

**Subject:** omr

**From:** Nancy Nikora <nancy@blue-note.com>

**Date:** Wed, 06 Jan 2010 17:57:00 -0600

**To:** Nancy Nikora <nancy@blue-note.com>, Jim Nikora <jim@blue-note.com>

Old Middleton Road Repair. Public Works Meeting January 6, 2010

It is commendable that many of the neighbors who live directly on Old Middleton were able to get together and agree on two important issues. The first is the success of having sidewalk on only one side of the street. The second is the accommodation being made to have the assessments shared by residents on both sides of the street, so the full burden does not fall to the homeowners who will have the sidewalk bordering their property. I think many of us in the area agree that the sidewalk provides an enormous and necessary improvement in the safety of this road. While it is a heavily used traffic corridor, it also serves many pedestrians. In most of the improvement area, there is no other way to get to streets that do have sidewalks for safer walking, other than in the narrow existing traffic lanes.

It is unfortunate that the discussions at the two community meetings were dominated by comments of resistance to cutting any trees. I think we all know that doing nothing is not an option. An inevitable result of any repair will be the loss of some trees. While this is regrettable, I think we have to accept some loss. I wish there had been more discussion about compromise or alternatives that might preserve some number of the trees and vegetation that provide our road with its unique and pastoral character. I also think it is more than reasonable to suggest that the City replace some of the trees that will be removed in this project. We understand that this does not fix the immediate wound, but over time it would help restore the quality of the road which we all find so attractive.

One suggestion that I have not heard even mentioned is the elimination or narrowing of the bike lanes. I don't understand why all plans I have seen presented to date include two five foot wide bike paths. I am aware of the city's commitment to the bicycle community. But, we are also trying to save a large number of trees. In that light, these are my questions.

Is the road plan still open to modification?

How many trees could be saved if the bike lanes were eliminated altogether or narrowed?

Why do we need 10 feet of bike path on Old Middleton when there is a bike path on University Avenue? This is fully one third of the road way being proposed.

Might the traffic necessarily slow down if cars and bikes were expected to share the 10 foot wide traffic lane?

If Old Middleton Road remained narrow, even after the curb and gutter improvement, might it be less desirable as a commuter route?... a fear repeatedly expressed by some of the neighbors who advocate doing nothing.

Can trees that are currently targeted for removal be marked in some way, so that neighbors could walk the street and see exactly what the impact will be?

If there is still an opportunity to modify the plans to improve safety and runoff control, I would urge additional neighborhood meetings to discuss areas of compromise and unity. I am discouraged by current environment which seems to put neighbors against each other when we all have something to gain by forging a unified plan.