



MADISON WEST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Re: Vote to remove Jeffy Trail local street extension from NDP

Good afternoon members of the Plan Commission,

The Madison West Neighborhood Association offers the following comments specifically recommending the removal of the Jeffy Trail local street extension in the updated High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan. We will be providing additional comments separately regarding the Neighborhood Development Plan overall. We also want to thank you for taking time to come out to Jeffy Trail in May to personally see why we are opposed to changing what the neighborhood identifies as an asset worth preserving as is.

On Monday evening, you will be asked to make a recommendation regarding adoption of the High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan. On behalf of the Madison West Neighborhood Association, I am writing to ask you to take the same action as the action taken by the Long Range Transportation Committee at its June 22 meeting, the Board of Park Commissioners at its July 12 meeting, and the Sustainable Madison Committee at its July 17 meeting: Recommend adoption of the High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan, **BUT TO SPECIFICALLY REMOVE THE EXTENSION OF JEFFY TRAIL** from the Plan.

Who is the Madison West Neighborhood Association?

The Madison West Neighborhood Association was created and recognized by the City of Madison in 2016, and its boundaries encompass all of the District 1 Aldermanic district. One of its first efforts as a recognized neighborhood association was to form a 12 person committee with representation across each of its subdivisions (plus the Ice Age Falls subdivision, which is located in District 7 south of Raymond Road) to participate in City Planning's process to update the Neighborhood Development Plan. The Madison West Neighborhood Association's and the District 1 boundaries encompass all of the Neighborhood Development Plan area north of Raymond Road.

The West Madison Neighborhood Association has been active in providing information and analysis regarding Jeffy Trail throughout the process to update the Neighborhood Development Plan. **Additional, more detailed analysis and materials that the Association has developed and previously provided are attached, including an identification of missing and incorrect information provided in the Plan and staff analysis regarding Jeffy Trail.**

Who else has taken a formal position opposing the Jeffy Trail street extension?

- *District 1 Alder Barbara McKinney.* Alder McKinney's district encompasses all of the High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan north of Raymond Road except for a small sliver on the north end of the Plan that is in Alder Skidmore's district. Alder McKinney has testified and submitted a letter to the legislative file stating:



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“As the Alder representing these residents, I strongly disagree with the recommendations of the Planning Division’s recommendation and rationale for the Jeffy Trail extension. Let the proposed resolution adopting the High Point Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan move forward as a supplement to the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan without the extension of Jeffy Trail. I am in support of removing the extension of Jeffy Trail out of the High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan.”

- *Each of the three voting committees that the Plan has been referred to prior to consideration by the Plan Commission.*
 - *Long Range Transportation Committee.* This committee introduced and passed a motion recommending the removal of the Jeffy Trail street extension from the High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan.
 - *Board of Park Commissioners.* This committee introduced and passed a motion recommending the removal of the Jeffy Trail street extension from the High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan.
 - *Sustainable Madison Committee.* This committee introduced and passed a motion recommending the removal of the Jeffy Trail street extension from the High Point-Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan.

Why should the City of Madison not include the Jeffy Trail local street extension in the updated High Point Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan?

In short, the neighborhood to be served by the local street connection views the small benefits in auto connectivity that the street would serve (just 11% of neighborhood automobile trips and according to the Planning Department would serve no through traffic) as not outweighing the permanent costs to this unique conservancy zoned space and the dedicated bicycle and pedestrian connectivity currently served by the Jeffy Bike Path, not to mention the \$560,000+ cost to the City Capital Budget to construct a street. The neighborhood views the space that the street would traverse as a unique wooded park space and bike path that is an asset to the neighborhood and should be preserved as is.

While automobile connectivity is one goal in the Comprehensive Plan, there are multiple other goals and principles in the Comprehensive Plan that given the unique circumstances and impacts of the proposed Jeffy Trail local street extension should collectively outweigh the minimum benefit to automobile connectivity of the local street extension, including:

- “Foster[ing] neighborhood involvement in all development decisions that will impact the neighborhood.”
- “Madison will grow and develop in a sustainable way that will protect the high quality natural environment, promote energy efficiency and conservation of natural resources, and create a built environment that is adaptable to future changes in conditions.”



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- “Preserve natural areas with outstanding ecological and aesthetic qualities.”
- “Require the design of subdivision plats to protect and enhance outstanding views of natural resource features.”
- “Adopt and enforce zoning code, land division ordinance and other regulations that protect from development environmental corridors and the natural resource features of which they are comprised, such as lakeshores, hilltops, and significant wooded areas, for example.”
- “The design of neighborhoods and districts should create memorable places for people and be designed at a human-scale to create a strong sense of place and community.”
- “When designing new neighborhoods, seek opportunities to establish and preserve defining views and visual references that contribute to neighborhood identity and character.”
- “Foster the creation of engaging and visually attractive neighborhoods, each with a distinctive sense of place.”
- “Neighborhood street networks should be designed to discourage cut- through non-local traffic and excessive travel speeds.”
- “Ensure that views and vistas of significant value, such as views of the lakes, open space or the Capitol, are treated sensitively by new structures or potential visual obstructions.”
- “Neighborhood streets and sidewalks should provide an interconnected transportation network that links neighborhoods, districts and corridors without forming barriers between them. Dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs shall **generally** be avoided **unless necessary to protect sensitive environmental features or address significant changes in topography.**”

Should the City be concerned that removal of the Jeffy Trail local street extension from the High Point Raymond Neighborhood Development Plan will create a bad planning precedent?

No. This is a unique set of multiple circumstances unlikely to be ever fully replicated again in Madison. While there is overwhelming and large neighborhood opposition (420+ individuals representing 80% of ALL single family homes in the neighborhood, signed a letter opposing the street), there are multiple other unique factors taken together that would limit the applicability of a decision to remove the Jeffy Trail local street extension to other requests to not build a street connection:

- There is an existing dedicated bike path asset that already provides walkable and bikeable connectivity.
- There would be an impact on a wooded space identified as special enough by the City Council and Plan Commission to zone the land it would traverse as conservancy zoning.
- The street would add an additional interruption of a continuous greenspace from Elver Park to the Ice Age Junction Natural Resource Area and along the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.
- The street creates no new development.



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- The local street would have very low traffic counts; lower than the Planning Departments smallest unit of measure.
- The Planning Department does not foresee any use of the street for through traffic (though the neighborhood disagrees)
- The creation would result in very little reduction in traffic utilizing other connections (the street would serve only 11% of neighborhood trips)
- The conservancy land that the street would traverse is not privately owned, but owned by the City, and thus the City will incur at least \$560,000 to construct the street.

Thus, as an example, few, if any, of these unique factors would apply to a decision regarding the creation of a Stratton Way extension.

Alternatively, building the Jeffy Trail local street connection would create a precedent elevating automobile connectivity above nearly all other goals of the Comprehensive plan.

If the need for automobile connectivity justifies spending \$560,000 to construct a local street opposed by the neighborhood, over a popular 3-year old bike path connecting to the Ice Age Junction Bike Path, through conservancy zoned land adjacent to the Ice Age National Scenic Trail to serve less than 11% of the neighborhood's automobile trips when no traffic problem in the neighborhood has been identified and when fire response already meets city standards and will not use the connection with the Raymond Road arterial when it is reconfigured in accordance with the plan, then is there any scenario in which street connectivity would not justify a road project in the City of Madison? We have other priorities in Madison and the plan for the Jeffy Trail local street extension places street connectivity above all other design and spending priorities.

Thank you again for your attention, and we hope that you agree with the neighborhood that the Jeffy Trail street extension should be removed from the Neighborhood Development Plan so that the Jeffy Bike Path and the surrounding area can be preserved as the neighborhood asset that it has become.

Joe Ryan

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