



**To:** City of Madison Transportation Commission  
**From:** Friends of Lake Wingra Board of Directors  
**Date:** October 28, 2020  
**Re:** Request to oppose reopening Vilas Park Drive

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Dear Transportation Commission:

**We ask that you consider opposing the proposal to reopen Vilas Park Drive (agenda item #7) with specific considerations.**

As confirmed in the Vilas Park Master planning process, a large majority of park visitors feel a through Vilas Park Drive negatively impacts the character of the park and the safety of park users. The draft master plan recommends redesigning Vilas Park Drive to cease through traffic. Keeping Vilas Park Drive closed during the winter will enhance park users' experience with the southern portion of the park. This area is also closest to Lake Wingra and offers the best scenic views and nature viewing. Furthermore, the drive may become narrower or more slippery with snow and ice and make humans feel less safe when sharing the road with cars. As a simple recap, vehicular traffic disturbs tranquil experiences cyclists, walkers, runners, and families seek when visiting Lake Wingra.

With this said, the pastime of ice skating at Vilas Park runs deep in the Lake Wingra community. Therefore, closing the road can make it less accessible for ice skating. We ask that if you oppose reopening Vilas Park Drive (which we support) that you consider advocating for safe and accessible ice skating pathways or wayfinding. Suggestions include focusing this messaging or management in areas where vehicles can still access the west side of the park (i.e., near the tennis courts) or near the east parking lot (i.e., by the Henry Vilas Zoo).

Thank you for considering our thoughts and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Casey Hanson  
Executive Director  
Friends of Lake Wingra  
volunteer@lakewingra.org