

From: [Austin Griesbach](#)
To: [Mayor](#); [All Alders](#)
Subject: Regent Street Concerns
Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 3:54:08 PM

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Hello,

I'm reaching out because I have serious concerns about the Regent Street redesign which will likely be appearing before the Council soon. It deviates significantly from national design standards and our own council-adopted Complete Green Streets policy. Many comments from myself and others are already available on [legistar](#) (with more likely on the way, I don't see my BPW comment), and on the City Channel recordings, so I don't feel the need to go into detail on this council-wide message. However, I would be more than happy to discuss this further with any of you (especially with Alder Verveer, I'm a resident of District 4), and I can be reached at austin.griesbach@me.com to continue discussion or arrange a meeting.

I think the likely outcome with this design is that we will almost immediately want to remediate it, which seems like a poor use of taxpayer money and a limited budget. Worst case, I think this design carries an appreciable risk of getting people hurt or killed.

Thank you,
Austin Griesbach

From: [Austin Griesbach](#)
To: [Zwieg, Andrew](#)
Cc: [Crawley, Katie](#); [Madison Mayor](#); [All Alders](#); [Mohr, Thomas](#)
Subject: Re: Regent Street Concerns
Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2026 4:02:28 PM
Attachments: [2026-04-29_Madison_Vision_Zero_Progress.png](#)
[regent_modal_hierarchy.webp](#)

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Hello Mr. Zwieg,

I should reiterate, these are not questions, these are concerns. I have been following the process fairly closely, and have both attended and re-watched those TC and BPW meetings. Most worrisome, the design process so far has clearly centered driver convenience and parking over pedestrian safety. In addition, that same prioritization has also sidelined transit and bikes. This overturning of the modal hierarchy and many of the corresponding design choices go directly counter to council-adopted City policy described by [the Complete Green Streets \(CGS\) guide](#), and best practices from such documents as the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Urban Street Design Guide (USDG). This NACTO document (plus others) *are* part of the adopted City design policy, [clearly stated](#) during the process for adopting CGS. "The following standards and guidelines informed **and are adopted as part of** this Complete Green Streets Guide" (CGS pg. 70).

- 14-Foot Travel Lanes
 - The 14-foot lanes go directly against CGS limits on maximum lane width of 10-feet generally on a Community Main Street, or 11-feet for a bus/truck route (CGS pg. 60), and even far exceeds the interstate highway 12-foot lane standards. This also goes directly counter to NACTO lane width standards: "Lanes greater than 11 feet **should not be used** as they may cause unintended speeding and assume valuable right-of-way at the expense of other modes". "Restrictive policies that favor the use of wider travel lanes **have no place in constrained urban settings**, where every foot counts" (both quotes from USDG pg. 34).
 - Meriter hospital was presented as a uniquely important hospital for frequent life-or-death situations where mere seconds count, necessitating emergency vehicle accommodations unique to this road. (I disagree with the framing: Meriter is classified as [a Level IV facility](#), far from being the most important, and [a records request](#) indicated this was more a general preference rather than a unique compromise for this one road, but the point stands that emergency vehicle access *does* need to be maintained for the sake of the nearby hospital.) This resulted in a "requirement" of 28 feet of clear width along the entire length of the road, allowing space for cars to pull over, with no allowance for limited narrower cross-sections at *any* part of the street, even at intersections where cars would be free to pull off to side streets. This "requirement" is not documented anywhere in written City policies (verified by a different records request), nor is there an accounting of which streets this does or doesn't apply to. The "magic number" (as it was often called) along with the assertion that it must apply to every last inch of the roadway length, is simply presented as "this is how it has to be". "Magic number" is perhaps appropriate, as it seems to have been pulled out of thin air.
 - There would be many ways to accommodate 28 feet of clear space. An emergency

vehicle clearable/mountable median or island, similar to some we have in some spots of Williamson Street and Monroe Street, is explicitly called out as an option in City policy (CGS pg. 66). There are also bike lane configurations that would have been compatible with the required 11-foot lanes, which would have also increased the amount of sidewalk space available to pedestrians and shortened the vitally important North/South pedestrian crossings across the road (I'd like to point out the massive number of UW students who live in the Vilas neighborhood). Instead, the decision was made to have clear and free 14-foot travel lanes, counter to all safety best practices.

- When this design element was repeatedly contested in support of other options like a mountable median, and the safety hazards such as speeding and longer pedestrian crossings were pointed out, it was asserted that speeding simply won't be an issue (a supposition I find extremely dubious). The emergency vehicle argument was eventually [extended](#) to state this is also critical for comfort to drivers (moving and parked) in street parking situations. Not only does this go counter to CGS and NACTO lane width guidance described above, it unilaterally vetoes and rewrites many CGS maximum lane width restrictions (a rewrite which I believe is not within Traffic Engineering's authority). It's also an assertion explicitly not backed up by NACTO: "To the greatest extent possible, the lateral distance between the traveled way and the sidewalk (or parking lane) should be minimized, providing ample space for sidewalks and other amenities" (USDG pg. 44).
- The NACTO Urban Street Design Guide does actually speak rather favorably of street parking as a safety measure for pedestrians (as a safer use of roadscape than moving motor vehicles, not as the best option full-stop), but this safety relies on being willing to cause some discomfort to drivers: "On-street parking narrows the street and slows traffic by creating friction for moving vehicles" (USDG pg. 142). In other words, the 14-foot lanes directly negate one of the few safety benefits to be had from street parking.
- Pedestrian Crossings
 - The slight expansion of sidewalk space over the miniscule width currently present is greatly appreciated. However, points throughout the rest of this email go over various ways in which potential sidewalk space was significantly eroded for cars, and in particular the N/S crossings (across speed-inducing 14-foot travel lanes) remain quite concerning. "**Design Intersections to Be as Compact as Possible.** Compact intersections reduce pedestrian exposure, slow traffic near conflict points, and increase visibility for all users. Limit the addition of dedicated turn lanes and pockets, and remove slip lanes where possible" (USDG pg. 93)
 - With the constraint of 28-feet of clear space required for emergency vehicles, pedestrian crossings would have to be something like 28 feet at a minimum (though other configurations, such as a mountable median or bike lane, could lower this to 22 feet worth of crossing general traffic). However, the design presented instead calls for 35-foot crossings at RRFBs, and even as much as 45 feet in some spots. In addition to the 14-foot lanes and bus pullouts, this is largely caused by the copious inclusion of dedicated turn lanes at every intersection. These are described as a safety improvement, and they even may well be. I concede they definitely are important at the signalized intersections, where a dedicated left turn allows for a protected left turn phase: "Left turn lanes are common at controlled intersections" (CGS pg. 44). But in the context of all the other suspect assertions made with this project, I think it simply hasn't been well-

demonstrated that dedicated lefts at pedestrian-heavy uncontrolled intersections are *more* safe than providing shorter pedestrian crossings. They seem to be much more about making sure people who are turning don't momentarily block traffic.

- In addition to the pedestrian safety risks posed by excessively long pedestrian crossings, pedestrians being in the road for longer would also *inconvenience* drivers too, through those efforts to prioritize them in other ways, by causing longer signal cycles and being required to stop for longer at RRFBs. "Longer crossing distances not only pose as a pedestrian barrier but also require longer traffic signal cycle times, which may have an impact on general traffic circulation." (USDG pg. 167)
- Bus Pullouts
 - The bus pullouts included as part of the design really can't be described as filling *any* purpose relevant to the modal hierarchy. It eats a huge amount of space from the sidewalk, severely constrains the amount of space available for the "enhanced transit stops" called out for Community Main Streets (CGS pg. 44), and lengthens pedestrian crossings at intersections. There are really only two reasons to have a pullout: bus route time stops (which could easily be shifted to other stops along a route, since Regent is so narrow), or for convenience of general motor vehicle traffic. We're clearly prioritizing the latter, in defiance of the modal hierarchy.
 - NACTO explicitly recommends bus bulbs (USDG pg. 50) or in-lane boarding if transit operations are actually prioritized over drivers. At the cost of drivers getting stopped for a few moments every ~30 minutes (which they'll have to do all the time anyways for pedestrian RRFB crossings), in addition to all the points regarding pedestrian space described in the above bullet, transit operations are improved by not having to find a gap to pull back into traffic.
 - Bus stop incompatibility was presented as a point against the inclusion of bike lanes, but as bus stops on Broom and Bassett prove: bike lanes and bus stops are fully compatible for in-lane stops. Bike lanes are merely incompatible with driver-serving pullouts, which is yet another way in which the pullouts upend the modal hierarchy in favor of drivers over bikes.
- Parking/Loading
 - Many of these design elements go back to parking and loading. The loading aspect already goes against City policy for a Community Main Street: "Loading zones, if needed, should be provided around the corner on intersecting minor streets" (CGS pg. 44). They have instead been treated as mandatory inclusions in front of businesses, another rewriting of City policy.
 - Parking is in fact a higher priority on a Community Main Street than the standard modal hierarchy. "Parking may be a *higher* priority" (CGS pg. 44). [In the recent BPW meeting](#) staff used the language on CGS pg. 15 to spin street parking as just about the *highest* priority in the presence of small businesses and on Community Main Streets. This is a selective and misleading reading, and completely ignores the elements of CGS which clearly state bike lanes to be a higher priority than street parking, calling for a shift of parking location when tradeoffs are required (such as by a limited ROW): "Bike lanes should be included and may require consideration of parking options on side streets or in structured parking" (CGS pg. 44).
 - It's also worth noting that in the Community Engagement period with 1,000+ respondents (pg. 8 of [these slides](#)), parking was the lowest community priority for this street **by far**.
 - One argument for including parking absolutely everywhere, at the cost of other

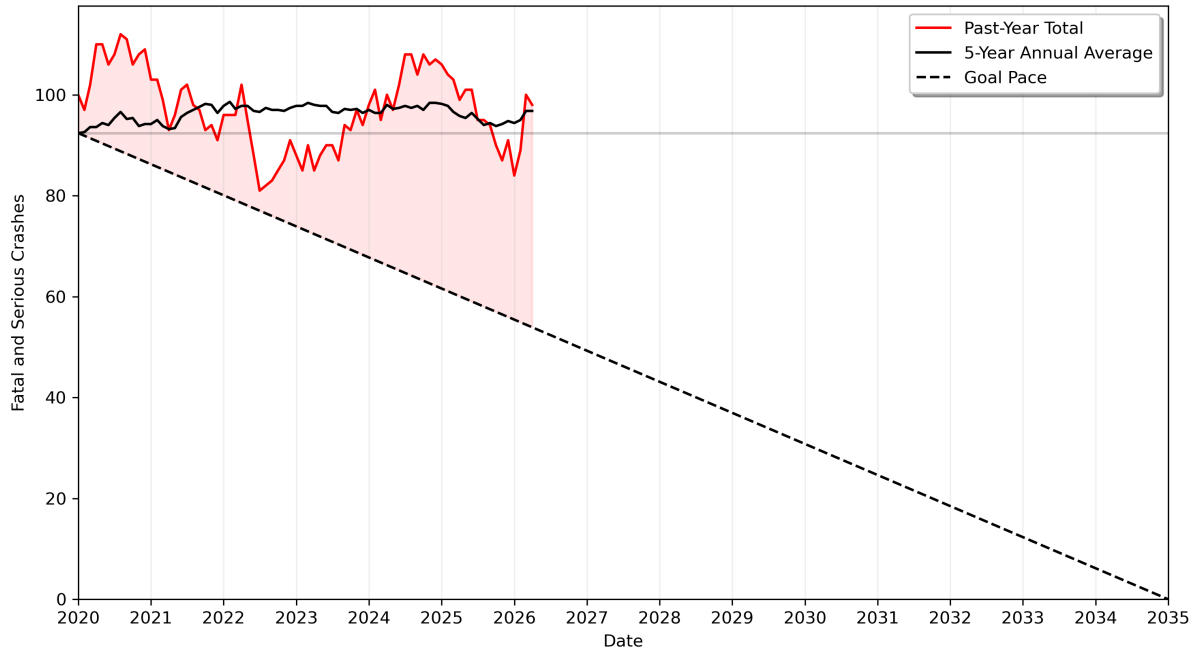
modes, is that people will park there anyways even if signs say otherwise. This seems like a ridiculous reason to violate City policy and abdicate the ROW space, rewarding the rule-breaking and encouraging similar behavior elsewhere in the future. And there's apparently no thought given to the fact that, if we're giving up on the concept of curb management and enforcement, what's to stop people from double-parking in those nice wide 14-foot lanes we're planning on building?

- Bike Lanes

- This is in fact a road with limited space, and tradeoffs are required. There is certainly a world where bike lanes would be fully incompatible with Regent street. However, this does not seem to be the case here. Plenty of extra space has been devoted to driver convenience and comfort, to an extent that goes in defiance of City policy. There is enough room for bike access without negatively impacting pedestrians, but the option was never even fully explored. [Per City staff](#), it was treated as a non-starter to remove even *some* of the loading space (which by policy shouldn't be on the street in the first place). The only option presented to staff was one that preserved loading and ate away at the sidewalk, which is misleading and improperly pits vulnerable road users against each other.
- Staff also went on to [misrepresent the All Ages and Abilities overlay](#), and essentially treated it as the basis for whether bike access would be included on a road. This is in direct contrast to City policy: "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" (CGS pg. 24). It also contradicts the bill of goods sold in the adoption of CGS (I don't have a timestamp for that one specific moment in 2022/2023 on hand at the moment, but I can find it if you really need me to).
- I can accept a world where bike lanes wouldn't be included (pedestrians of course should take the highest priority), but as I said, I don't think it's necessary in this case, and including bike lanes would help achieve other safety goals and increase pedestrian space. Instead, we're breaking City policy on vehicle space in order to facilitate motor vehicle uses and exclude bike lanes. Lastly, the positions stated by staff in this process are extraordinarily concerning for future bike access throughout the rest of the City. I'm sure it's already caused Mr. Luecke some grief, that people are now commenting on the AAA network according to this de facto treatment by staff in practice rather than the de jure written policy.

Driver convenience and "Level of Service" continues to be prioritized over convenience and safety of other road users. This goes against Complete Green Streets (page 10 details all the ways LOS-first design harms us, and CGS is intended to counter it). The City has [a VMT reduction goal](#), which will never be achieved if the current mentality persists: if convenience is given to drivers first and other modes last, why would you travel by any means other than driving if you had the choice? The driver prioritization is a self-fulfilling prophecy. More importantly, the City has a Vision Zero goal, which we are utterly failing. Achieving this goal can't happen overnight, but if we want to make **any** progress then we need to make absolute full use of any opportunity to prioritize safety. That's clearly not the top priority here, and we seem to be happy to continue along with the status quo that gets people hurt and killed.

Madison, WI Vision Zero Progress
TOPSLAB Data Through 2026-03-31 as of 2026-04-29



Thank you,
Austin Griesbach

On Apr 29, 2026, at 9:35 AM, "Zwieg, Andrew" <AZwieg@cityofmadison.com> wrote:

Hi Austin,

Tom Mohr from Traffic Engineering and I have been working on the Regent St planning team since June 2025. Traffic Engineering has been leading the project to date; once the geometry is approved, responsibility will transition to Engineering, which will advance the street design and prepare construction plans. What specific questions do you have? Tom and I are available to help provide answers. Additional information is available on the Regent Street project website (<https://www.cityofmadison.com/engineering/projects/regent-street-reconstruction>); I will also update the site today, along with the Legistar presentation, to better outline how the project progressed to this point and what materials were presented to the Transportation Commission and Board of Public Works in advance of geometry approval.

Regards,

Andy

Andrew Zwieg, P.E.

Principal Engineer

City of Madison - Engineering

Rm 115, City-County Building

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

608.266.9219 (ph)

608.264.9275 (fax)

azwieg@cityofmadison.com

From: Madison Mayor <madisonmayor@cityofmadison.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 4:11 PM

To: Zwieg, Andrew <AZwieg@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Crawley, Katie <KCrawley@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: FW: Regent Street Concerns

Please let us know of follow up with Austin.

Thank you!

Diana

Diana du Cini - Mayoral Office Clerk

City of Madison • Office of the Mayor

<image001.jpg>

Room 403, City-County Building

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Tel 608 266 4611 • **Fax** 608 267 8671

Email dducini@cityofmadison.com

Web <http://www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/>

From: Austin Griesbach <austin.griesbach@icloud.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 3:54 PM

To: Mayor <Mayor@cityofmadison.com>; All Alders <allalders@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Regent Street Concerns

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I think the likely outcome with this design is that we will almost immediately want to remediate it, which seems like a poor use of taxpayer money and a limited budget. Worst case, I think this design carries an appreciable risk of getting people hurt or killed.

Thank you,

Austin Griesbach

From: [Alicia Lyu](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Cc: tom.mohr@cityofmadison.com; kliems@gmail.com
Subject: CC 5/5 Written Comment for Regent Street Reconstruction (#92491)
Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 4:57:52 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)

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Dear Alders,

I urge you to refer this item back to the Transportation Commission because it is not only a policy failure but also lacks procedural integrity.

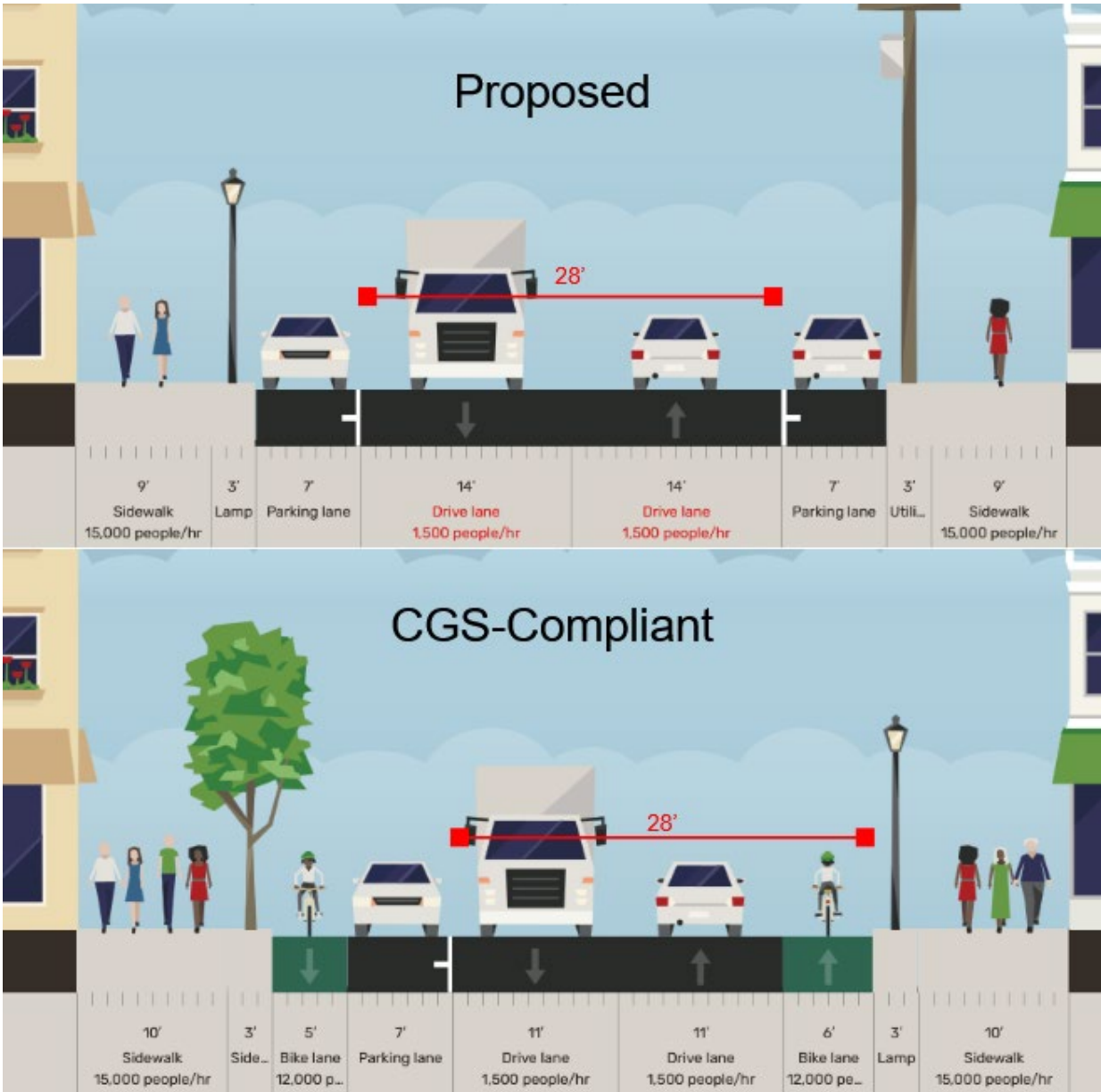
The Common Council can't sit through every meeting, that's why we have Complete Green Street to guide the commissions. Staff is expected to stay neutral and use their expertise to provide multiple options, so that the commissioners can choose one in accordance with city policies. **The whole process failed from the point where staff only provided one viable option.** Staff may have displayed some other options, but they all happened to be not viable, when other viable options do exist as seen in public comments, such as the one attached. And the one option staff presented was nowhere near a complete green street. Commissions had no choice but to stomach this design, therefore **failing to deliver on the Common Council's vision.**

As I watched or attended all the meetings, it became clear that the current design has **two priorities: Delivery/parking and travel flow.** Cars get twice as much of the road space as pedestrians, while bikes get none. I ask the Common Council, do you agree with these priorities? Do the voters agree? I'll give you a hint: **the Regent Street surveys show that parking is the lowest priority.**

If not for the 28-inch clear width requirement to ensure emergency access, I would support leaving out bike lanes; without this constraint, even double-sided parking allows 12' sidewalks. Now, **with the 28-inch requirement, omitting bike lanes results in two 14-inch wide travel lanes, as in the current design, as wide as on interstate highways.** Mr. Mohr argued to the Board of Public Works that this wouldn't cause speeding because of "pedestrian activities", among other things. **Does the City plan to place human-sized traffic barrels to keep Regent Street from becoming a highway?**

This item is a procedural failure because the commissions were denied any meaningful opportunity to deliberate on multiple options. It is a policy failure because it prioritizes the moving and storing of cars, contradictory to public input. Luckily, we have the Common Council shepherding the last step, which is this meeting. **If the Common Council voted yes on this item, it would set a precedent that career professionals disregard city policies and overstep their authority, and a precedent that undermines any future argument for Complete Green Street.**

Respectfully, I wanted to point out **a systematic issue: there is no procedural guardrail to require staff to provide multiple viable design options that the committees can decide on.** Even after the attached design appeared in multiple oral and written comments, Mr. Mohr did not include it in his last presentation to BPW but showed another infeasible bike-friendly option, despite that he specifically set out to respond to public comments, e.g., "pedestrian activities" as traffic calming measures and his own "interpretations" of the Complete Green Street. **Transportation Commission had 3 options to vote on for Midvale Boulevard resurfacing,** so clearly staff knows how to do this but chose not to, seemingly without any repercussions.



From: [geri marsh](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Narrowing Regent and any other street in Madison
Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2026 9:06:25 AM

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I believe by making our streets narrow, will not only discourage people from visiting but would also allow people to park. There are no Fee Free parking available in the area. Hospitals and clinics will either charge a large amount or not allow people to park in their ramps or parking lots. I strongly oppose this idea.

From: [Tippedtailan Cora](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Opposition to Regent Street Project
Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 11:00:22 AM

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Good morning,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposal to reduce Regent Street down to 2 lanes. This route is critical for people commuting downtown, to people attending sports events and enjoying downtown. Currently, there are very few bikers that utilize this street. As a bike commuter, I utilize the Southwest bike path which runs from the Beltline to Lake Monona and beyond. As a resident of Westmorland, I have been increasingly concerned about pedestrian safety on Monroe Street, Nakoma Road, Odana Road and Tokay Boulevard. These have been historically residential streets, but as the city has cut off more routes to downtown for vehicles, they have been more heavily used by vehicles. It's even more disappointing that the city leadership has sought to increase housing density in these areas while simultaneously restricting transportation options for individuals that live in these neighborhoods.

Thank you,
Anna Moffit
53711