

From: [Majid Allan](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Support for Lake Mendota Drive project (3-9-22 agenda item 6, #70385)
Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2022 4:16:26 PM

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Dear Members of the Transportation Commission,

I am writing in support of the city's plan for the reconstruction of Lake Mendota Drive, and particularly in support of improved pedestrian access and safety in this area of the Spring Harbor neighborhood. I appreciate the efforts that have been made to avoid excessive tree clearing or expanding impervious surface beyond the minimal necessary within the public right of way.

Regardless of neighborhood residents' position on this reconstruction project, I would venture that everyone would agree that Lake Mendota drive is a very special place. The drive provides access to Lake Mendota in several ways, including Spring Harbor boat launch, Spring Harbor beach, Merrill Springs Park, and the numerous public lake accesses provided via Epworth Ct, Upham Ct, Laurel Ct, Capital, and Baker Aves. It also provides access to Shorewood Hills and the UW Campus to the east, and Allen Blvd and Marshall Park (via Thorstrand) to the west. However, pedestrian access to these areas of the neighborhood and beyond is currently via the roadway.

These public amenities are wonderful and the private homeowners in the neighborhood benefit tremendously from them. Of course, we're not the only ones who benefit. On any given winter day, you can see people ice fishing on the lake. During the summer, boaters of all kinds launch their craft from spring harbor. Families bring their children to Spring Harbor park, and bicyclists enjoy LMD as an alternative route to University Ave. Neighborhood children are still granted automatic enrollment at the middle school, and are able to enjoy walking, biking, skateboarding, etc. to/from the school.

Speaking from my experience as a homeowner in the neighborhood, who walks LMD almost every day and enjoys seeing neighbors doing the same, I can say I feel perfectly at home walking LMD, even if not as safe and free of concern as I might feel if not forced to share the roadway with vehicles. But, what of the pedestrian experience of those who do not own property in the neighborhood? Or of those who may have accessibility needs?

Many have noted concerns with increasing amounts of impervious surface as a result of this project and attendant potential negative impacts on water quality and well 14. I do not recall similar concerns over private development projects along

and near LMD over the past several 6-7 years. There have been over a dozen such projects since 2016, many resulting in increases in overall lot coverage and impervious surface as a result of home construction / expansion, or the addition of accessory buildings - including at least one such project on a parcel of land known to have Native American mounds.

As a 22 year neighborhood resident, I trust the professional staff reviewing and making recommendations on such projects, as well as the elected / appointed bodies of our fine city to ensure proper consideration is given to, and protections afforded, the environment. Indeed, I have faith in the private property owners making the proposals, understanding that such improvements often result in “win-win” outcomes for both the owner and the environment. I am confident the same can be accomplished with this project. Improved pedestrian access / safety and protecting the environment are not mutually exclusive goals.

There is one important constituency that has not been consulted about this project: future residents of the neighborhood. No doubt this is a major project and expenditure of public funds that will affect the neighborhood for decades and generations to come. Those future residents will be grateful to the city for making this long term investment, and I only wish there had been such foresight decades ago when other portions of the neighborhood were first developed.

I wholeheartedly agree with my fellow neighbors that the project should be done in an environmentally sensitive manner that protects the existing tree canopy, acknowledges and respects the Native American heritage of the area, and ultimately results in an improvement to the current conditions. After reviewing the preliminary proposal put forward by city staff, I have every confidence that will occur. I urge the commission to support this project.

**Respectfully,
Majid Allan**