

Renovation nearly finished

By Kim Kitley Price
The Lantern.

The High Street-Pearl Alley renovation is drawing to a close and the city is getting mixed reviews from several High Street merchants.

One merchant says the project has caused problems with delivery persons who complain they can no longer pull their trucks up in front of the stores because of the bike paths.

But a member of the ad hoc High Street committee and Campus Planner Jean Hansford says that is not so.

"They (the delivery persons) are just in the habit of using High Street. They're not really losing anything, they're gaining."

He says even though there are service islands out from the sidewalks, delivery persons may pull up to them to load and unload until 11 a.m.

The project, which will cost nearly \$900,000 by the time it is finished, is intended to "improve the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists" and provide safety, says Hansford.

Betty Harris, owner and manager of The Image, 1872 N. High St., says

she feels business is unaffected by the renovation and adds, "Once it's completed it might be nice, right now it's a real mess."

Harris says she hears complaints about the parking problem but says there has "never been any ideal situation up here as far as parking goes ... I just hope it's not a waste of our money."

Students who used to park on 15th Avenue while attending classes will find that it is now a one way street going west, lined with meters.

Hansford says the meters are intended to serve the business area on High Street and not to provide student parking.

He adds that parking at the university has never been as convenient as it is now and says students have the option of riding the campus buses or getting parking permits.

Many merchants have also complained about the drainage problems within the project area. But Hansford says, "It's not fair for anyone to look at this project and say it's responsible for the water."

High Street has always had a poor drainage system and this summer's overwhelming rainfalls have not helped, he says.

Amy Gordon, a senior from Cleveland and an employee of Friendly Florist, 11 E. 16th Ave., says she feels the project was not well planned.

She says that people have called the store asking about parking facilities and some complain, but in the long run feels it's too early to tell

if the project is deterring customers. "I think maybe when school starts it might deter people."

Hansford says the renovation should not be a detriment to High Street businesses, but rather a help. He believes that the upgrading of streets and added parking will have a positive effect on business.

Another merchant says, "I'm glad to see them take some provision for people riding bikes ... and trying to help with the parking problem ... I just wish they'd hurry and get it cleaned up."

The renovation includes:

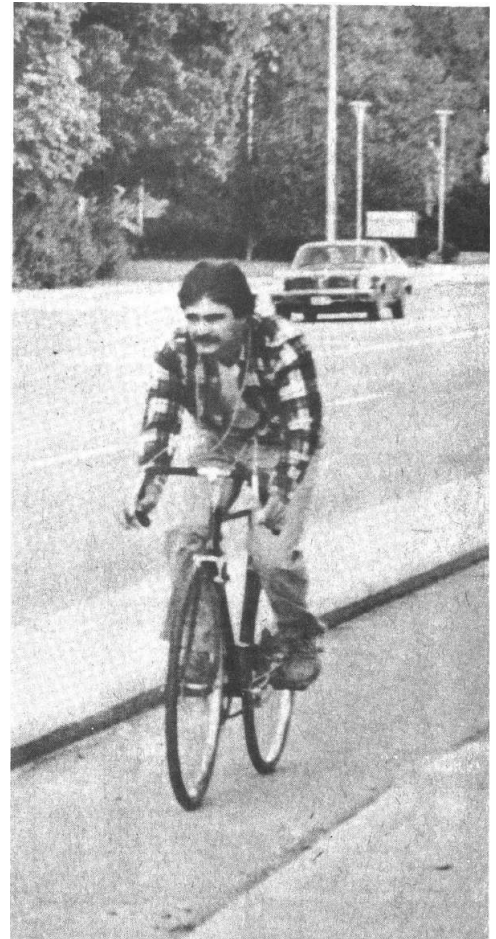
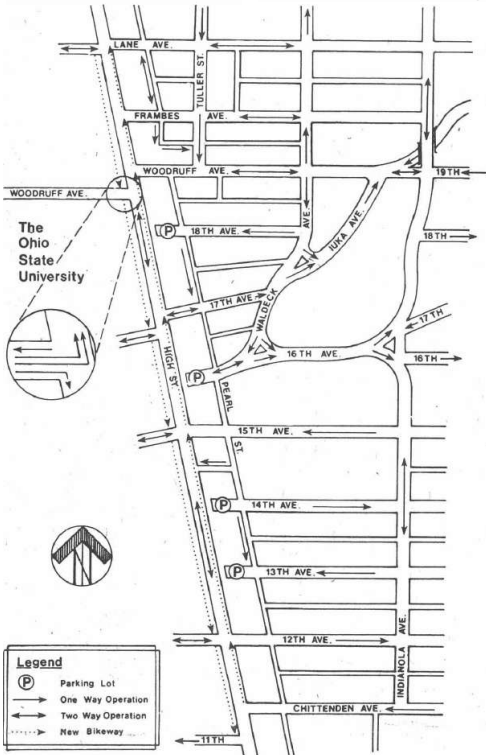
- closing 13th, 14th, 16th and 18th avenues to traffic between Pearl Alley and High Street and turning the closed sections into pedestrian mini-plazas and metered parking lots;

- constructing bike paths on High Street separated from the sidewalks by a three-foot service island;

- moving traffic signals, signs and other pedestrian obstructions from the sidewalks to the service islands to make pedestrian traffic flow smoother;

- eliminating parking on High Street;
- and landscaping the mini-plazas with trees, plants bulletin boards and benches.

According to Aurel Damian, engineer in charge of the city's Street Construction and Design, the project is schedule to be finished by the end of November and plans are moving along ahead of schedule.



The Lantern/Cindy Crowe
A bicyclist makes good use of the new bike path along North High Street. The path is part of a \$900,000 renovation project scheduled to be finished by the end of November.