



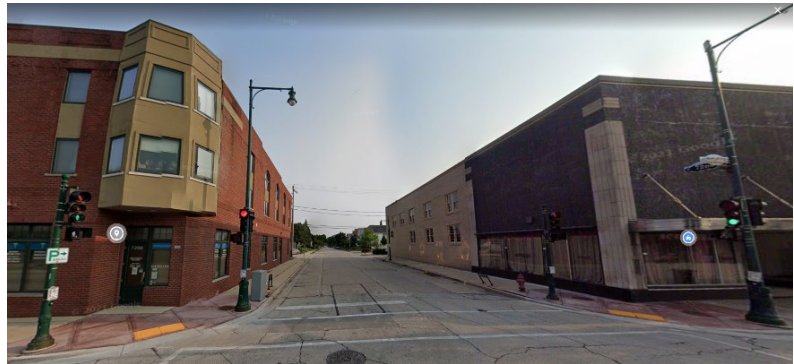
**STAFF REPORT
WEST ALLIS PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 7, 2022
6:00 PM**

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/user/westalliscitychannel>

6. Ordinance to create a pedestrian mall in the 1300 block of S. 72 St.

Overview

An ordinance has been proposed to create a pedestrian mall on an approximate 60-ft x 120-ft portion of S. 72 St. (just north of W. Greenfield Ave.). The initial concept was before Plan Commission last month for discussion and is being brought



back to Plan Commission December 7, for approval. Staff's recommendation is for Council approval of the pedestrian mall ordinance being passed.

The objective of the proposed ordinance is to create a public space/amenity that will be closed to motorists. Planning believes the change will be supportive of a thriving Main Street Community (that is Downtown West Allis).

The creation of a plaza would provide the basic function as a public gathering space within the downtown area. The Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) would be able to use the space for programming during Ala Carte, parades, City, and BID organized events. The space could also be utilized for weeknight summer events such as small-scale acoustic or low-amplified music performances.



Pedestrian plaza – 1300 block S. 72 St. (north of W. Greenfield Ave.)

Located at 7140 W. Greenfield Ave. is a new event venue that was approved via conditional use permit earlier this year in May. The property owner and proprietor is Walter Hotlz, who has invested over \$1MM in bringing the former department store building (Wedding Center and JC Penny) back to life as an event venue. The business will open its doors in the first quarter of 2023. The Deco property is located on the east side of S. 72 St. (abutting the subject pedestrian plaza). The Deco is seeking to conduct special events between May 1 and October 31, 2023 (a 6-month period) within the pedestrian plaza to complement their venues planned in 2023, but will also share the space.



Rendering of a programmed pedestrian plaza – 1300 block S. 72 St. (north of W. Greenfield Ave.)

While some exclusive use is planned on Fridays and Saturdays (May 1 to October 31), the Deco will partner with the BID to share and help further activate the space. The public will not be excluded from the space during non-Deco events. The Deco would also be willing to host/partner community events on Wednesday's. The Deco is willing to provide beverage service for City/BID events too. The Deco has indicated they would pay for improvements and provide seating for the plaza.

- Walter Holtz, the owner of the property at 7140 W. Greenfield Ave., has submitted a vision and supporting documentation indicating he would like to use a portion of S. 72 St. abutting his property (between W. Greenfield Ave. and the alley).
- A pedestrian plaza could be passed by ordinance and utilized initially for a 6-month demonstration period. Planters and/or barricades could be used to close the space to vehicular traffic.
- A separate Privilege Agreement will be considered by the Common Council (by and between the city and the Deco/Walter Holtz) to specify and regulate terms on proposed improvements, special events, maintenance, insurance, termination clause.
- The terms under which Deco may serve alcohol (an extension of premise) will be handled by Council, but outside of the privilege agreement.

Public informational meeting

On November 10, the city hosted an informal gathering to share the pedestrian mall concept (closing a portion of S. 72 St. to motorists) in Downtown West Allis. About twenty (20) people attended the meeting (a few residents, some business owners, elected officials and staff in attendance). The informational meeting was shared with the Business Improvement District, and advertised via social media blasts and door hangers to neighbors along S. 72 St. north of W. Greenfield Ave.



Most of the feedback received is positive and supports a change to something less auto centric for Downtown West Allis.

There have been some concerns with respect to closing the street to motorists. Specifically, concerns of reducing street parking (about 10 spaces), loss of S. 72 St. access for truck deliveries supportive of commercial business on the north side of W. Greenfield Ave. There have also been questions on programming of the space.

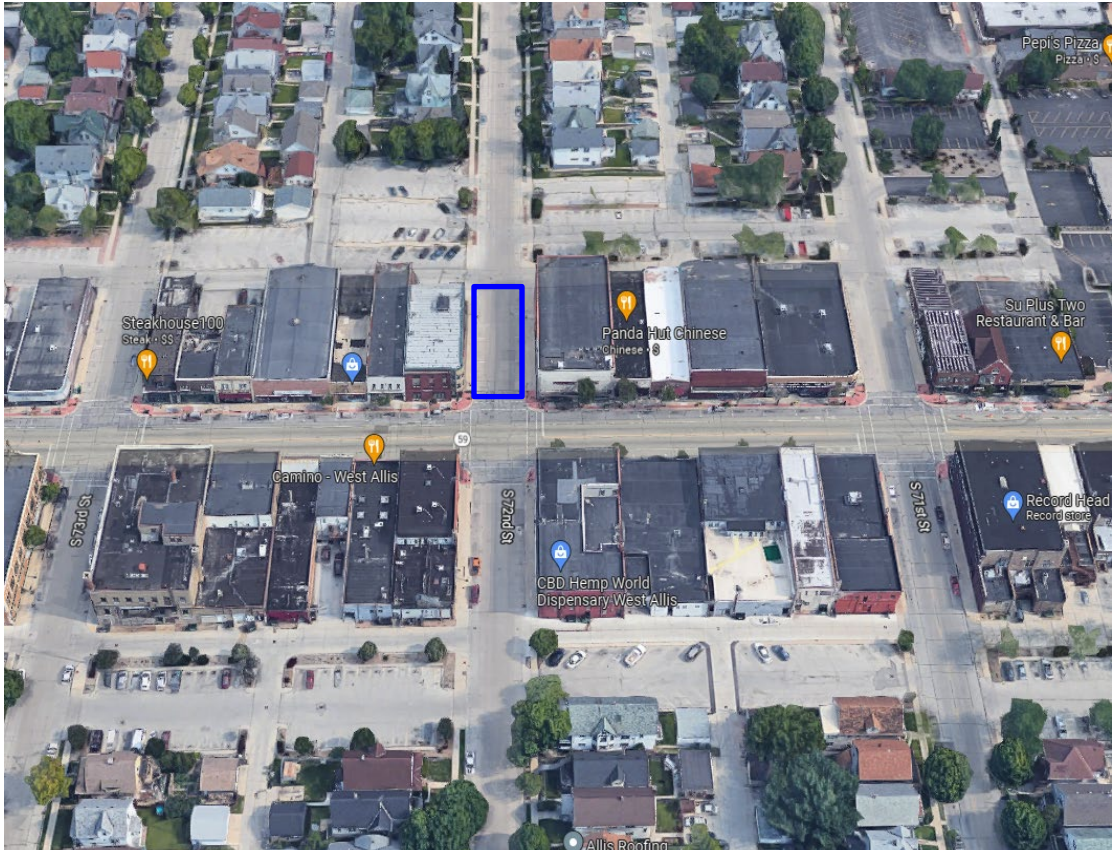
The Business Improvement District has shared a communication with the Common Council and while supportive indicates that it would prefer the pedestrian plaza not be created in 2023, but instead wait until 2024. The BID's communication notes, "*This allows the BID, the city and Mr. Holtz to get informed feedback from our businesses and residents to determine the impact of having 72nd Street closed so we can better determine the feasibility of closing it on a permanent basis. If everything is positive or if things need to be adjusted, they can be taken into consideration before moving forward.*"

The West Allis Police Department and Fire Department are supportive of the street closure with the understanding that barriers will be placed to prevent an errant motorist from turning into the area.

The City's Planning and Economic Development teams support this effort. Adding public space in our downtown will encourage people to spend more time in the downtown, improves the pedestrian experience and traffic flow along Greenfield, provides opportunities for the BID and local businesses, and will help further West Allis as a destination.

Schedule to date and next steps

- a. Nov 10, Public informational meeting
- b. December 7, Plan Commission consideration on ped mall ordinance
- c. December 13, Common Council consideration of ordinance and resolution for a privilege agreement with Deco



- 385 municipal parking spaces
- 161 street parking spaces

Recommendation: Common Council approval of an ordinance to create a pedestrian mall in the 1300 block of S. 72 St. and a resolution granting a privilege agreement for use of the pedestrian mall between the city and Walter Holtz. The terms under which Deco may serve alcohol (extension of premise) will be handled by Council separately.