



## Changes Made to Stellar Streetscape Plan

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Questions about the Stellar Communities' plans to close Short Street have prompted city officials to make some revisions to the plan.

"We have heard the concerns of some business owners and residents, and will be making changes," said Mayor Harold "Soup" Campbell.

Specific concerns raised were the loss of parking on Short Street, potential traffic concerns associated with making Madison Avenue two-way, and the need to make Madison Avenue more park-like.

"The revised plan will keep Madison Avenue one-way southbound. To make up for parking lost on Short Street, Fifth Street will be made into a one-way northbound street with angle parking on one side," said Cory Whitesell, Project Manager for HWC Engineering.

The downtown project will still include closing Short Street in North Vernon in order to create an outdoor plaza, which will be designed as the heart of downtown.

"Businesses told us we should make Madison Avenue more park-like, so that people did not have to walk to Short Street to enjoy the downtown," said Whitesell. The revised plan adds more trees, landscaping and park benches along both sides of Madison Avenue to meet this goal.

The new plan also calls for the sidewalk in front of the Park Theater and White Front Café to be widened to make more room for street trees and outdoor dining.

After the revisions, there should be less waiting for motorists at U.S. 50 and Madison, because cars going in each direction will have their own signal phase at the traffic light, Whitesell said.



Parking is also improved with the revised plan. When complete, the new plan will provide the same number of parking spaces as exist downtown today. The parking simply moves the angle spaces from Short Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Whitesell said.

Additionally, the changes mean Madison Avenue will not change traffic patterns, which will be less confusing for local motorists.

Most importantly, answering these concerns will allow the city to move forward on creating its first downtown public plaza, Mayor Campbell said.

The street work is just one of the Stellar Communities' projects ready to launch. North Vernon was selected as one of two cities in Indiana to win a new grant from the state called Stellar Communities in March 2011. Receiving the grant will amount to more than \$16 million for roads, housing, storefront façades and other programs over the next few years.

Details about the Stellar Community projects can be found at [www.northvernonstellar.com](http://www.northvernonstellar.com).

For more information contact Kathy Ertel at (812) 346-2388.