

Alison TenBruggencate
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Madison, WI 53717
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Sent via email

December 5, 2023

City of Madison Plan Commission
City-County Building
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd
Madison, WI 53703

**Re: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item
Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path**

Dear City Plan Commission Members

This letter is to request that all plans for a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway be removed from the West Area Plan.

The Sauk Creek Greenway is comprised of a narrow ribbon of urban woods which is home to owls, multiple species of woodpeckers, foxes, deer and coyote. The woods are rich with valuable trees and an undergrowth of woodland flowers and plants. Two narrow well-used natural hiking paths run the one-mile length of the woods, and 4-6 paths cross the woods. In many locations the woods are less than 120 feet wide. The creek that runs through the woods is in need of restoration. It has suffered from the diversion of runoff from Menards and other big box enterprises which has caused a huge volume of water to be forced down the little creek, eroding its banks and killing many adjacent oak trees.

Until recently, this community's focus has been on protecting the urban woods we all cherish through the use of sound forestry and animal-friendly measures to restore the Greenway creek and urban forest. For several years we have had to resist 'over-engineered' proposals for the Greenway restoration, which included grass banks necessitating extensive tree removal, the installation of streetlamps, mountain bike paths, and wide paved walking paths. Until recently, we had thought these proposals had been tabled and looked forward

to constructive engagement in the planning to simply restore the Greenway. We had hoped we were finally on the same page with the city.

This hope that we had achieved a unity of purpose has come to an end. Without any notice or request for resident input, a separate set of plans for the Greenway emerged at a meeting on July 17th—this one for a bike path. It is as if the West Area Plan staff, and our city alderperson, never set eyes on these woods. Or else, how could they envision squeezing a wide bike path in a ribbon of woods 120 foot wide in places where there already exists a creek, two hiking paths and trees. The only way to do it would be to take out trees and forest undergrowth to make way.

Residents have pointed out repeatedly that there are near-by bike paths already in place running parallel to the woods with much better connections to parks, grocery stores, restaurants, the library, and the new BRT line. Experienced bikers have raised that they would never make use of a one mile diversion from the already existing bike paths. We have pointed out concerns about installing impervious surfaces, further tipping the scale against this little creek.

These concerns fall on deaf ears and are not carried forward in the plan process. Justifications by staff for the plan, labeled 'Opportunities', do not connect to what has been proposed on the display boards in public meetings. They seem generic and inapplicable to this proposal. There was mention of one resident in the Walnut Grove area who was in favor of a bike path, yet who interestingly would not derive benefit from the proposed location of the path, but there was no mention of the widespread opposition to a bike path in the Greenway. At best, the information that has been provided to residents in the area has been disconnected. At worst, and with particular regard to this bike path, it has been manipulated.

As has been brought to city staff's attention repeatedly, there is an overwhelming lack of community support for a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway woods. The Sauk Creek Community has written letters, signed petitions, filed objections, attended meeting after meeting after meeting. The numbers opposing the installation of a bike path dwarf the 1-6 residents who appear to favor the path. And it is not clear that those who expressed favor were well-informed or even in the district. City staff appear to go through the motions of soliciting feedback from area residents, and then completely ignoring the feedback when it is given. This has occurred over and over again.

This community would welcome being relieved of the impression that staff on the West Area Plan aim to steam-roll the bike path through this process despite massive opposition. At this point, the entire community in and around the Sauk Creek Greenway is on edge. If this bike path goes forward, we readily envision perhaps a half a dozen people per month riding their bike on a path where once 200 year old oak trees stood.

Thank you for your time in consideration of our concerns,

Sincerely,

Alison TenBruggencate and Tony D'Alessandro

Cleveland, Julie

From: Deb Ankowicz <debankowicz@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 3:52 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Cc: All Alders; Conklin, Nikki; Stouder, Heather; Mayor; Wachter, Matthew; Lynch, Thomas
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Dear Plan Commission:

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A. The City and our Alder have ignored significant feedback against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway; therefore **we have not had a true engagement process**. A bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings.

Numerous petitions were obtained and submitted at the Common Council meeting on Nov. 15, 2022-Legistar file 73264-agenda number 1, and **new ones** will be attached to this agenda item; **27 + objections** were written to the Transportation Commission for its meeting on Aug. 8, 2023, after the neighborhoods first found out a path was shown in the Complete Street Guide while the engagement process was underway Legistar file 79282 agenda item three. The neighborhoods were **never informed of the inclusion of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway** when it was first introduced on Nov. 2, 2022 Legistar file 74436 agenda number and passed on January 3, 2023 Legistar file 74926 BEFORE the engagement process started in February 2023.

Per the first phase planning survey, **69 other residents had/have concerns about a path** in the Sauk Creek greenway; in addition, **27 residents in the second phase two survey were against a path** compared to 6 who were for a path. Staff said in its memo that they continue to support this feedback. This does **not coincide** with the above numbers or other noted feedback.

B. **The City planners claim that the path goes back 30+ years. THIS IS INCORRECT** because the Park and Open Space plans do not apply to the Sauk Creek greenway, and the 2000 MPO Bike Plan said a Sauk Creek path was listed as **a third priority** given “suitable on-road routes exist”. The 2015 MPO bike report said there is **not a bike gap** in the neighborhood and refers to the following roads that are within 1000+ feet of the greenway: Westfield Road, as primary bike road and High Point Road, a secondary bike road. **Most importantly, this is the root document** that the City then used for other reports (2018 Comprehensive Plan, etc.) and the neighborhood was not notified about it to have its voice heard. The neighborhood first heard about it at the March 2018 City Engineering meeting on the greenway.

C. City staff mentioned in its memo to you for your Dec. 7 meeting that residents' concerns include that the path will cause safety concerns (dangerous), increase crime, lead to losing too many trees, does not connect to anything, negatively impacts wildlife, increase runoff, costs too much to build and maintain, and increases noise

and litter. This is all true and these concerns were **summarily dismissed by City staff without substantive evidence to the contrary**. In addition, the staff **ignores strong environmental concerns** from residents, some of whom are scholars and researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other paths that staff mentions are not comparable for several reasons. Those paths did not require cutting down massive numbers of trees to build the paths; the other bike paths were platted before the homeowners acquired their lots; the paths are near commercial uses and not the 90% frontage of homes that abut the Sauk Creek greenway eliminating a buffer to the homes; the other paths are longer than .8 miles etc. The other paths did not cause significant animal displacement such as the coyotes, foxes, owls, deer, and birds that live in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

D. The City is incorporating in the streets “safe” bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the **nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road**, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline.

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City’s Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you for listening to my concerns and opposition to a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

Sincerely,
Deborah Ankowicz
406 Sauk Creek Drive,
Madison, WI 53717
debankowicz@gmail.com
608-843-4341

Cleveland, Julie

From: Ted Drewsen <ted.drewsen@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 3:48 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang; Stouder, Heather; All Alders; Wachter, Matthew
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

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forests. There is a great deal of value in keeping this urban forest as intact as possible to mitigate the effects of global warming as much as possible.

D. The City is incorporating in the streets "safe" bike paths per its *Complete Green Street Guide*, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the **nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road**, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline.

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City's Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,

Edmond & Debra Drewsen
7621 Farmington Way

Madison, WI 53717
ted.drewsen@gmail.com
920-251-9640 (cell)

Cleveland, Julie

From: Sue Stark <sstark7060@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 3:21 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

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In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City’s Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**. Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS

Thank you,
Mary Susan Stark
7433 Farmington Way
Madison, WI. 53717-1311

Cleveland, Julie

From: LJ Cayton <ljc1519@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 3:02 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: Dec 7 Plan Commission Meeting

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am a resident of the Highlands Community and it has come to my attention that the City Plan Commission wants to eliminate the Highlands Community TR-R zoning and rezone the neighborhood to SRC1, Suburban Residential Consistent 1.

The Highlands is a unique and special space that adds many positive elements to the greater Madison community, and in particular to the West Side. Our neighborhood is its own enclave that is home to many trees and wildlife. We all coexist with deer, turkeys, coyote and numerous other birds and critters. Our neighborhood contributes to the greater Madison population as an area that is attractive to young professionals and retirees equally. It is often an attractive selling point for new leaders moving to our area as well as entrepreneurs, professors, medical staff, and those in the tech community looking for a desirable area to live in that feels remote yet is within minutes of all services. We are also a magnet for dog walkers, runners (including the Memorial High School track and cross country teams), bikers and walkers of all ages; it is common to see elderly out for a weekend stroll and families with young children enjoying the neighborhood's trees and quiet. It is not uncommon for there to be dozens of active people coming through the neighborhood on any given day.

Our status as a residential neighborhood with a park-like setting will be lost if the area loses its TR-R zoning status. Please help us maintain our unique contribution to our community and keep the Highlands a TR-R zoned area.

Thank you,
Lori Cayton

Cleveland, Julie

From: Marion Belzer <meabelzer@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:26 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: Proposed West Area Plan

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission Members - I have just become aware that the Planning Division is proposing to the Plan Commission that the Highlands be rezoned from Traditional Residential-Rustic (TR-R) to Suburban Residential Consistent 1 (SRC1). While I recognize that Madison is growing and there is a need for more housing, the goal should not be to designate all areas of Madison for high density housing.

TR-R was created to preserve large lots in the area in question, and the Highlands neighborhood is a unique attribute for the entire City of Madison, specifically because of its low-density park-like nature with an abundance of native habitat and wildlife. The neighborhood is enjoyed daily by many walkers (including dog walkers not otherwise allowed in Owen Park), runners, and bikers who both live within and outside of the neighborhood. That park-like setting persists only because of the TR-R zoning, and will be lost if the City were to make the mistake of converting a city gem - the Highlands neighborhood - to SRC1 zoning.

Likewise, I oppose the Planning Division's proposed "Old Sauk Planned Streets" as described on page 4 and depicted on page 10 of the staff's report.

I sincerely hope that you preserve the unique character of the Highlands and determine "no" to Questions 7 and 8 of the staff's report. Thank you in advance.

Marion Belzer
6105 South Highlands Ave

Cleveland, Julie

From: Jennifer Morgan <jbmorgan@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:02 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

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Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan.**

I live on N High Point and bike a great deal in this neighborhood. I do not see any need for a bike path through that wooded area, as High Point, Westfield, Tree Lane and Old Sauk all have good bike lanes. I do not see a need to remove any more of what remains of that wooded area to create an unneeded bike path after the needed maintenance is done for drainage. I love biking and the many paths available in Madison, but this one is not necessary, and would further displace the animals and birds that make a home there.

Please remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan!

Thank you,
Jennifer Morgan

Cleveland, Julie

From: jenny.stein@sbcglobal.net
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 1:00 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Cc: 'Andrew Bent'
Subject: Memo to City of Madison/Planning (11/30/23) Re: Northeast and West Area Plan Updates - Item 8.A

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

TO: City of Madison / Plan Commission

Comments on Item 8.A (Proactive Rezoning) in 11/30/23 Memo Re: Northeast and West Area Plan Updates

We are writing to express our opposition to the **proposed change in zoning from Traditional Residential-Rustic (TR-R) to Suburban Residential Consistent 1 (SR-C1) outlined in item 8.A in the memo to the City of Madison/ Plan Commission dated 11/30/23 detailing the West and Northeast Area Plan – which has come without advance notice or discussion with impacted stakeholders.**

When we decided to relocate to Madison with our four school-aged children in 2005, we prioritized living in the city of Madison in a neighborhood offering the character, convenience, natural beauty and relative privacy not commonly found in a city setting. I was fortunate to grow up in Madison during the 1970's, and after decades of living in several other urban and suburban settings around the country, thoroughly appreciate the distinct character and appeal of Madison's varied neighborhoods – traditionally a hallmark of this city.

Every day of the year, the seasonal beauty, serenity, and low-density of the Highlands neighborhood is appreciated by numerous pedestrian and dog walkers, runners, bicyclists and children in strollers and on bikes (many from outside of the Highlands neighborhood per se) seeking a convenient, scenic, safe, dog-friendly and peaceful alternative to walking on the busy urban streets in the vicinity. Visitors to our home often remark how pleasantly surprised they are to find a residential area with such significant green space and tree cover within the Madison city limits, and how it reflects favorably upon our city. Over decades of development in the city of Madison, it is the TR-R zoning restriction that has preserved the unique character of this neighborhood. We join our neighbors in voicing our strong opposition to any change in TR-R zoning of the Highlands neighborhood.

We would also like to express our reservations for a major neighborhood rezoning initiative that until 12/4/23 has not previously been brought to the attention of local property owners nor the Highlands Neighborhood Association—which has for many years been the sole collaborative body representing all homeowners here. Further, we take issue with the representation in the first paragraph of the 11/30/23 memo to the Plan Commission stating *“Public participation has been extensive including virtual and in-person meetings, online community and business surveys, and engagement with underrepresented populations through neighborhood events, walking tours, door-door conversations, focus groups, and more...”* as this claim relates to any contact or discussion initiated by city staff pertaining to TR-R rezoning with either area property owners or the Highlands Neighborhood Association.

We urge you to eliminate Item 8.A related to proactive rezoning in the Highlands Neighborhood and discontinue any further discussion in view of the potential negative repercussions for the City of Madison and numerous impacted stakeholders. We appreciate your serious consideration of our comments here, reflecting a perspective shared by our Highlands neighbors and visitors alike.

Thank you!

David & Jennifer Stein
6226 N. Highlands Avenue
Madison, WI 53705

Cleveland, Julie

From: Susan Bruegman <susan.bruegman@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:51 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Cc: Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Stouder, Heather; All Alders; Tao, Yang
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

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In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City’s Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values.**

Respectfully,

Susan Bruegman
313 Sauk Creek Drive
Madison WI 53717
559-999-0287
susan.bruegman@att.net

Cleveland, Julie

From: JOANN J PRITCHETT <jjpritch@wisc.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:30 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Cc: Gwen Long
Subject: Re: proposed bicycle path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

As a retired senior citizen and an avid walker, I am opposed to constructing a bike path in a community with a large population of walkers. It puts (us) at risk for falls and health issues that are sustained as a result of a fall. I lived in the Westmorland neighborhood along the Southwest path before moving to the 9th District (inclusive of Tamarack Trails). And yes, I have been hit by cyclists who have zero regard for others (i.e., no bell ringer or verbal announcement that they are approaching). Seniors are encouraged to remain active and walking is in keeping with remaining active even at a slower pace, hearing loss, using assistive devices (canes, walkers) loss of visual acuity, etc. In a nutshell, constructing a bike path without a **destination point** is insane and DENIES walking seniors the one opportunity to feel safe and free from harm from cyclists. WHO conducted the survey to determine the need for constructing a bike path in this proposed area? Without a preponderance of evidence to support this project is akin to remodeling my kitchen without consulting me about refrigerator size, counter space, gas vs electric, flooring, etc.. As taxpayers, seniors and constituents, this neighborhood deserves better than a heavy-handed approach from the City of Madison that smacks of WE KNOW what's BEST for you.

Joann Pritchett

9th District Constituent

Cleveland, Julie

From: Mike Schmidt <mfschmidt1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 11:46 AM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang; Stouder, Heather; All Alders
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear City of Madison Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting. My wife and I are long term residents in the Madison area, but only recently moved to the Sauk Creek Neighborhood. We chose our home and neighborhood largely because of the Sauk Creek Greenway. We are also long time bikers, logging many miles on the bike paths in the Madison area and around the state every year. That being said, my wife and I are against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway **and urge the commission to remove it from the West Area Plan.**

I attended a West Area focus group meeting back in October. While there was much discussion about retaining the natural beauty of the Sauk Creek Greenway for the enjoyment of residents and protection of the natural environment and wildlife, nothing was mentioned about a wide lighted impervious surface bike path. We already have far too much concrete and asphalt in our city and far too few trees and natural areas. Adding an expensive bike path in a location where it would add to that disparity seems both ludicrous and unnecessary, especially when there are perfectly safe bike lanes available on nearby low traffic streets.

The proposed bike path would lead to the loss of precious trees and plants, disturb wildlife, reduce property values and increase runoff. There are also increased safety concerns, potential for crime, noise and litter in our neighborhood caused by the added traffic, as well the high cost to build and maintain a path. In short we feel there is no need for a path and a lot of valid reasons not to support it.

We moved to Madison from the Town of Dunn, which has long supported maintaining a natural environment over needless construction and development. My wife and I would urge you to follow that example by removing the proposed bike path from the West Area plan.

Best regards,

Michael Schmidt
Sharon Schoolmeesters
7629 Farmington Way
Madison, WI 53717
(608) 698-3598

Cleveland, Julie

From: jim shull <jshull4646@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 11:39 AM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Andrew Bent
Subject: proposed Highlands rezoning

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

December 5, 2023

To: Madison Plan Council
From: James Shull

My wife Sara and I have resided at 1030 Hillside Avenue in the Highlands neighborhood since 2009, following relocation from Omaha, NE.

We wish to voice our strong opposition to the proposed plan to Proactively change the zoning of the Highlands neighborhood from Traditional Residential-Rustic (TR-R) to Suburban Residential Consistent 1 (SR- C1), as summarized on page 4 of the November 30, 2023, memo to the Plan Commission in advance of the upcoming December 7, 2023, meeting.

Our opposition to the proposed rezoning is based on two factors.

First, the proposal does not identify any significant problem that the change in zoning would alleviate. It was only through reading the November 30 memo that we learned the present zoning of the Highlands as TR-R is unique within the city. That fact alone does not, in our opinion, constitute a sound basis for rezoning. If the Plan Commission strongly believes the current TR-R zoning is problematic, rezoning should only occur following input from neighborhood residents and careful consideration of all possible zoning options (see below).

Second, the proposal was prepared and submitted to the Plan Commission without any direct input from Highlands residents or our neighborhood association.

Consequently, we respectfully ask that rezoning of the Highlands neighborhood **not be approved**.

Respectfully,

Jim Shull
[Jshull4646@gmail.com](mailto:jshull4646@gmail.com)
1030 Hillside Avenue
Madison, WI 53705

Cleveland, Julie

From: Stouder, Heather
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:29 PM
To: Cleveland, Julie
Subject: FW: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Hi Julie-
Could you please add this one to the group? Thanks!

From: Jennifer Morgan <jbmorgan@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:11 PM
To: Stouder, Heather <HStouder@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan.**

I live on N High Point and bike a great deal in this neighborhood. I do not see any need for a bike path through that wooded area, as High Point, Westfield, Tree Lane and Old Sauk all have good bike lanes. I do not see a need to remove any more of what remains of that wooded area to create an unneeded bike path after the needed maintenance is done for drainage. I love biking and the many paths available in Madison, but this one is not necessary, and would further displace the animals and birds that make a home there.

Please remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan!

Thank you,
Jennifer Morgan

Cleveland, Julie

From: Lynn Hummel <lynn.hummel@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 9:36 AM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang; Stouder, Heather
Subject: Sauk Creek Greenway

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear City of Madison:

I am opposed to the proposed Sauk creek green way bike path because it will greatly degrade the green way and create a bikeway that already has good biking alternatives.

As an avid bicyclist I have enjoyed and benefited from the bikeways in Madison and in Dane County. However, I am totally perplexed why this expensive bike way was proposed. There are good, safe bike ways on the streets surrounding the green way on all four sides. Highpoint Road has good designated bike lanes as does Westfield Road.

Tree lane is a lower speed road and I have never felt endangered biking on that road. Farmington is a 25mph road with multiple speed bumps. I would feel safe to ride with my kids on all these streets.

The existing bike lane in back of the shopping mall that houses Main Appliance ends up in a huge, frightening traffic snarl on the south end. Using this short bike way to get to the Target shopping center off Mineral Point road is scary business with very fast traffic exiting south off the beltline onto Mineral Point Road. You have to literally run or sprint to make the crossing safely. So, my point is, where does this proposed bike way go? It doesn't serve any purpose and in constructing this bike way you will degrade a resource that hundreds of residents enjoy and cherish. If there was an elementary school or similar at the south end of the proposed bike way I would be all for it in spite of good alternative routes. Building this bike way in the Sauk Creek green way will benefit very few people and greatly diminish the green way for many of us.

Just because you have a small bike trail segment in place does not mean you have to continue to build on it. It was a mistake and it does not warrant making it a bigger mistake. Please take the money and use it on a different bike route where more people will benefit.

thanks

Cleveland, Julie

From: Larry and Ginny White <lgwhites@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 9:28 AM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang; Stouder, Heather; All Alders; Wachter, Matthew; Baumel, Christie; Brown, Ian K.
Subject: Oppose Bike Path in Sauk Creek Greenway

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Commissioners and City Officials: **Have you personally visited the 26-acre Sauk Creek Greenway?** If not, with all due respect, you haven't done due diligence on the question of a paved, shared-use path in the greenway. Simply reviewing maps and reading staff memos is insufficient preparation for such a consequential decision.

Our earth is in crisis. Governments should be conserving as much green space and tree canopy as possible to mitigate the effects of climate change. But in Madison, city planners are conducting business as usual. They're promoting a plan that was first proposed in 1991--and rendered irrelevant by today's climate crisis.

Planners see the greenway as a mere "transportation corridor" and are dismissive of residents who object to a bicycle path. Immediate neighbors have personal concerns about privacy and security. But they and hundreds of others cherish the greenway as an environmental asset that contributes to everyone's quality of life. Sauk Creek Greenway is one of precious few remaining natural spaces in Madison. It helps mitigate the effects of climate change and provides habitat for animals, birds and wildflowers.

The planning process itself has been disillusioning because of the city's indifference to citizen concerns. Planners asked for feedback on a proposed bike path, residents objected and now the planners are proceeding with their own vision and priorities. They're applying the same three-step protocol they've used in other Madison neighborhoods: (1) Ask for input on plans, (2) receive well-supported criticism from property owners and (3) ignore it. Owners are expected to pay ever higher property taxes and fees every year, while ceding control over their own neighborhoods.

We're urging you to consider the long-term effects of a paved, shared-use path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. It will be bad for the environment, it will reinforce residents' feelings of being marginalized and it will provoke continuing conflict with City Hall. Please exercise your independent judgment and stop this ill-advised plan.

Respectfully,

Ginny and Larry White
71 Oak Creek Trail
Madison 53717
608-821-0056

Cleveland, Julie

From: Brian S. <bgswis@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 5:50 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang
Cc: Wachter, Matthew; Stouder, Heather; All Alders
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan**. I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded (5000+ trees) and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway because:

A. The City and our Alder have ignored significant feedback against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway; therefore **we have not had a true engagement process**. A bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings.

Numerous petitions were obtained and submitted at the Common Council meeting on Nov. 15, 2022-Legistar file 73264-agenda number 1, and **new ones** will be attached to this agenda item; **27 + objections** were written to the Transportation Commission for its meeting on Aug. 8, 2023, after the neighborhoods first found out a path was shown in the Complete Street Guide while the engagement process was underway Legistar file 79282 agenda item three. The neighborhoods were **never informed of the inclusion of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway** when it was first introduced on Nov. 2, 2022 Legistar file 74436 agenda number and passed on January 3, 2023 Legistar file 74926 BEFORE the engagement process started in February 2023.

Per the first phase planning survey, **69 other residents had/have concerns about a path** in the Sauk Creek greenway; in addition, **27 residents in the second phase two survey were against a path** compared to 6 who were for a path. Staff said in its memo that they continue to support this feedback. This does **not coincide** with the above numbers or other noted feedback.

B. **The City planners claim that the path goes back 30+ years. THIS IS INCORRECT** because the Park and Open Space plans do not apply to the Sauk Creek greenway, and the 2000 MPO Bike Plan said a Sauk Creek path was listed as **a third priority** given "suitable on-road routes exist". The 2015 MPO bike report said there is **not a bike gap** in the neighborhood and refers to the following roads that are within 1000+ feet of the greenway: Westfield Road, as primary bike road and High Point Road, a secondary bike road. **Most importantly, this is the root document** that the City then used for other reports (2018 Comprehensive Plan, etc.) and the neighborhood was not notified about it to have its voice heard. The neighborhood first heard about it at the March 2018 City Engineering meeting on the greenway.

C. City staff mentioned in its memo to you for your Dec. 7 meeting that residents' concerns include that the path will cause safety concerns (dangerous), increase crime, lead to losing too many trees,

does not connect to anything, negatively impacts wildlife, increase runoff, costs too much to build and maintain, and increases noise and litter. This is all true and these concerns were **summarily dismissed by City staff without substantitive evidence to the contrary**. In addition, the staff **ignores strong environmental concerns** from residents, some of whom are scholars and researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other paths that staff mentions are not comparable for several reasons. Those paths did not require cutting down massive numbers of trees to build the paths; the other bike paths were platted before the homeowners acquired their lots; the paths are near commercial uses and not the 90% frontage of homes that abut the Sauk Creek greenway eliminating a buffer to the homes; the other paths are longer than .8 miles etc. The other paths did not cause significant animal displacement such as the coyotes, foxes, owls, deer, and birds that live in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

D. The City is incorporating in the streets “safe” bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the **nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road**, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline.

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City’s Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,

Brian Shore

Cleveland, Julie

From: Lora Burchill <lburchill@tds.net>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:05 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang; Wachter, Matthew; Stouder, Heather; All Alders
Subject: Sauk Creek Greenway Bike Path Objection

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

To Whom It May Concern:

As area residents, we object to a bike path running through the Sauk Creek Conservancy. We even more strongly oppose a lighted pathway. While the green space needs managed due to the invasive plants particularly the buckthorn and mustard, it is our strong desire that this space remain "wild". We have regular spottings of turkey, deer and fox in the neighborhood. This space is essential habitat in a city that should be maintaining and protecting its remaining public natural spaces. Lighting this space adds insult to injury regarding destruction of this area. Most major cities along the bird migratory paths (Minneapolis, Chicago, etc.) are working hard to reduce lighting to aid wild animals. This proposal moves the opposite direction. Someone should study the impact it would have on the bird population.

Secondly, we are avid walkers and regularly commute using our e-bike when the weather is fair. Despite living a few hundred yards from the conservancy, we have never had a desire to cross the space on a bike. High Point Rd and Westfield-Farmington both are bikable roadways running parallel to the proposed pathway. Because of the green space, there are few through streets and only scant cross traffic on this stretch of road. We feel safe riding these alternatives and no of no biking incidents in this area.

Lastly, the proposed path connects to no trail on either end. If it were part of a larger bike system (perhaps running to downtown Middleton), I could get behind the idea of a permeable pathway without lighting, but this proposition literally goes nowhere.

Lora and Todd Burchill
2 Gray Fox Circle
Madison, WI 53717
312-919-9952

Cleveland, Julie

From: Brent Denton <bdenton@uwalumni.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 7:28 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: 07-Dec Plan Commission Meeting: Legistar #81028

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello,

With regard to the West Area Plan Discussion Points, Item 9 - Sauk Creek Greenway Shared-Use Path, the information presented is misleading: this greenway is at least an order of magnitude smaller than the smallest example given (Pheasant Branch) and would be decimated by the installation of the proposed path. Furthermore, although the linked summaries do include feedback by many neighbors (36 and 92, respectively) that bike paths should be expanded, even more neighbors (79 and 62, respectively) provided feedback that greenspaces must be preserved. To effectively lose a greenway for a bike path, in an area which is already filled with bike paths and which would not create any new biking connections, does not match the community feedback received. I am therefore firmly opposed to the proposed path for the greenway.

I care very much about our greenspaces, and am happy with the public input being solicited for the related Sauk Creek Greenway project - further discussion regarding a path going through the greenway should be combined with that project so that proper community feedback can be obtained.

Sincerely,
Brent Denton

7814 W Oakbrook Cir

From: [Heather RoseNagel](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Highlands neighborhood
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:55:50 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

What can realistically be gained by changing the zoning my neighborhood from Tr-r to SR-C1 other than the destruction of many old growth trees due to the forced installation of sidewalks no one in the neighborhood wants and some perceived increase in buildable lots? I say perceived because it is unlikely any of us will be selling off small bits of property to be developed. This is a threat in paperwork only but it will upset all of us. What happens to our neighborhood should be determined by our neighborhood. It is wrong to rezone us without even consulting us!

Thank you,
Heather Rose-Nagel
6241 S Highlands Ave

Cleveland, Julie

From: Tom Jacobs <jthomasjacobs@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 9:10 AM
To: Slack, Kristen; Plan Commission Comments
Subject: Opposition to zoning change in the Madison Highlands neighborhood

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello,

I learned less than 12 hours ago that a public hearing is taking place on December 7 regarding the city of Madison staff recommending to the planning commission to change the zoning of the neighborhood I have lived in for 18 years. I am concerned that I had not received a notice in the mail, or by any means, that this issue was being discussed or advanced without notice to me or to my neighbors in the Highlands neighborhood.

I am writing to voice my objection to any change in our neighborhood zoning that would reduce our lot size and would take away the wonderful park like atmosphere and benefit that attracted many of us to this neighborhood. The neighborhood was designed in a manner to take advantage of the many trees and many public park areas with walkable paths. The Highlands Avenue loop is well traveled by our family, our neighbors and by many who live outside the Highlands neighborhood who come here to walk the loop and the many wooded pathways all year round.

Madison is a unique city for many reasons, and is highly revered by the people that live here and by those who admire the city. The Highlands neighborhood is a work of art that is a city gem, it is a unique neighborhood that should be preserved. Kindly do not take our park away from us.

Please do not accept Staff's recommendation to change our zoning, and please be more forthcoming on these matters by apprising residents of such significant matters that affect all of us within the neighborhood and without.

Thank you.

Tom Jacobs
6204 S Highlands Ave
Madison, Wi 53705
608-220-7777

Tom Jacobs
608-220-7777

Cleveland, Julie

From: Justin Koepsel <jkoepsel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:09 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: 81029 - Proactive Rezoning Opposition

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Madison Plan Commission,

I am writing to formally oppose 81029, Agenda Item 8 “Proactive Rezoning” within Planning Division Staff memo 12-7-23. I am just receiving notification that this topic will be discussed on December 7th, 2023.

The TR-R zoning status for the Highlands neighborhood is a critical attribute to preserving this unique part of our community. Everyday people from neighboring communities visit this neighborhood as a respite from city life and this is enabled by the rustic feel and low traffic environment. It hosts numerous wildlife (deer, turkey, foxes, coyotes, hawks, owls, etc) and abundant plantlife that would be at risk if the area is allowed to be further developed as SRC1 zoning. The Highlands is a historic wonder of a thriving Madison community and we want it to be preserved for generations to come.

In the future, it would be great to have a way to weigh in on these decisions. Seeing this agenda item was a surprise since there was no prior public mention of these plans. Please let me know how I can stay apprise of similar issues in the future.

Sincerely,

Justin Koepsel

6218 South Highlands Ave

Madison, WI 53705

Cleveland, Julie

From: Patrick Rindfleisch <porindfleisch@icloud.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 7:35 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang; Stouder, Heather; Wachter, Matthew; All Alders
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan**. I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded (5000+ trees) and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway because:

A. The City and our Alder have ignored significant feedback against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway; therefore **we have not had a true engagement process**. A bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings.

Numerous petitions were obtained and submitted at the Common Council meeting on Nov. 15, 2022-Legistar file 73264-agenda number 1, and **new ones** will be attached to this agenda item; **27 + objections** were written to the Transportation Commission for its meeting on Aug. 8, 2023, after the neighborhoods first found out a path was shown in the Complete Street Guide while the engagement process was underway Legistar file 79282 agenda item three. The neighborhoods were **never informed of the inclusion of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway** when it was first introduced on Nov. 2, 2022 Legistar file 74436 agenda number and passed on January 3, 2023 Legistar file 74926 BEFORE the engagement process started in February 2023.

Per the first phase planning survey, **69 other residents had/have concerns about a path** in the Sauk Creek greenway; in addition, **27 residents in the second phase two survey were against a path** compared to 6 who were for a path. Staff said in its memo that they continue to support this feedback. This does **not coincide** with the above numbers or other noted feedback.

B. The City planners claim that the path goes back 30+ years. THIS IS INCORRECT because the Park and Open Space plans do not apply to the Sauk Creek greenway, and the 2000 MPO Bike Plan said a Sauk Creek path was listed as a **third priority** given “suitable on-road routes exist”. The 2015 MPO bike report said there is **not a bike gap** in the neighborhood and refers to the following roads that are within 1000+ feet of the greenway: Westfield Road, as primary bike road and High Point Road, a secondary bike road. **Most importantly, this is the root document** that the City then used for other reports (2018 Comprehensive Plan, etc.) and the neighborhood was not notified about it to have its voice heard. The neighborhood first heard about it at the March 2018 City Engineering meeting on the greenway.

C. City staff mentioned in its memo to you for your Dec. 7 meeting that residents' concerns include that the path will cause safety concerns (dangerous), increase crime, lead to losing too many trees, does not connect to anything, negatively impacts wildlife, increase runoff, costs too much to build and maintain, and increases noise and litter. This is all true and these concerns were **summarily dismissed by City staff without substantive evidence to the contrary**. In addition, the staff **ignores strong environmental concerns** from residents, some of whom are scholars and researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other paths that staff

mentions are not comparable for several reasons. Those paths did not require cutting down massive numbers of trees to build the paths; the other bike paths were platted before the homeowners acquired their lots; the paths are near commercial uses and not the 90% frontage of homes that abut the Sauk Creek greenway eliminating a buffer to the homes; the other paths are longer than .8 miles etc. The other paths did not cause significant animal displacement such as the coyotes, foxes, owls, deer, and birds that live in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

D. The City is incorporating in the streets “safe” bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the **nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road**, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline.

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City’s Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,

Patrick & Jennifer Rindfleisch
14 Canvasback Circle

Sent from my iPhone

Cleveland, Julie

From: Ellen Schneiderman <ejks73@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 7:32 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments; Conklin, Nikki; Mayor; Lynch, Thomas; Tao, Yang; Stouder, Heather; Wachter, Matthew; All Alders
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

RE: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting. I strongly urge the commission to remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bike path from the West Area Plan. I am adamantly opposed to a bike path being constructed in the auk Creek Greenway.

The City and our Alder have ignored significant feedback from constituents against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway and we have not had a true engagement process. A bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings.

Numerous petitions were submitted at the Common Council meeting on Nov. 15, 2022 (Legistar file 73264 agenda number 1) and additional signatures be attached to this agenda item. More than two dozen written objections were submitted to the Transportation Commission for its meeting on Aug. 8, 2023 after the Sauk Creek residents found out a path was shown in the Complete Street Guide while the engagement process was underway (Legistar file 79282 agenda number 3). Additionally, the area residents were never informed of the inclusion of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway when it was introduced on Nov. 2, 2022 (Legistar file 74436) and subsequently passed on January 3, 2023 (Legistar file 74926), all prior to the engagement process beginning in February 2023.

Per the first phase planning survey, 69 area residents expressed concerns about a path in the Sauk Creek greenway. 27 additional residents were agains the path in the second phase two survey while just six residents indicated support.

City staff mentioned in its memo to you for your Dec. 7 meeting that residents', have concerns regarding the proposed path including: safety, increased crime, loss of trees, negative impact to wildlife, increased runoff, increased noise and litter, and excessive cost for construction and maintenance. These concerns seem to have been summarily dismissed by city staff.

The City is incorporating in the streets “safe” bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid the redundancy of a bike path in the Sauk Creek greenway by using the nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall, and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road (per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo).

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a Sauk Creek greenway bike path from the West Area Plan.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

-Ellen Schneiderman
Brule Circle

Cleveland, Julie

From: JEFF WIESNER <jdwiesner@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 8:30 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: Fwd: Highlands Zoning Changes

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Begin forwarded message:

From: JEFF WIESNER <jdwiesner@aol.com>
Date: December 4, 2023 at 3:05:03 PM CST
To: district19@cityofmadison.com
Subject: **Highlands Zoning Changes**

Alder Slack - I see absolutely no reasonable justification for the current proposal to eliminate the TR-R zoning that governs the Highlands neighborhood, nor do I see any valid reason to change lot size limits from .6 of an acre to .18 acre.

Development density may be an overall goal of the city, but in this case it is an approach that will ruin a neighborhood that is a park-like setting. Why in the world would the city propose this, and why would they propose this without engaging the Highlands Home Association in the discussion.

This sounds like a city staff proposal with no efforts to hear the voice of the neighborhood. Seems like they have learned nothing from the Lake Mendota Drive outcry from those who were impacted by that without any involvement or communication.

I hope that you will fight this on our behalf and get these proposals dropped from the West Area Plan.

Jeff & Sara Wiesner
6202 N. Highlands Ave
Madison

Cleveland, Julie

From: JP Yu <john.paul.yu@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 10:49 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Cc: Julia Unger
Subject: OPPOSITION to proposed City of Madison Zoning Change (Highlands; TR-R)

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To Whom It May Concern:

We are homeowners and residents of the Highlands Community (6206 South Highlands Ave, Madison, WI 53705). We were informed this afternoon by Andrew Bent and the Highlands Community Association of a planned agenda item at the upcoming December 7th City of Madison Plan Commission meeting that seeks to eliminate the TR-R zoning of the Highlands and change it to SRC1.

We **strongly oppose** this change.

The Planning Division's failure to actively seek resident input into this important change is disappointing and plainly suggests their disregard for the residents that these changes would impact. Further, the Planning Division staff note in their proposal that TR-R was created to preserve large lots in the area in question and also note the statement of purpose for TR-R which is stated in the Zoning code: "to stabilize and protect the natural beauty, historic character and park-like setting of certain heavily wooded low-density residential neighborhoods."

Their brief (unjustified) justification for eliminated TR-R zoning district includes the opinion that: "*Historic character would be better protected through a local historic district rather than creating a specific zoning district for one neighborhood, and protecting tree canopy through requiring large lots is at odds with other sustainability goals of the City.*" They provide no evidence to support this claim.

Further, this logic and justification fails on multiple levels:

1. They fail to address that the natural beauty and park-like setting protected by TR-R zoning, as well as the historic character, derive to a substantial extent from the larger lot sizes.
2. The intended outcome of this proposal, increased urban infill and land utilization, would be inadequately and under supported by the lack of public transportation infrastructure, municipal services (city water and sewer, lift stations, all of which would not meet code requirements), and road usage limits currently in place. In fact, to support the population density desired by SRC1 zoning, the neighborhood would require enormous infrastructure and civil engineering investments with anticipated environmental impacts that run counter to the purported purpose of this change.
3. The proposal also misses the concept that the goal of city planning and zoning is not to push all parts of the city toward high density but is rather to promote specific favorable use patterns for specific areas. Our neighborhood currently enjoys high usage patterns from many in adjoining neighborhoods. The committee fails to understand and anticipate the reverberating effects – human, social, and environmental – that such a change would bring about.
4. Lastly, the planning commission is seeking to change and fix a problem that does not need fixing. Our neighborhood has already demonstrated a longstanding commitment to sustainability, environmental stewardship, and community that requires no redress.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration and for your support in our community's opposition to this change.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Kind regards,

JP Yu and Julia Unger
6206 S. Highlands Ave., Madison
Cell: 415-994-1037; 650-400-9524
Email: john.paul.yu@gmail.com; julia.unger@gmail.com

Cleveland, Julie

From: V Martin <vmartin368@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 6:16 AM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: Highlands rezoning
Attachments: Madison's Highland Book.pdf

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To the City of Madison Planning Commission

Please take a moment to read the attached short book about the Highlands by Norman K. Risjord, professor of history, written in 1988. It truly relates a bit of the history of the Highlands, "A Community with a Land Ethic". My wife and I live in the Highlands, and we would be devastated to see rezoning of the Highlands current zoning of TR-R, Madison's only rustic designation. It is our belief that any decision to change zoning could, over time, completely change the character of this very special neighborhood. It is part of Madison's history, it is used by bikers, hikers, joggers, and is a resource for anyone wishing to step away from conventional neighborhood platting to enjoy a park-like setting. It is not a "private" community, but a shared area, with embedded parks and hiking trails. A sudden zoning change, without debate and consideration is, at the very least, short-sighted. Once significantly changed, the area can never be recovered. This new trend of "high density" should not be applied to every neighborhood in Madison, nor should it be the goal of the planning commission to rezone simply to create density where it is not warranted. This idea of density, introduced throughout Madison, would certainly change the character of the city, overall. It may not be the best vision for our city, and we simply ask for very careful thought and debate prior to going forward with any final decisions regarding any of our neighborhoods. If you have taken the time to read this letter, and are willing to read Norman Risjord's booklet, we thank you.

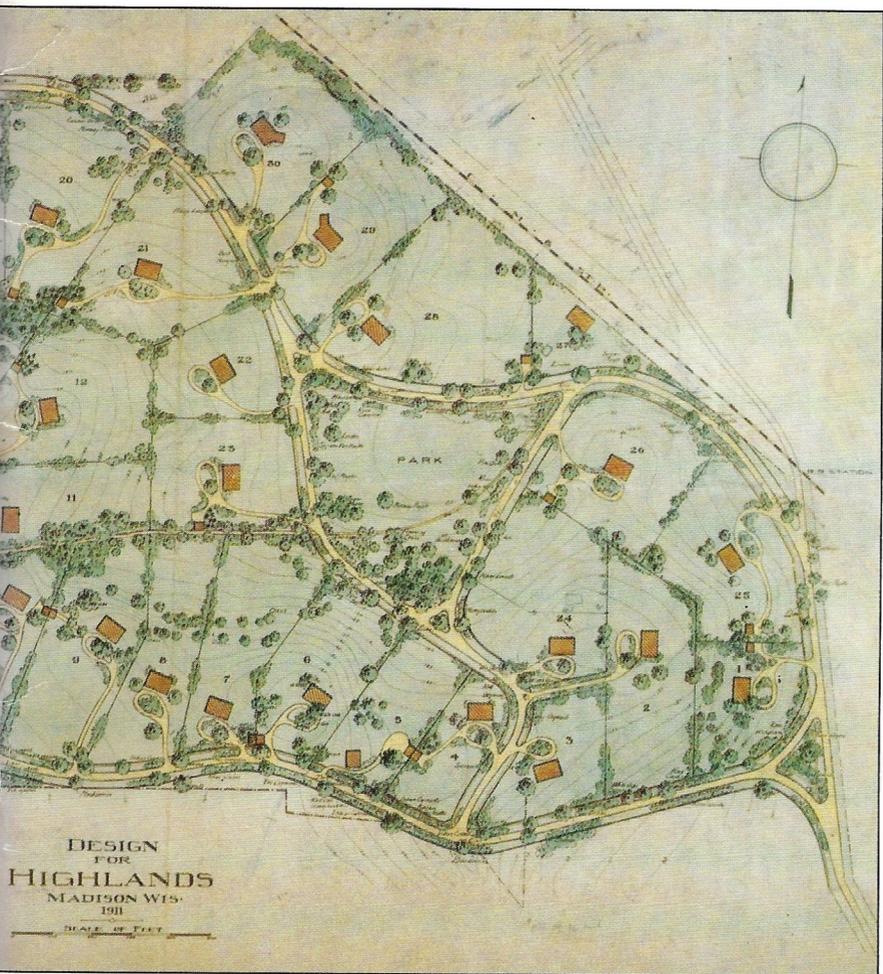
Sincerely,

Harold & Valerie Martin

MADISON'S HIGHLANDS

A Community With a Land Ethic

by Norman K. Risjord





*W. H. Lighty and his sons, Russell and Paul,
ca., 1918.*



*View of the Highlands from the back of the Lighty house, ca. 1920.
Lake Mendota can be seen in the distance.*

MADISON'S HIGHLANDS



*A Community
With a Land Ethic*

by

NORMAN K. RISJORD
Professor of History
University of Wisconsin-Madison

MADISON, 1988

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Published by The Highlands Association

Designed, Typeset and Produced by Impressions, Inc.,
Madison, Wisconsin

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people helped to assemble the raw materials for this unusual piece of neighborhood history. I am especially indebted to Patience Roggensack for providing me with a xerox copy of the original Highlands brochure, as well as the reminiscences of Jackman Pyre and George Icke. Nancy Mead provided me with the snapshots of the Lighty House and of the Highlands ca. 1920. She also loaned me her own notes of Paul Lighty's oral reminiscences. And, finally, I wish to express special thanks to George Icke for lending me his colored reproduction of the Highlands plat and for helping me to identify the original developers. The Highlands Association financed the publication of this project. Its flaws are my own.

Norman K. Risjord
South Highlands Ave.
Madison

MADISON'S HIGHLANDS

Where others saw a hillside farm planted in corn and oats, a few Madison men envisioned a community of people with a special relationship to the land. They named it the Highlands and formed a company to develop it. The year was 1911.

The hillside farm rested on one of a series of hills that formed the western slope of the great basin that houses Madison's lakes. There was little to distinguish the Highlands from the rolling farmland that stretched northward toward the village of Middleton and south toward the road to Mineral Point. Years past, the oak-dotted prairie known to the Indians had been converted to cropland and pasture. The Miner family farmed this particular hillside. Their house, built in 1860, sat near the crest of the hill facing south toward the winter sun as it stands today at 6010 South Highlands Avenue (the Meads').

The men who formed the Highlands Company were quite familiar with the area. Ernest N. Warner, president of the company, was a Madison lawyer who owned a farm to the northwest of the Miner property (now the Skyline

development). Edward T. Owen, the company's vice-president, was a university professor who owned a farm to the south of the Miners' across Old Sauk Road (present-day Owen Park). On the board of directors was Andrew R. Whitson, a state geologist, who lived on Old Sauk Road just downhill from the one-room schoolhouse (now Crestwood School) where the neighboring farm children learned their ABCs. A single teacher held sway over all eight grades, a total of 28 to 30 children. She took recitation from one grade at a time, while the others studied. Older girls helped with the youngest children. The school had neither water nor electricity. Each day a pair of boys carried two pails down to the Whitsons', or across the road to the Owens', to fetch drinking water. The teacher, lacking accommodations of her own, boarded two weeks at a time with the farm families.

What did these men see in the Highlands that held more promise for development than the lands they already held? Most likely, it was the convenience of road and rail access. At the base of the Highlands the dirt road that wound northwesterly from Madison to Middleton crossed the tracks of the Milwaukee Railroad, whose trains commuted daily between Madison and the farm marketing centers of the West. The Highlands was some five miles west of the city limit, which was then the University of Wisconsin campus. The Highlands investors knew that if their residential experiment was to be a success, its people must have easy access to the city. The Middleton Road was a convenient carriage route; it could even be navigated by the new-fangled automobiles. But the key was the railroad, which provided a faster, cheaper, and smoother ride into the city. Stopping

the train at the road crossing required only a handwave by day or a burning paper torch signal by night.

The first brochure put out by the Highlands investors revealed their concern for transportation. It stressed the convenience of the Milwaukee Road stop, and it noted that a proposed "Interurban Railway," which was then being surveyed, would "pass about two blocks from the entrance to the Highlands." The brochure also promised that "the lots are so large that those desiring to do so can keep horses or automobiles thus providing a number of methods of transportation." Expanding on this theme, the investors pointed out that it was "only a short walk" from the Highlands to Mendota Beach, where in summertime one could catch a "steamer" across the lake to the city. Finally, the investors reminded potential buyers that the university was then in the process of acquiring the Raymer and Olin farms at Picnic Point and Eagle Heights. Since these were, in the view of the investors, natural sites for future classroom buildings, the university itself would soon be "but a short distance" from the Highlands.

The Highlands Company, formed in 1911, hired Chicago landscape architect Ossian Cole Simonds to lay out the plat. This was a significant move, for it meant that the Highlands from the beginning was to be something other than the ordinary. Simonds was one of the best-known landscape architects in the country. He had designed parks and cemeteries in a dozen mid-western cities, including Tenney Park and Vilas Park in the city of Madison. Just two years before the Highlands Company retained him, Simonds had founded at the University of Michigan the first four-year landscape architecture program in the midwest. Thus the

Highlands would become the visual embodiment of the landscape philosophy of Ossian C. Simonds.

Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1855, Simonds graduated from the University of Michigan in 1878 with a degree in civil engineering. His first job was with a Chicago engineering firm that had a contract to install a lagoon in Chicago's Graceland Cemetery. When Simonds finished the lagoon, he became interested in landscaping the remainder of the cemetery. The Cemetery Association obliged and made him its director in 1881. He held the post until 1898 when he left to go into business for himself.

The profession of landscape architecture (or landscape gardening as it was more commonly known) was then in its infancy. The handbooks and models were nearly all of English origin. Through the nineteenth century the designers of landed estates for the wealthy merchants of New York and Philadelphia followed English patterns. They installed neatly trimmed hedges in geometrical patterns, and they laid out square or oval plots for evenly spaced rows of flowers, selected for a harmonious blend of colors. The first American to break from this tradition was Frederick Law Olmsted, a traveler/journalist of the Civil War era. (His *Journey through the Cotton Kingdom*, 1861, is one of the classics of travel literature.) His travels convinced Olmsted that the natural landscape was far more beautiful than anything that could be devised by man. He got an opportunity to apply this principle when he won a competition to design New York's Central Park in 1872. Olmsted's plan involved retaining the natural features of the landscape, including most of the vegetation. When planting was necessary, he used native species, rather than exotic imports. A purist to the

soul, Olmsted even built a wall around the park to limit access by people.

The success of Central Park earned Olmsted commissions to design parks in other eastern cities, and he went on to write numerous books and articles on the preservation of nature in landscape design. Simonds absorbed Olmsted's writings and adapted his principles to the prairie lands of the American midwest. Graceland Cemetery was his laboratory. Since the prairie that was once there had long since been destroyed, Simonds sought to restore the past by planting native species, not just of prairie grasses and flowers, but native shrubs and trees, such as hawthorne, wild plum, oaks, and sugar maples.

Less a purist than Olmsted, Simonds sought to make the landscape work for people. In this he retained some of the elements of the English picturesque tradition. Simonds felt that the virgin prairie was a drab, even forbidding landscape, a flat vista that stretched dutifully toward an unattainable horizon. He humanized his landscapes by imposing splashes of vertical greenery, soothing in summer and colorful in autumn. His favorite design form he called "the long view," which was in fact a confined—and therefore comfortable—vista created by a narrow opening between vegetation yet blocked by a terminal vista. His "long views" were the most famous feature of the Graceland Cemetery, and he experimented with them again in the design of the Highlands. (The effect he sought can best be experienced today by walking down South Highlands Avenue under the canopy of oak trees. The road bends just enough to block a view of its terminus at Old Middleton Road until one is almost upon the intersection.)

There was yet another possible influence on Simonds, which may have shaped his thinking when he took up his pen to plat the Highlands—the concept of the City Beautiful. The principal promoter of this approach to the urban environment was another Chicago-based architect, Daniel Hudson Burnham. Burnham had risen to national prominence by designing a “Great White City” on Chicago’s lakefront to house the Columbian Exposition in 1893 (celebrating the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America). Burnham’s vision was that architecture could influence human behavior—that a well-planned city with spacious avenues, pure-white buildings, and monuments as reminders of a glorious past would inspire virtuous behavior and public spirit among its inhabitants. The idea appealed to Progressives (a political reform movement led nationally by President Theodore Roosevelt and in Wisconsin by Governor/Senator Robert M. LaFollette), who were deeply concerned about crime and disorder in the nation’s cities.

Simonds was almost certainly acquainted with Burnham’s idea of the influence of environment on behavior. Both men were members of Chicago’s numerous clubs devoted to art and design. And Simonds could hardly have escaped an acquaintance with the City Beautiful movement since it permeated the field of urban planning in the years prior to World War I. The federal government even gave it its blessing when it retained Burnham in 1905 to plan the city of Manila in the Philippines.

Whether or not they were aware of Burnham’s views on city planning, the Highlands investors were almost certainly familiar with the main currents of Progressive thought. On the Board of Directors of the Highlands Company (which only contained five men) was University of Wis-

consin sociology Professor Edward A. Ross, whose book *Sin and Society*, published just four years earlier, was a scathing indictment of the ethics of American business corporations. The book, for which President Theodore Roosevelt himself wrote an introduction, had earned Ross instant national prominence. His aphorism “there is nothing like distance to disinfect dividends” became one of the slogans of the Progressive movement. More important, for the purposes of the Highlands story, was Ross’s sociology. Like Daniel Burnham, he believed that people were influenced by their surroundings. He called for a sociology of “pure environmentalism,” “methods of analyzing society which recognize that relationships to property have something to do with what men think.”

Given this view of behavior and his national reputation, Ross was a logical candidate for the Highlands’ Board of Directors. Those familiar with his ideas would find depth and meaning in the enterprise. The proposed community would be more than a tawdry real estate speculation. Ross himself bought a parcel in the Highlands although he later sold it without ever building.

In laying out the Highlands plat, Ossian Simonds applied his design principles as best he could, given the lack of vegetation. The roads he marked out curved gracefully and followed the natural contours of the landscape. The principal road formed a rough horseshoe that began near the railroad crossing and climbed gently to the West before curving to the top of the hill and then returning steeply to the Middleton Road. A sort of back entryway (a public right-of-way since the 1880s) allowed access to Old Sauk Road from the top of the hill. On the northward slope of the hill a triangular plot of several acres was preserved as a

public park. Simonds' plan called for the planting of sugar maple trees on the southern and western edges of the park. They can still be seen today, and in the springtime yield their sap to a few of the more enterprising members of the Highlands community. With meticulous care Simonds specified the plantings for every roadside, choosing wild roses, wild plums, hawthorns, barberry, "Indian currents," red maples, white oaks, and elms.

A Highlands Association was formed in 1912 to preserve the development as Simonds had planned it. The Association was particularly concerned that the sizable estates envisioned by the developers were not carved into smaller parcels. It also continued the job of landscaping the roadways, obtaining shrubs from the university's botanical garden that would provide food and cover for birds.

It was some years before the Highlands lost its pastoral character. The first resident of the new subdivision was Professor W. H. Lighty, who purchased the Miner homestead and was living there when the Highlands was platted. Lighty had been a social settlement worker in St. Louis before coming to Madison in 1906 to develop correspondence courses for the University Extension. Later, in 1922, when the university radio station WHA began broadcasting, Lighty was made its first program director. An escapee from the city, Lighty kept his Highlands environment determinedly pastoral. He kept a small flock of sheep in his yard, and he tethered a cow in the community park. He also planted an apple orchard up the hill from his house, the first of many intrusions on Ossian Simonds' plans for a natural landscape. Lighty used the railroad for transportation into Madison, but he rode his horse to the trainstop. A story, firmly embedded in Highlands lore, is that the horse

would return home alone in the morning and then go back to meet the train in the afternoon, receiving a nosebag of oats as its reward. To keep the horse happy in the interim Lighty invented an automatic feeder, paced by an alarm clock that dropped oats into a bin automatically at 12:00 noon.

The brochure of the Highlands Company specified that the "Highlands has been planned as a place in which to make your permanent home, not as a place for summer cottages. Each home may properly be called a small estate." The brochure went on to provide pictures of the sort of houses the developers had in mind—stately, multi-storied dwellings that required means but not necessarily vast wealth. Initially, they had only one taker. Walter Hart, a university mathematics professor, purchased a multi-acre tract along the Middleton Road at the base of the hill. The house he built in 1911, which he placed on the upper end of his tract for maximum view, corresponded closely to the samples in the Highlands brochure. But otherwise construction must have seemed discouragingly slow. In 1916 John Icke began purchasing from the Highlands Company a thirteen acre tract on the northern edge of the plat and put it to the plow. For more than two decades the Icke property remained a truck farm, as Icke grew fruits and vegetables for the Madison market. Icke was a building contractor who lived in Madison; his children, three sons and a daughter, worked the garden patch. One of the sons, George, who presently resides on a portion of the original farm, remembers raising 5,000 quarts of strawberries in 1929 and being put through college on the proceeds from the asparagus patch.

Not only was construction slow in coming, but the

developers' vision of year-around homes was not always met. In 1915 Professor Julius Francis Augustus Pyre (who for understandable reasons preferred the nickname "Sonny") began construction of a summer cottage a short distance up the hill from Hart's establishment. As summer cottages went, however, it almost certainly suited the requirements of the developers. Built in the style of a Swiss chalet, it was commodious enough so that Professor Pyre, a Shakespearian scholar in the university's English Department, later moved in with his family on a permanent basis.

By the time the Pyre house was completed, two others were under construction. The sharp increase in the pace of building may well have been due to the increased availability of automobiles (Henry Ford introduced the moving assembly line in 1913), which made the Highlands more accessible. Both of the new homes were magnificent structures that did justice to their spacious settings. Thomas Brittingham, who had made his fortune in the lumber business, built his house on a ten-acre estate on the southern edge of the Highlands plat, with private access to the Old Sauk Road. Brittingham's son, Thomas Jr., became in the 1930s the manager of investment funds for the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. The Brittingham family left large endowments to the University of Wisconsin, including, in the end, their Highlands estate, which is now the home of the university's president.

Even more grandiose was the house built in 1916 by Dr. Frederick Davis and his wife Edith. Dr. Davis was a world renowned eye surgeon, and his wife was the daughter of Magnus Swenson, the Norwegian-American who invented the modern method of sugar refining. The mansion, named Edenfred (a contraction of the couples' names) can

only be described as unique. Built of red brick in the Georgian style, Edenfred's principal feature is a dramatic entry portico graced with great white Corinthian columns. The house is 180 feet wide and only one room (26 feet) deep. The purpose of this odd shape was evidently two fold: to allow for maximum ventilation and to give every room access to the view. And the view is memorable. Situated at the crest of the hill, the house commands a twenty-mile vista stretching to the far shores of Lake Mendota. The Davises counted among their friends president Herbert Hoover and the prince/president of Norway. Personages from around the world have stayed in Edenfred's guest rooms.

The Brittingham house and Edenfred set the tone for the Highlands and fulfilled the developers' vision of a community of landed estates. When construction resumed in the 1920s the tradition was firmly established. But tradition also clashed with modernization because more people meant more automobiles. Because the noisy contraptions spooked horses, the Highlands Association tried to reserve the roadways around the community park for horses only. When the Association finally yielded to technology, it limited automobile usage to certain hours only.

In 1925 Dr. William A. Beecroft began construction of one of the Highlands most distinctive residences. It was a copy of a chalet that the Beecrofts had seen in Normandy, France, complete with stone walls, turrets, and slate roof. The slate was brought from the East by rail and then hauled by horse and wagon from the Middleton station. Dr. Beecroft, known in Madison as the founder of three of the city's motion picture theaters, lived in the house until his wife died in the mid-1950s. He then sold the chalet, divided

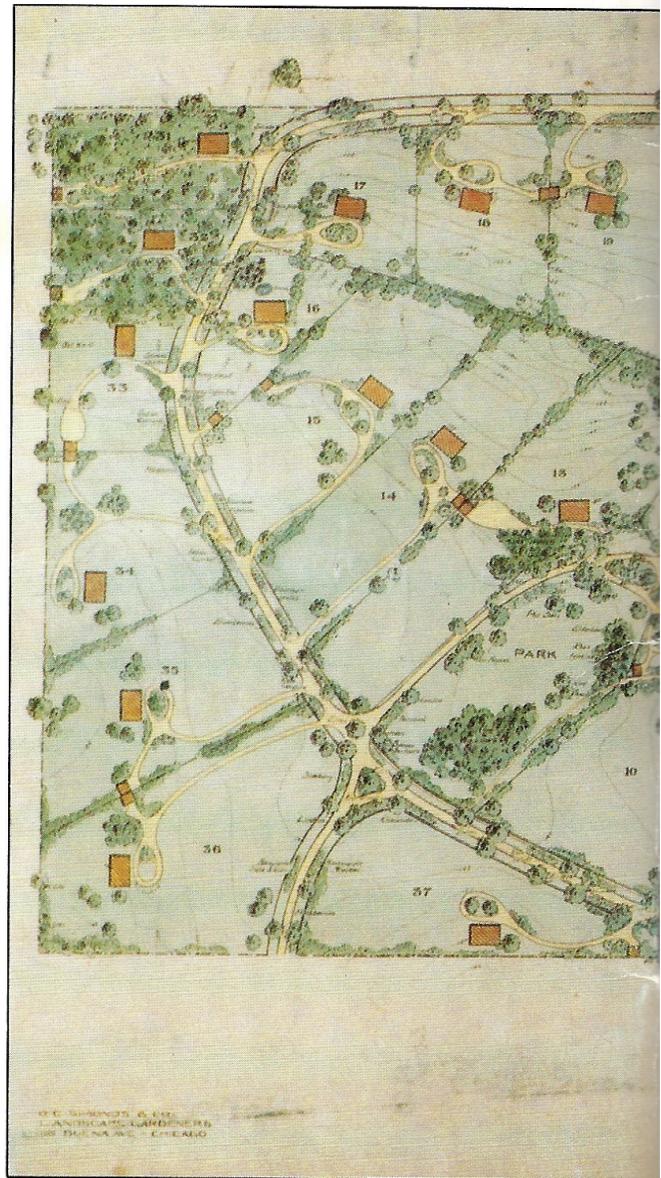
the property, and built on the downhill side a trim, modern house of brick and redwood. Such eclecticism has characterized Highlands building since the 1920s. The Mattox house (1934) is modeled on a French farmhouse, even to the point of having a preplanned sag in the roofline. The Eckert house, designed by the same Chicago architect, is Georgian. The more recent ones, built in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, are varieties of “modern.”

Although house design has varied with time and taste, the cohesive feature of the Highlands community is respect for the integrity of the land. Many of those who built when the vegetation was still sparse have maintained the land as they found it. The Mattox house, situated like Edenfred on the crest of the hill, overlooks acres of wildflowers as well as the distant shoreline of Lake Mendota. The Cheneys, whose parcel on North Highlands bordered on the old Icke farm, have carefully nourished a plot of prairie grasses.

Those who arrived in the Highlands after World War II found the remaining land overgrown with natural vegetation—oaks, elms, maples, buckthorn, and box elder—planted for the most part in the way Ossian Simonds would have approved, by birds and squirrels, and by the wind. Most of the newcomers nestled their homes amidst the trees, disturbing as little of the landscape as possible. The result is a community of tree-lined streets, kept in as primitive a condition as safety will allow, curving gracefully through a patchwork of woodlands and clearings, revealing a new facet of nature at every step.

Ossian Simonds could have wished for no finer monument.

SIMONDS' PLAT FOR THE HIGHLANDS, 1911
Orient the map by the railroad track and the Middleton Road.
Note that the roads are almost exactly as they are today.
With meticulous care, Simonds specified every planting.
Some of the trees he asked for are still there today.



MADISON'S HIGHLANDS

A Community With a Land Ethic

by Norman K. Risjord

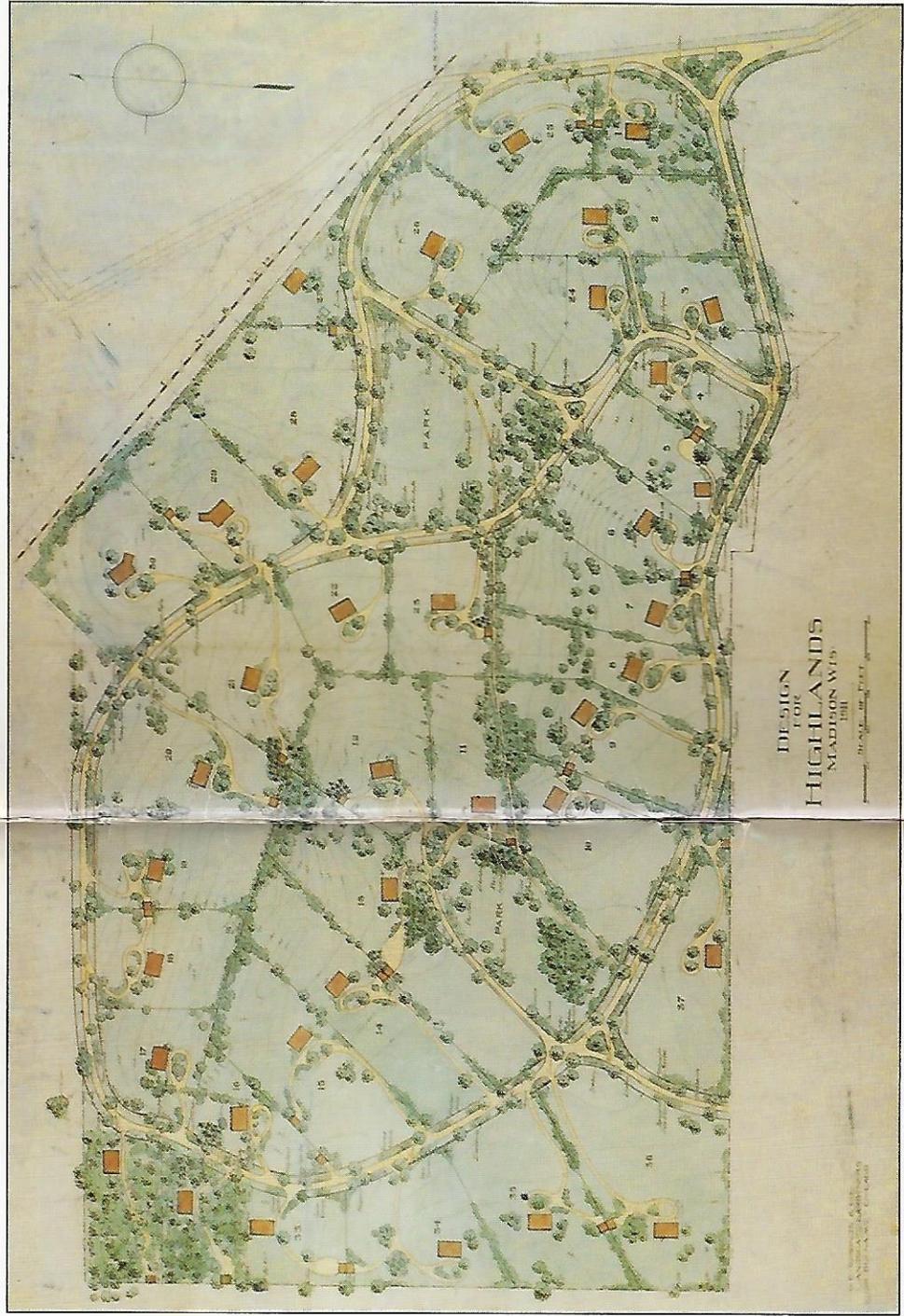
SIMONDS' PLAT FOR THE HIGHLANDS, 1911

Orient the map by the railroad track and the Middleton Road.

Note that the roads are almost exactly as they are today.

With meticulous care, Simonds specified every planting.

Some of the trees he asked for are still there today.



From: [James Long](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Mayor](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:13:44 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I am writing to oppose the construction of a bike path through the Sauk Creek neighborhood, a pristine and vibrant green space of trees, wildlife, a stream and home to many species of wild animals and beautiful vegetation.

When we moved to the Sauk Creek neighborhood 13 years ago we were attracted to this beautiful green space and have since observed countless people enjoying it in its winding paths. We were pleased that the City saw fit to maintain such a serene green space and now are upset that the City is reversing its long standing policy of maintaining this green space.

We feel a paved bike path is wasteful and unnecessary, as it does not connect to other bike paths. There are lightly used streets running parallel to the proposed bike path adequately wide and well lit for safe bike travel. We also feel the City has a less than stellar habit of not keeping up green spaces and feel that once this bike path is constructed, it will not be adequately maintained to keep it safe.

Therefore I write in opposition of the proposed bike path through Sauk Creek Greenway and have it removed from the West Area Plan.

Having talked to several neighbors in the area, I have not encountered one person who is in favor of the bike path proposal. I think the City has not thoughtfully considered if there is truly a need for such a bike path. Given the expense, the burden on the fragile ecosystem and the disruption to the wild plant and animal species, I think the inclusion of this proposal in the West Side Plan is ill advised and unnecessary.

Jim Long MD
225 Sauk Creek Drive
Madison. 53717

From: [Planning](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Zellers, Benjamin](#); [Horvath, Linda](#); [Stouder, Heather](#)
Subject: FW: West Area Plan
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 4:12:06 PM

From: Barry Pace <bpace@bpaceconsult.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:51 PM
To: Planning <planning@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Andrew Bent <abent@wisc.edu>; Slack, Kristen <district19@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: West Area Plan

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

This email is intended specifically for the BEN ZELLERS and LINDA HORVATH, of the West Area Project Team, for HEATHER STROUDER, director of the Department of Planning, for ANDREW BENT, president of the Highlands Community Association, and for KRISTEN SLACK, alder representing the Highlands Neighborhood in Madison.

-
I am a fulltime resident of the Highlands Neighborhood in the City of Madison. I have been informed of an email dated November 30 of this year from, amongst others, Ben Zellers and Linda Horvath, project managers of the West Area Plan. The email is addressed to the Plan Commission and provides updates to the Northeast and West Area plans.

Page 4, numeral 8 specifically addresses my neighborhood, the Highlands, and proposes proactive rezoning of the Highlands from traditional residential-rustic to suburban residential. Such a change would shrink minimum lot sizes, impact the tree canopy of the neighborhood, alter the building requirements within the neighborhood and effectively change the overall character of the Highlands neighborhood. That such a proposal would be presented without specifically asking for the input of neighborhood residents is unfair, somewhat astounding and shortsighted. Contrary to the first paragraph of the email which states that "Public participation has been extensive ..." it is misleading and wrong for the Plan Commission to think that neighborhood residents engaged specifically in a discussion regarding proactive rezoning. That is simply not the case. Personally I have heard from 8 (of the approximate 90 homes in the Highlands) of my neighbors who fully agree with my statement.

To attempt to alter one of Madison's premier residential neighborhoods without real input from its residents is overreach and shortsighted.

I'm confident that the vast majority of neighborhood residents have no interest in splitting their lots to accommodate the addition of 8,000 s.f. residential lots. It's shortsighted to think this would add any meaningful quantity of new homes for Madison.

Though your next meeting is Dec 7, only 3 days from now, we the residents will do our best to be

present so that our true input can be heard by the Planning Committee.

From: [Claire Forrester](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:33:30 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bike path from the West Area Plan**. I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded (5000+ trees) and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway because:

A. The City and our Alder have ignored significant feedback against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway; therefore **we have not had a true engagement process**. A bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings.

Numerous petitions were obtained and submitted at the Common Council meeting on Nov. 15, 2022-Legistar file 73264-agenda number 1, and **new ones** will be attached to this agenda item; **27 + objections** were written to the Transportation Commission for its meeting on Aug. 8, 2023, after the neighborhoods first found out a path was shown in the Complete Street Guide while the engagement process was underway Legistar file 79282 agenda item three. The neighborhoods were **never informed of the inclusion of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway** when it was first introduced on Nov. 2, 2022 Legistar file 74436 agenda number and passed on January 3, 2023 Legistar file 74926 BEFORE the engagement process started in February 2023.

Per the first phase planning survey, **69 other residents had/have concerns about a path** in the Sauk Creek greenway; in addition, **27 residents in the second phase two survey were against a path** compared to 6 who were for a path. Staff said in its memo that they continue to support this feedback. This does **not coincide** with the above numbers or other noted feedback.

B. The City planners claim that the path goes back 30+ years. THIS IS INCORRECT because the Park and Open Space plans do not apply to the Sauk Creek greenway, and the 2000 MPO Bike Plan said a Sauk Creek path was listed as a **third priority** given “suitable on-road routes exist”. The 2015 MPO bike report said there is **not a bike gap** in the neighborhood and refers to the following roads that are within 1000+ feet of the greenway: Westfield Road, as primary bike road and High Point Road, a secondary bike road. **Most importantly, this is the root document** that the City then used for other reports (2018 Comprehensive Plan, etc.) and the neighborhood was not notified about it to have its voice heard. The neighborhood first heard about it at the March 2018 City Engineering meeting on the greenway.

C. City staff mentioned in its memo to you for your Dec. 7 meeting that residents' concerns include that the path will cause safety concerns (dangerous), increase crime, lead to losing too many trees, does not connect to anything, negatively impacts wildlife, increase runoff, costs too much to build and maintain, and increases noise and litter. This is all true and these concerns were **summarily dismissed by City staff without substantive evidence to the contrary**. In addition, the staff **ignores strong environmental concerns** from residents, some

of whom are scholars and researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other paths that staff mentions are not comparable for several reasons. Those paths did not require cutting down massive numbers of trees to build the paths; the other bike paths were platted before the homeowners acquired their lots; the paths are near commercial uses and not the 90% frontage of homes that abut the Sauk Creek greenway eliminating a buffer to the homes; the other paths are longer than .8 miles etc. The other paths did not cause significant animal displacement such as the coyotes, foxes, owls, deer, and birds that live in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

D. The City is incorporating in the streets “safe” bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the **nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road**, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline.

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City’s Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,
Claire Forrester

From: [Dawn Zimmerman](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Mayor](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [All Alders](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#)
Subject: Legistar File Number 81028, Agenda Number 3, Discussion Item Number 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:32:14 PM

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Dear Plan Commission:

I am writing as a resident in the affected area and as a disabled person, regarding the above matter to be discussed at the Dec. 7 Plan Commission meeting and urge the commission to **remove the Sauk Creek Greenway bikepath from the West Area Plan**. I am against a bike path in the 26-acre heavily wooded (5000+ trees) and narrow Sauk Creek Greenway because:

A. The City and our Alder have ignored significant feedback against a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway; therefore **we have not had a true engagement process**. A bike path was not mentioned, discussed, or shown in any slides at the first four West Area public meetings.

Numerous petitions were obtained and submitted at the Common Council meeting on Nov. 15, 2022-Legistar file 73264-agenda number 1, and **new ones** will be attached to this agenda item; **27 + objections** were written to the Transportation Commission for its meeting on Aug. 8, 2023, after the neighborhoods first found out a path was shown in the Complete Street Guide while the engagement process was underway Legistar file 79282 agenda item three. The neighborhoods were **never informed of the inclusion of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway** when it was first introduced on Nov. 2, 2022 Legistar file 74436 agenda number and passed on January 3, 2023 Legistar file 74926 BEFORE the engagement process started in February 2023.

Per the first phase planning survey, **69 other residents had/have concerns about a path** in the Sauk Creek greenway; in addition, **27 residents in the second phase two survey were against a path** compared to 6 who were for a path. Staff said in its memo that they continue to support this feedback. This does **not coincide** with the above numbers or other noted feedback.

B. **The City planners claim that the path goes back 30+ years. THIS IS INCORRECT** because the Park and Open Space plans do not apply to the Sauk Creek greenway, and the 2000 MPO Bike Plan said a Sauk Creek path was listed as **a third priority** given "suitable on-road routes exist". The 2015 MPO bike report said there is **not a bike gap** in the neighborhood and refers to the following roads that are within 1000+ feet of the greenway: Westfield Road, as primary bike road and High Point Road, a secondary bike road. **Most importantly, this is the root document** that the City then used for other reports (2018 Comprehensive Plan, etc.) and the neighborhood was not notified about it to have its voice heard. The neighborhood first heard

about it at the March 2018 City Engineering meeting on the greenway.

C. City staff mentioned in its memo to you for your Dec. 7 meeting that residents' concerns include that the path will cause safety concerns (dangerous), increase crime, lead to losing too many trees, does not connect to anything, negatively impacts wildlife, increase runoff, costs too much to build and maintain, and increases noise and litter. This is all true and these concerns were **summarily dismissed by City staff without substantive evidence to the contrary**. In addition, the staff **ignores strong environmental concerns** from residents, some of whom are scholars and researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The other paths that staff mentions are not comparable for several reasons. Those paths did not require cutting down massive numbers of trees to build the paths; the other bike paths were platted before the homeowners acquired their lots; the paths are near commercial uses and not the 90% frontage of homes that abut the Sauk Creek greenway eliminating a buffer to the homes; the other paths are longer than .8 miles etc. The other paths did not cause significant animal displacement such as the coyotes, foxes, owls, deer, and birds that live in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

D. The City is incorporating in the streets "safe" bike paths per its Complete Green Street Guide, and it can avoid a bike path in the Sauk Creek area by using the **nearby High Point Road or Westfield Road**, both of which directly connect to the new BRT stations, Westfield Road, West Town Mall and the future connection across the beltline to Watts Road per WAP street rendering in the Dec. 7 memo. Also, city officials show that a bike path should connect in the Bike Network rendering to connect to High Point Road, just north of the future bike path across the beltline. It makes more sense to use a shared bike path on High Point Road rather than build an expensive bike path on the narrow Sauk Creek Greenway. High Point Road is also shown to connect to the south to a new bike path that will parallel the beltline.

In summary, I am asking that you inform the City West Area planning team to remove a bike path from the West Area Plan, which goes against the **City's Civic Engagement, Equity and Stewardship Values**.

Thank you,
Dawn Marie Zimmerman

From: [Richard S. Russell](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#)
Subject: Legistar File #81028, Agenda Item 3, Discussion Item 9-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:01:38 PM

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There are plenty of actual citizens willing to speak up for the bikers and hikers. They have voices and votes, so they're in a position to speak up in their own self-interest. Birds and birches, critters and creeks do not. Which doesn't mean they're unworthy and unwelcome and can thus easily be dismissed and destroyed.

The Sauk Creek Greenway provides shelter for urban wildlife, a welcome cooling canopy in this time of global warming (especially as opposed to heat-trapping concrete and asphalt), and a restful reminder of how beautiful this area used to be before we started paving it over.

Please do everything in your power to preserve this welcome vestige of nature in celebration of not only human diversity but natural diversity as well.

Who speaks for the trees? Joyce Kilmer did. I do. I hope you will, too.

=====

Richard S. Russell
7846 W. Oakbrook Cir., Madison WI 53717-1609
608-219-7044 • RichardSRussell@tds.net
https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__richardsrussell.livejournal.com_&d=DwIFaQ&c=byefhD2ZumMFFQYPZBagUCDuBiM9Q9twmxaBM0hCgII&r=EQgg7uY6gX1lmVjf-bnHVDCc8f-JggwxtZapC762N-w&m=N4-qBwla2of-f0z18DA7e7kqertZICAu7VMcEQr4Wthe5vzQjEdFO4JIYIyHTgpE&s=KQIq6-K7YmXDb1v2xjWSaXdyBtRNw8ka_IRydaJxdlo&e=

=====

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

— Joyce Kilmer (1886-1919) American Poet

From: [Tom Dosch](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Mayor](#); [All Alders](#); [Tao, Yang](#); [Stouder, Heather](#)
Subject: File number 81028-Discussion Item No. 9 - Please remove Sauk Creek Greenway bike path from the West Area Plan
Date: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:40:47 AM
Attachments: [102323 Callaway ltr.pdf](#)
[ATT00001.htm](#)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Madison Plan Commission members,

I write to request that you please remove the proposed Sauk Creek bike path from the West Area Plan which I understand will be considered at your upcoming meeting on December 7th. I live in the Sauk Creek neighborhood and despite being a bicycling enthusiast I oppose the construction of a paved path here for reasons including those I described at length in a letter to city engineering and transportation staff two months ago. I've attached a copy of that letter - explaining why I believe a paved path would be of very limited value or useless for bicycle commuting or recreational purposes. Contrary to the suggestion in the briefing memo you've received from planning staff, a bike path here would not in any way be comparable to the very popular Southwest Bike commuting path or the long Pheasant Branch path which constitutes a recreational destination for bikers. After all, the "Bicycle Transportation Plan for the Madison Metropolitan Area and Dane County 2015" recommends that the city and county "[l]ocate future off-street paths where they are most useful for transportation and cost effective (i.e., where they supplement rather than duplicate the local street system)." See https://www.greatermadisonmpo.org/planning/documents/Final_BTP_2015_web.pdf at page 110. A Sauk Creek Greenway bike path would duplicate existing bike routes (as I explained in my letter) and would not be cost effective.

I won't reiterate here what I've previously written but I submit that letter for your consideration. I would, however, like to add two points:

First, at a November 9, 2023 zoom meeting with city engineering and transportation staff, neighbors who expressed concerns about the potential storm water runoff from a paved bike path running the length of the greenway were told it would be trivial in comparison to that coming from upstream commercial parking lots. While the runoff from a 4,000 foot long and ten feet wide paved path may be small in comparison to that from the Target Department store parking lot, it would seem to be well over the "significance" threshold established by the city ordinances. Under Ordinance 37.06(3)(a)1., any land disturbing project which "[r]esults in the addition of twenty thousand (20,000) square feet of new impervious surface to the site" requires a stormwater permit and development of a stormwater management plan. The proposed path here would likely be twice the size of the city's stormwater "significance" threshold. And the additional runoff from a paved path would not only be significant for areas downstream, but is a cause of particular concern for the residents in this neighborhood whose properties might receive a good share of the additional runoff from the 40,000 square feet of new pavement.

Second, I would like to correct the point I made in my letter about the redundancy of a Sauk Creek Greenway bike path with other existing or planned bike routes between Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road. The proposed bike path would be one of 11

bike routes - not 9 - in the 2 and 1/2 mile stretch from Gammon Road to Pleasant View Road. I had failed to count the existing bike lanes on High Point Road and Westfield Road in my initial letter. This represents an extraordinary redundancy of bike routes, apparently greater than anywhere else in the city. Aren't there better places to put new bike paths?

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.
Tom Dosch

Tom Dosch
13 St. Lawrence Circle
Madison WI 53717
608-445-2401
dosch@charter.net

Via email

October 23, 2023

Attention: Ms. Callaway, Ms. Horvath, Mr. Zellers, Ms. O'Brien, Ms. Stouder, Mr. Wolfe, Mr. Tao, Mr. Haas, Mr. Veum, Alder Conklin, and Mayor Rhodes-Conway.

Re: Sauk Creek Greenway and related bike path issues

Dear Ms. Callaway, et al.,

I am writing about the city's planned work in the Sauk Creek Greenway and in particular the suggestion that a north-south bike path be constructed in the greenway when work is done in the next several years to improve the drainage way. I'm hoping that someone from the city will answer my questions, either directly in response to this letter or at the upcoming November live and virtual public information meetings regarding the "Sauk Creek Greenway Corridor Plan Kick-Off."

I am particularly interested in this project for two reasons. First, my wife and I live adjacent to the greenway and for some years have shared our concerns with city engineering staff about the damage done and threatened by the extensive erosion in the drainage channel. Aside from destroying trees in the greenway and impairing water quality in the Lake Mendota, it threatens to undermine the service road and sanitary sewer main on the west side of the greenway. Here's a photo of the channel immediately behind our house, taken 5 years ago. It hasn't gotten any better since and the eroded bank is now within about 8 feet of the road and sewer main. It's for reasons like these that we strongly support the city's proposed improvement to the drainage way.



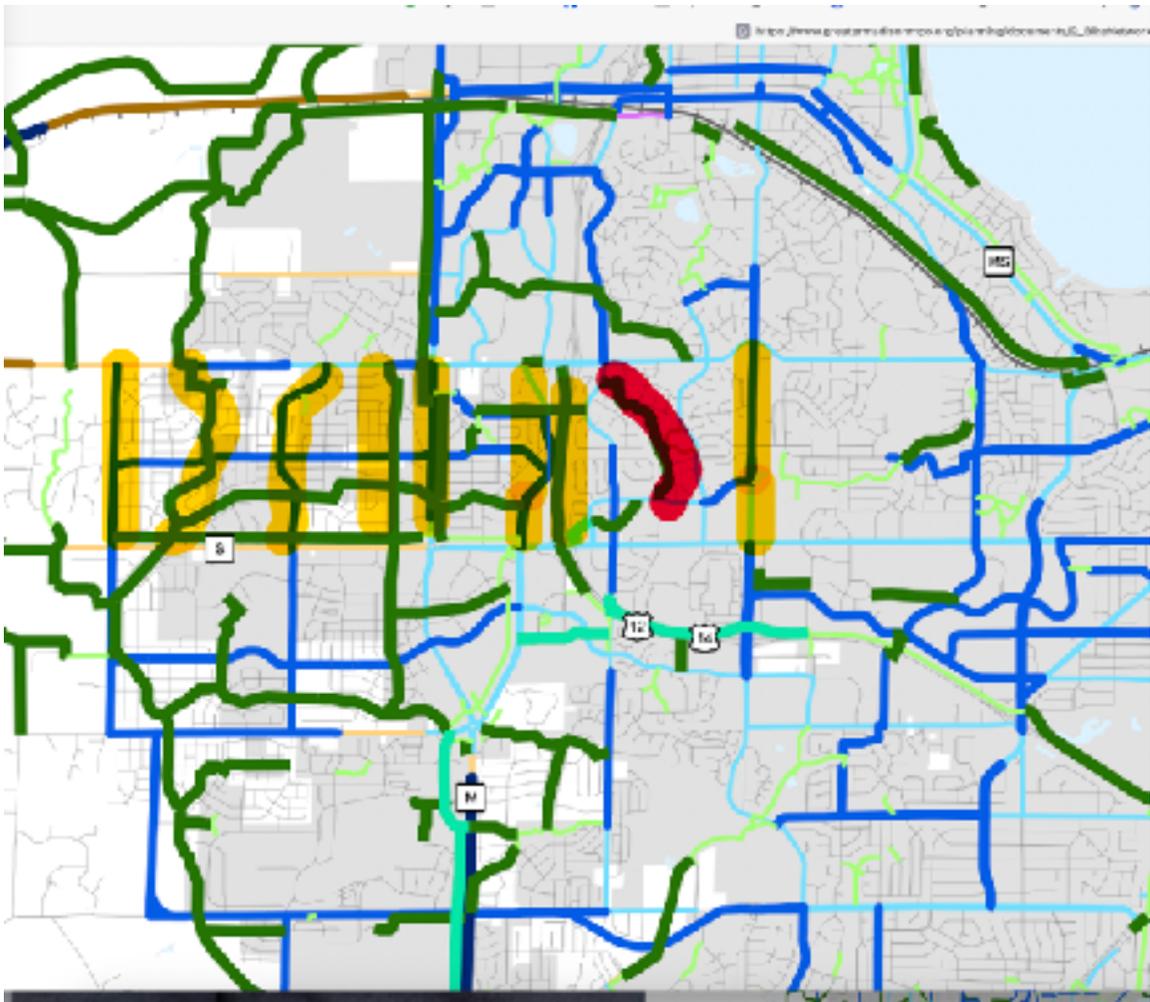
I'm also interested in the suggestion that this project might include a bike path because I am very interested in bicycling generally. For many years before my retirement, in good weather, I commuted by bike from this neighborhood the 8 miles to work on Capital Square and I still ride the same route to campus to audit UW classes. I've been a bicycling enthusiast for more than 50 years, I'm a member of the Wisconsin Bicycle Federation, and aside from lots of recreational riding and errand running in the Madison area, my wife and I plan many of our vacations around bicycling opportunities. The questions I have about a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway derive from this experience.

As I will describe in more detail below, it looks like a north-south bike path in this area would be of very little use or value to the bicycling community. I note too that the recent West Side Plan Survey shows only negative comments about the possibility of a bike path in the greenway, and these comments were the second highest multiplier in the entire survey (https://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/documents/WestPlan_Feedback_Summary_6-30-23.pdf)." This prompts my first question to you: **Has anyone other than city or county planning officials asked for this specific bike path?** Or is the proposed path being driven primarily by city planners' more general goal to "expand ... bicycle networks to enable safe and convenient active transportation" as expressed in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan strategy city officials cited in a recent public meeting? Creating better biking opportunities is certainly a laudable goal, but shouldn't the city prioritize projects that are useful and desired by the biking community? A Sauk Creek Greenway bike would be neither. And is a bike path

like the one under consideration - which doesn't connect to anything - really going to be part of any "bicycle network"? I don't think so.

I expect that anytime a municipality proposes to construct a new bike path in or adjacent to a long-established residential neighborhood there will be some controversy. I suppose too that it's less controversial where the proposed path would replace a motorized transportation route (like the Southwest bike path which replaced an active freight train route) or where, like the Pheasant Branch path, no homes back up to the path. In her October 2, 2023 letter to all of you my neighbor Jenny Iskandar spelled out a number of the concerns with a north-south bike path in the greenway, among them that any new path would cause additional loss of trees, would be redundant with existing bike routes on adjacent streets and would seem to serve no purpose as there's really nothing at either end for people to travel to and nothing special to see in between. My wife and I support those and all of her other concerns. I'd like to elaborate on two points.

As to redundancy, I have to wonder why there is any need for a new north-south bike path in a neighborhood like this which is already served by very nice bike lanes on the adjacent High Point Road and Westfield Road. And if you take a "bigger picture" view you will see what seems to me to be an extraordinary redundancy in planned north-south bike routes in our area. The "Madison Area Bicycle Network Plan" https://www.greatermadisonmpo.org/planning/documents/9_BikeNetworkPlan_Urban.pdf shows that in the approximate 2 1/2 miles from Gammon Road west to Pleasant View Road there are 9 existing or planned north/south bike routes connecting Mineral Point Road and Old Sauk Road. I've tried to depict that in a graphic below. **This appears to be a greater density of alternative routes than is proposed anywhere else in the city with the possible exception of an area east of the Interstate near Sun Prairie. Why?** And of those 9 alternatives, the proposed Sauk Creek Greenway route is the shortest and likely least practical - it doesn't seem to go anywhere useful for most commuters and wouldn't be some kind of scenic recreational biking destination like the Pheasant Branch or Capital City bike paths. **Why spend city money on something that's of such little value to bikers? Why should this bike path be a priority?**



Another consideration demonstrating that path's very limited value would be its **lack of connectivity**. In support of the project the city has suggested it would somehow enhance bicycling connectivity but that clearly appears not to be the case. At its north end the path would put riders back on the existing bike lane on High Point Road. On its south end, whether the trail head would be at Tree Lane on the existing service road or constructed somewhere in Haen Family Park, riders would have to go onto the existing Tree Lane bike lanes - there would be no path on the opposite side of the street to continue further west/upstream on the drainage way. And given a law enacted by our legislature during the Walker administration, the city will never be able to exercise eminent domain to acquire a right of way for a bike path along the drainage way where it crosses through the privately owned Greenbrier Village apartments property. For that reason such a path would never be connected to the short bike path the city built behind Rocky Rococo's several years ago - a bike path which itself is almost never used by

bikers because the only place it would direct riders westward requires crossing a busy on-ramp, a busy off-ramp, the busy Target Department Store driveway and the very busy Junction Road, all of which are hazardous for bikers. I expect a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway would be similarly unconnected, little used, and its construction a poor use of public moneys. **Aren't there better biking projects for the city to invest in?**

For example, in this neighborhood the safety of bicycle travel on High Point Road might be improved by putting "bicycle only" green lights at the Old Sauk Road crossing like the city has done at some intersections downtown. This would make biking to the Alicia Ashman Library or High Point Pool safer for kids from the Sauk Creek, Tree Lane and Oakbridge neighborhoods and for kids living north of Old Sauk Road to get to Tree Lane and from there to the Ezekiel Gillespie and Vel Phillips schools on Gammon Road. Another modest biking improvement project might be for the city to create a dedicated west-bound bike lane on Tree Lane as it already has on the east-bound side of that street - kids on their way home from school and other bikers wouldn't have to swerve around parked cars and into traffic. And I personally have long hoped for an alternative to the bike lanes on either side of Old Sauk Road which are heavily used by riders commuting to campus and the Square because I think they are dangerous - lots of fast cars which you can see drifting in and out of the bike lane in front of you - and because riding on them is unpleasant with all the car traffic and the killer climb westbound from Old Middleton Road. Improvements to that "connected" commuting route would be welcomed by many bikers. **Why not prioritize projects like these?**

I hope you will address these questions in correspondence or at our upcoming meetings. I hope too that after we've had those discussions the city will decide to pull the proposed Sauk Creek bike path from the West Area Plan. Thank you very much for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely yours,

Tom Dosch

From: [Connie Brown](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Extending Appalachian Way to Sauk Ridge Trail
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 3:24:39 PM

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Regarding this proposal to extend Appalachian Way. What purpose does this serve? How will this benefit traffic? This doesn't really solve a problem because no problem exists at this time. If this is supported to alleviate traffic caused by the addition of a housing project on Old Sauk Rd, than there is an assumption that those new residents are going to be parking on Sauk Ridge Trail instead of their own property and need additional access to Old Sauk Road.

Connie and Jeff Brown
1 Sauk Woods Ct.

Sent from my iPad

From: [Nicholas Davies](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Yes to Sauk Creek Greenway!
Date: Sunday, December 3, 2023 1:20:42 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Plan Commission,

One of the questions before you in your next meeting is whether to continue to show a planned multi-use path connection across the Beltline at Sauk Creek Park. This connection would be highly valuable and a positive addition not only for people in the neighborhood, but anyone needing to get across the Beltline.

Currently the only nearby crossings of the Beltline are at Mineral Point Rd and at Old Sauk Rd. For those on foot, it's loud, exhaust-filled, and trash-strewn on the sidewalks, and for those on bike, you're in an unprotected bike lane in the gutter, with lots of sharp debris. In either case, you have to deal with on/off ramps, where vehicles are approaching at freeway speeds.

The Sauk Creek Greenway is a connection that we must make. This need has existed for as long as the Beltline has existed with housing and employment on both sides of it, separated. And taking this connection off of the comprehensive plan will not eliminate the reality of this need. This need has been documented in city plans for 17 years already.

It's unfortunate that there's some confusion and misinformation about this path connection and about path connections in general. A multi-use path like this does not lead to crime, and does not decrease property values [[source](#)]. Opponents of the path also fail to distinguish between invasive vs. native tree species, and unmanaged growth vs. intentional cultivation. Plus, if the path connection enables even one person to commute by active transportation instead of by car, that will likely offset the environmental impact of any necessary tree removals. And concerns about noise and impacts on wildlife are hilarious--are they unaware the Beltline's right there?

The West Area Plan was the product of a public engagement process. We owe it to all the people who participated in that process not to let a small, vocal, privileged group scribble over that plan after the fact.

Thank you,
Nick Davies
3717 Richard St