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To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: 2021 Vision Zero Projects - Whitney Way - Item number 7 on todays agenda
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To the Members of the City of Madison - Transportation Commission,

As a resident on Whitney Way at South Hill Drive for over 20 years, I feel I can provide insight into the habits of traffic on Whitney Way. Additionally, having worked directly with the City of Madison on several occasions to help improve safety on Whitney Way, I take the proposed changes on Whitney Way seriously.

Living on Whitney Way comes with its own difficulties. Speeding is a significant issue. Frequently, especially when traffic is lighter, I see many vehicles drive along Whitney Way at speeds of 40 to 50mph, occasionally some cars come past my house at speeds up to 70 mph (not exaggerating). This is not going to change without significant modifications to the patrolling of this street especially in the evenings and on weekend nights by traffic enforcement.

Heavy trucks that use this venue continually at all times of day and night. In fact, in approximately 2019 a heavy truck driver had a medical emergency as he was southbound on Whitney near the Walgreens, in this situation he went over the median, over the lanes of the northbound roadway and came to rest after damaging several utility poles just south of us at the HyVee property. This event could have occurred any place along this route. Whitney Way is also a major route for Ambulances and Fire Engines aside from Police Vehicles access from the far west to the hospitals downtown. Most of these emergency services come from West Mineral Point Road and head north on Whitney Way towards University Avenue.

For years, I have been considering Whitney Way traffic in relation to other west side streets with similar traffic patterns. In my observations, I believe we (on Whitney) have a similar level of traffic to Midvale Boulevard. However, there is car parking for residents on Midvale and no buffered bicycle lanes. The level of traffic on Whitney (and Midvale) and history of crashes also make this route unsafe for cyclists. Reducing traffic and access to the downtown through either of these routes doesn't seem like a viable option for the vibrancy of the community.

I walk along Segoe Road as part of my nightly walk. This much less traveled road has dedicated bicycle lanes much as is proposed on Whitney Way but allows parking on the side. Segoe has also reduced the lane to one lane of travel either direction through the mainly residential areas from Regent Street to Mineral Point Road. I realize this cannot be done on Whitney Way without significant loss of traffic throughput.

Keeping separation between cyclists and vehicles on major venues seems sensible. Whitney Way is only liveable with the existing traffic because there is parking available in front of our properties. To change that and eliminate parking not only makes things more burdensome for all the residents on the street, but also increases the danger as the potential for all traffic to use the same routes increases. The margin of combined parking and existing bike lane on the street also provides a safety buffer for people accessing the properties on Whitney Way.

Bicycle paths and dedicated bicycle lanes on less traveled streets are important for keeping separation from traffic. However, if a buffered lane is a model being used for Whitney Way, then the proposed changes are likely to make this street significantly more dangerous for the residents, travelers and the buses traveling the street.

There are risks in the proposed changes which includes:

- Greater likelihood of increasing speeding by vehicles that see an open roadway
- Increased risk for turning into driveways
- Loss of property value
- Bad behaviour (YES - I've had people pass me on the inside parking lane as I've turned into my driveway)

- Accidents by drivers rear ending vehicles turning into driveways
- More risk to cyclists by inattentive or speeding vehicles
- Loss of ability of older people to safely enter and exit vehicles
- Loss of service provider access which may make some services vehicles unable to provide service.
- More likelihood of abuse by uninformed and impatient motorists

I've either experienced all of these issues, as a cyclist, as a driver entering my driveway, as a homeowner on Whitney Way or because I've reported the crashes. I'm also uniquely experienced in this situation because of traffic layout turning east on South Hill Drive, I have to approach from the middle lane before turning into my driveway. This would need to be done by all drivers along the roadway with an active cycling lane with the potential of moving cyclists placed between the roadway and the curb. This means a motorist would be turning with a cyclist in their blind spot and where a cyclist would not easily be able to avoid an unexpected turning car. Traffic on Whitney Way is fast, and these situations occur quickly.

I've had 3 cars hit and 4 cars on my lawn (having travelled across the neighbors lawns first). From 16 year old girls rear ending my car, to 20 year old boys driving while on mobile phones hitting my cars while I'm turning into my driveway, to drunk drivers hitting my trees, to anonymous people committing hit and runs on my cars while legally parked on the street (4' away from the lane of travel). This street is not safe.

I've also called the police and city about many incidents that have occurred on mine and neighbors properties and have witnessed many incidents on the street. I've been abused by bad behaviour including verbal insult, or obnoxiousness by other motorists who weren't paying attention to the traffic as I signal and turn into my driveway - in spite of plenty of warning ahead of my intentions. Additionally, multiple drivers have died on this venue after leaving the roadway.

Bluntly, anytime anything is on or near this roadway it is in danger of being hit. My examples are meant to show this. Fortunately, there have not been significant numbers of people hit. While cyclists and cars are supposed to be equal on the road, there's physics in play in this relationship. A car weighs significantly more than a cyclist and so if the level of damage to a car is significant. However, it doesn't take much to have a dead cyclist. This proposal actually goes counter to the idea of promoting separation of traffic. Promoting cycling by accommodating a buffered bike lane on this route is a well-intentioned, but dangerous idea on Whitney Way.

Madison already has significant traffic which means that traffic separation is needed, however, promoting cycling along Whitney Way is not a wise outlook. Traffic needs to be accommodated but nobody likes to be near speeding cars while cycling. By comparison to other routes, currently cyclists rarely use Whitney Way as there are plenty of side streets and alternative routes for cycling that provide a much safer and more enjoyable experience. Not many people actually park on Whitney Way in significant numbers for many of the reasons I've detailed. For those who do, they park there because it's needed in front of their properties. For the limited number of cyclists that choose to use Whitney Way, the existing parking lane on Whitney Way provides sufficient width to accommodate their needs.

My issue my loss is not simply of street parking, but my concern also includes the fact that I believe that promoting bicycle riding on Whitney Way is likely to increase the significant risk of personal injury and death by promoting the use of this route with the proposed higher traffic levels that will need to use this venue. Additionally, if this proposal is adopted, parking on the street - even temporarily - to move vehicles would put the owners of these properties at liability if somebody hit their vehicles.

There are already significant and numerous incidents on this route that provide foundation for awareness by the council and for this to be a serious consideration before any proposal is approved. I believe there is good intention, but I believe this a huge mistake in providing safety for all involved.

Is the commission willing to take on the potential liability to the City of Madison that these situations may present to attorneys and families that will be impacted. I do not believe this is the intention of the City, but may be an overlooked side-effect that will be a real issue for homeowners and people in motion. This also needs to be carefully considered.

If the city is intent on proceeding with this proposal, then I would ask the commission to provide access to funds and

variance approvals for homeowners on this street to provide off-street parking on their properties for multiple vehicles, as many of the home owners have single car driveways and garages with multiple vehicles at their residences whether from ownership, tenancy or visitors.

Because of the reasons I have pointed out, I would ask the Transportation Commission rethink this well-intentioned, but erroneous proposal and reject this proposal.

Thank you,
Alan Zarinnia

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