or recommendations. A summary of these findings follows:

1. **Traffic Volumes:** All three north-south streets (Vine, Race, and Walnut) when analyzed as a "system," decreased in traffic volumes an average of 28% since the conversion of Vine Street to two-way in 1999.
2. **Traffic Accident Experience:** The total number of all reported accidents on Vine Street between Twelfth Street and Findlay/McMicken Avenue were compared. The average totals per year went from 212 to 102 to 164 respectively for the three analysis periods. This showed a decrease when Vine Street was one-way as compared to the two two-way operations.
3. **Travel Time:** Northbound Vine Street has more than doubled in average travel time from 2 minutes 1 second to 4 minutes 34 seconds, and average speed has decreased from 18.1 mph to 12.1 mph.
4. **Transit Operations:** Since the Vine Street conversion to two-way operation, Metro has had to lengthen their bus schedule times along Vine Street due to the increased congestion. The buses are experiencing some delays created by the bump-outs, as they cannot get into or out of the bus stops efficiently.

the Downtown and Over-the-Rhine and is held to a set schedule for completion in this busy corridor, it is not reasonable or cost effective to hold up his work assignments indefinitely.

**CONCLUSION**

There are many issues and perspectives regarding traffic circulation, one-way versus two-way Vine Street, and the removal of the bump-outs. The Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE) is reporting on the history and traffic circulation and safety issues. There were and may continue to be considerations other that traffic that drive the design and traffic pattern of Vine Street. From strictly a safety and traffic movement perspective, DOTE recommends the removal of the bump-outs on both the east and west sides of Vine Street from Twelfth Street to McMicken Avenue. We do not recommend full time or peak hour parking restrictions for northbound or southbound Vine Street.

There will be a public meeting concerning the removal of the bump-outs on Vine Street at the Neighborhoods and Public Services Committee at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 31, 2004. We are seeking policy guidance from City Council on this issue.

Attachment: Over-the-Rhine / Vine Street Circulation Study

cc: Eileen Enabnit, Director, Transportation and Engineering
Bob Richardson, Transportation and Engineering
Steve Bailey, Transportation and Engineering
Don Rosemeyer, Transportation and Engineering
Jack Martin, Transportation and Engineering
Martha Kelly, Transportation and Engineering