

From: [Nicholas Davies](#)
To: [JCAC](#)
Cc: [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#); [Mayor](#)
Subject: Regent Street: Madison can and legally must do better (93067)
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 9:59:54 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
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Dear Joint Campus Area Committee,

Here are a few topics for you to be aware of, regarding the Regent Street reconstruction project...

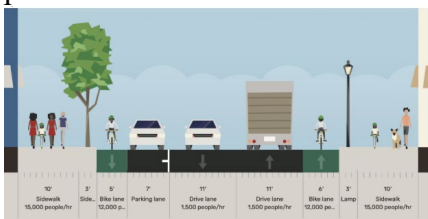
The public's case for a complete, green Regent Street

>1,000 residents responded to the city's initial survey. The respondents' [ranked priorities](#) were:

1. Safety for all users
2. Pedestrian amenities
3. Traffic flow
4. Bike comfort
5. Sense of place
6. Event operations
7. Parking

In April, an independent survey was offered to the UW student body, and also received >1,000 responses.

74% favored an option with bike lanes and parking on one side, vs. 17% favoring the city's preferred alternative.



The public has expressed a clear preference for a Regent Street that prioritizes safety and a bike amenity--two complementary priorities.

Including a bike facility would have several benefits:

- Bring a new, more reliable customer base to Regent Street businesses
- More consistent with Madison's Vision Zero goal to eliminate traffic fatalities
- Supportive of Dane County's climate goal of reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Better for emergency vehicles: cars could pull into the bike lane to let an ambulance through
- Better for resupplying businesses: trucks could stop in the bike lane to quickly unload
- Better for game day pedestrians, who can stumble off the curb without stumbling in

- front of a car
- Better for pedestrian crossings in general
- Better for the thousands of people who will live / work / sustain themselves on Regent Street as it continues to redevelop
- Including a bike lane would allow the travel lanes to be narrower, and safer/calmer as a result

The legal case for a complete, green Regent Street

Madison is also supposed to be redesigning this street according to its own ordinances, which includes Complete Green Streets, but the city hasn't done that.

According to [Complete Green Streets](#), the process is supposed to start with staff drawing up options that are consistent with CGS:

"Staff will use the guide to develop street design alternatives that are consistent with the guide. The Transportation Commission will then have the opportunity to review and select design concepts for street construction and reconstruction that are consistent with the community values incorporated in the Complete Green Streets Guide."

That first step has not yet been completed. Traffic Engineering's preferred alternative is inconsistent with Complete Green Streets in two clear ways:

1. Lack of a bike facility

CGS on Community Main Street:

"Bike lanes should be included and may require consideration of parking options on side streets or in structured parking." (page 44)

CGS on biking on non-All Ages & Abilities streets:

*"The baseline goal for all City streets is to provide All Ages and Abilities Bike accommodations. When constraints or other modal priorities limit the ability to provide an All Ages and Abilities bike facility, **streets will be built to the lowest stress level possible**, per the street type and travel way widths recommended in this guide." (page 24)*

TE's preferred alternative does not build include bike lanes, and does not build the street to the lowest stress level possible.

2. Over-wide travel lanes

Table 6.2 (page 60) lists maximum lane width for a Community Main Street as 10 feet. But also, *"Transit buses need a dynamic envelope of a minimum of 11[ft]"* (page 61).

TE's preferred alternative has 14 ft travel lanes.

...And then, once Transportation Commission receives CGS-consistent alternatives, TC can approve variances from CGS if needed. Variances from CGS require TC approval, according to Madison ordinance 33.56(6)(c):

"The Transportation Commission shall determine the right-of-way use and geometric designs

to be included in the final plans and specifications sent to the Board of Public Works and Common Council for approval, with Transportation Commission approval required for any geometric design variances from the Complete Green Streets Guide."

The variance process has also not yet been followed. To this day, no variances have been listed or approved for this project. In fact, TC's remarks at the April meeting showed they were unaware of the variance process. Not surprising--this is [the first time since CGS adoption](#) (March 2023) that a project has needed this process.

Other viable alternatives

Paris has transformed their street network in the fast few years, with low-cost quick-build adaptations that we could take inspiration from.



5 Bd de Bonne Nouvelle, 40 ft curb-to-curb. Bike lanes separated by low mountable curb, allowing a delivery truck to stop in one of them.

Minneapolis has addressed emergency vehicle requirements by including a compact two way path, separated from the road by a 2 ft sloped/mountable curb:



[\(source\)](#)

Street parking is only 8% of the overall picture

Okay, so the public supports a bike lane alternative, and Madison ordinance requires consideration of a bike lane alternative. But what if that involves eliminating some of the

street parking?

[94% of Regent Street properties](#) are non-reliant on street parking. They already have other parking, on their own property or adjacent to it.

Here's an aerial view, with surface parking outlined in blue, and underground parking outlined in orange.



Street parking in TE's preferred alternative as percentage of total parking, by block:

- 900 block: 3% (3 on-street spots, 104* off-street spots)
- 1000 block: 6% (11 on-street spots, 177 off-street spots)
- 1100 block: 7.5% (10 on-street spots, 123 off-street spots)
- 1200 block: 14% (16 on-street spots, 96* off-street spots)
- 1300 block: 10% (8 on-street spots, 71* off-street spots)

*This doesn't count underground parking.

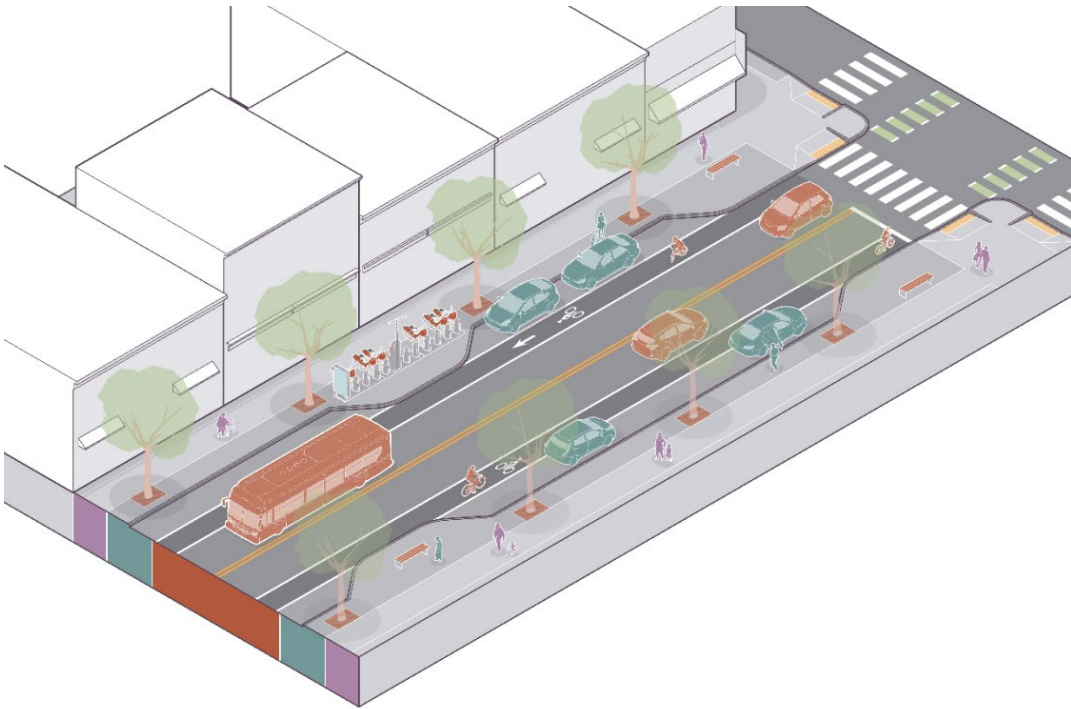
571 total off-street spots! There is a shocking amount of parking on Regent Street, and I wasn't even able to count the underground portion.

So when we're talking about 2-sided street parking (48 spots) vs. 1-sided street parking (~20 spots), it would only take a 5% reduction in the overall available parking to make room for a bike facility.

That's such a small ask, for such a significant gain in safety, sustainability, and all those other benefits. It would be absurd not to take that deal.

Status quo bias

A reconstruction project like this is supposed to be the one time in a street's lifecycle when you aren't tied down by the status quo, and can actually apply Madison's policies with a clean slate.



To mitigate status quo bias, let yourself imagine that current conditions are different to start with, and then in *that* context, reconsider what the preferred alternative is proposing:

- * Regent Street (free from status quo bias) has 11 foot lanes today, but the preferred alternative would widen these to 14 feet, to encourage speeding, double-parking, and dangerous weaving.
- * Regent Street (free from status quo bias) already has the bike lanes that it's supposed to have, but the preferred alternative would take those away, putting cyclists in travel lanes that are too hazardous to paint sharrows on.

I look forward to your meeting tomorrow, where I plan to speak on these topics and be available to answer any questions on the info I've provided.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
3717 Richard St

From: [James Kreft](#)
To: [JCAC](#)
Subject: The city can do better on Regent Street
Date: Wednesday, May 27, 2026 8:33:23 PM

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Dear members of the Joint Campus Area Committee-

City Staff are going to present the latest version of the Regent Street Redesign today, and I want to share some feedback on this as a local resident who regularly visits businesses on Regent, from the bike shops to Greenbush donuts to Leopolds to the UPS Store. I am also a parent of a 10 year old who in all likelihood will be attending UW in a few years, and will probably end up crossing Regent on a regular basis.

Despite pedestrian safety nominally being a high priority, wide lanes, dedicated turn lanes, bus pull outs and other car-centric design decisions have led to a proposed geometry with a minimum crossing distance of 33 feet, and often over 40 feet. The wide lanes (wider than an interstate!) are undeniably going to lead to people driving faster on Regent, especially at night, which is by far the most dangerous time for pedestrians in Madison. These lanes do not need to be so wide, even with the arbitrary width requirements for emergency vehicle access. Madison Engineering staff were just in Minneapolis for the NACTO conference, where the fire department endorses using bike paths as additional space for emergency vehicle access (they even toured such a street!). Minneapolis has the same kind of fire trucks and ambulances that we have, but this kind of an option was dismissed by traffic engineering from the beginning of this project. As others point out, there are multiple options for allocating street space that will make Regent a safer, more vibrant space for the people that live on and near Regent. The city should reconsider these alternatives.

The current Regent street design prioritizes parking on both sides of the street, driven by the desires of Regent Street businesses. It is this parking that makes it impossible to add any sort of bike infrastructure. There is [ample evidence](#) that, in fact, removing parking and adding bike infrastructure is good for businesses on the street. Study after study shows that adding protected bike infrastructure has either a positive or neutral impact on businesses. To add a local flavor to this, I recently surveyed 54 cyclists on the Southwest commuter path over the course of about 40 minutes on a blustery Friday afternoon. Of those 54 cyclists, 44 said that they would visit Regent street businesses more, or at all, if they could safely ride on Regent. Among the more striking comments was someone who noted that she had ridden the path on a near daily basis for years, but actually had no idea what businesses were on Regent, because she could not ride by them safely. Another said that he would go to a specific business, but it was always a pain because he had to remember the right cross street, so often wouldn't bother. As part of a family who primarily moves through the city by bike, I can't emphasize enough how valuable safe bike routes on corridors are to trip chaining, a key part of effectively doing errands, rather than a simple commute. If there are multiple businesses on a street, I am much more likely to visit them if I can move linearly down the street, rather than having to go back and forth out of my way. Regent Street businesses are leaving money on the table by lobbying for a handful of additional parking spots rather than allowing for a street that cyclists (and their money) can safely navigate.

This is a lesson learned in Portland as well, which for decades has focused on funneling bikes onto neighborhood greenways, not unlike Madison's All Ages and Abilities Network. However, it turns out that such a network is not enough if the goal is to shift modeshare from cars to bikes. This paragraph from *Beyond the Automobile* puts it really well:

Our final thought about Portland's Neighborhood Greenways is a cautionary one. With such a well-developed system of greenways spanning the City, many people on bikes choose to avoid major streets since there is frequently a Greenway within a few blocks. The success of Neighborhood Greenways in Portland has created a situation where there is less support for physically separated bike lanes along those main streets – many of which are lined with the businesses, restaurants and local shops that people on bikes want to get to. The Dutch experience is that while bicycle streets form an important role in the creation of a safe cycling network, they cannot exclusively form the entirety, or even the majority, of an effective cycling network. They must be used in combination with protected cycling lanes, multi-use paths and cycle tracks to build a complete network of AAA cycling infrastructure. Only when all of those tools are deployed with consideration towards constructing a complete network will cycling be seen as a safe, accessible and practical choice for a majority of residents in North America.

[Bicycle Streets Beyond Europe: Portland's Neighborhood Greenways](#)

The city has recently endorsed multiple policies that center people over cars, from Complete Green Streets to Vision Zero to Climate goals that seek to reduce the number of miles driven in the city. The current Regent Street design may meet a tortured definition of Complete Green Streets but it certainly doesn't meet the spirit of the policy. It is absolutely not a Vision Zero street, and it is absolutely not a climate focused street. When this geometry comes up for approval by the Common Council on June 9th, please encourage the alders to send this design back to Traffic Engineering to build a street for people, rather than for cars.

Best,

Jim Kreft
Fish Hatchery Rd.

From: [Josh Olson](#)
To: [JCAC](#)
Subject: Regent Street - 10 feet and 2 lanes are all you need
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2026 10:57:47 AM

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Hi,

I'm a former student who lived on Mills and Spring Street. When I was a student, I would frequently go on walks into the Vilas neighborhood to clear my head and relieve stress. Many of my friends lived in the same area or in student housing on the other side of Regent, so crossing at Regent intersections were common, and unfortunately they were scary. Whether it was vehicles swerving because of the confusing parking lanes or generally moving too quickly, there were times where I would avoid taking my family to businesses on Regent because it just wasn't a fun place to be unless you were quickly moving away from it.

City Staff is asking you to approve their existing design that would reduce Regent from 4 to 3 lanes and would have 13 feet wide travel lanes. We should borrow **the most up to date research from a peer university** (Johns Hopkins) and [create safer roads through narrow lanes](#). This report finds that crashes are significantly more likely with wide lanes. It specifically calls out the following:

Set a narrower standard. In urban areas, set a standard lane width of 10 feet and have engineers justify why it needs to be wider. Currently, in most states the standard starts at 11 or 12 feet.

I've watched the presentation City Staff has provided and I **do not think they have justified why we need expanded lanes**. There are concerns about emergency vehicle access that are outdated and deny the fact that [22 pedestrians and bikers have been hit on Regent Street since 2017](#). We have a real problem with crashes that should take priority over hypothetical preference for easing access. Staff have stated that it would probably reduce vehicle throughput and increase congestion, but this shouldn't be a main concern for a university where the majority of students do not drive. Per Alicia Lyu, most students want a safer environment!

Complete Green Streets would allow for safer designs, but that is not what City Staff is presenting to you tonight. Please vote to not recommend this design and request that staff use up to date research to design the safest road design possible for a community main street in Madison.

Thank you,
Josh Olson