

From: [Nicholas Davies](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Yes to Willy St lane reduction experiment
Date: Sunday, August 10, 2025 2:43:06 PM

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Dear Transportation Commission,

I encourage you to implement a lane reduction experiment on Williamson St, as a cheap first step towards addressing safety issues. Here's why I see this as important and worthwhile:

Road width is severely misallocated today

It's a shame that this year's Ride the Drive was cancelled, because it was a revelatory experience for me last year.

On normal days, sidewalk space on Willy St is very cramped for the amount of usage it gets. Sidewalk users often have to shoulder past each other--effectively a "yield street" for pedestrian traffic, while the bidirectional auto traffic is not similarly cramped. On the 1-2 days a year when the roadway is free of cars, we suddenly have a release for that pressure.

Willy St is also practically no-go for all but the most confident (or foolhardy) cyclists. We often take this for granted because the Cap City Trail runs parallel to it a block away, but for a street with such density of destinations, that's no excuse.

During non-peak hours, parked cars may act as bollards between moving traffic and mid-block buildings, but those parked cars also create visibility issues for turning movements and pedestrian crossings. If eliminating rush hour lanes means more usage of street parking, at least pedestrians during those hours will only contend with 1 travel lane each way, but there also needs to be better daylighting.

Yes to bollards, but also curb adjustments

Bollards are an important tool in traffic safety and traffic calming, and I support the city becoming more comfortable with using this tool, where it's effective and cost-conscious.

However, altering curb geometry might provide greater benefit overall, and will render the placement of bollards in today's curbs obsolete.

This is no state highway

The city isn't tied up by outside stakeholders like WisDOT or OCR, so the city should consider all available options for what Willy St could be, and how city resources could be used to get there.

Yes, parts of Willy St are a transit route for the C and the 38 buses, and maybe the Jennifer St routing would make sense to move onto Willy St. Yes, there's a fire station. But strategies that significantly cut down on through traffic could actually reduce delays for these vehicles, rather than increase them.

Reducing rush hour lanes isn't a solution on its own, it's a prerequisite

The occurrence of destructive and endangering incidents doesn't line up with peak usage of the

street. A lot of them occur in the overnight hours of little-to-no traffic. But the added rush hour travel lanes are fundamentally a problem, and a blocker for a wide range of possible solutions.

It's as if, twice a day, Willy St turns from a neighborhood commercial street, into a crosstown commuter highway. That creates its own set of safety hazards, and stands in the way of reducing lanes (getting even late-night traffic further from buildings and people), adding more bike/ped facilities, or other changes to reduce high-speed cut-through traffic.

My vision

When I drive on Willy St, I don't expect to go fast, and I don't think anyone should. If Willy St were less useful for crosstown trips, I'd just jog over to E Wash instead; that'd be no hardship at all.

Ultimately I don't think crosstown trips are what makes Willy St valuable to us as a city. It's the people there, and the community destinations that bring people together there. Crosstown traffic only detracts from that value.

In an ideal world, I'd like to see wider sidewalks, and a separated bike facility, at sidewalk level, or close to it. There is space for all this if we reduce travel/parking lanes. While it might sometimes affect transit service, tabletop intersections (with an all-way stop) would give pedestrian movements better visibility and priority.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
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