

October 20, 2010

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee:

Regarding Item Number 20126 (Agenda Item 7) for the October 20, 2010, Madison Public Works Committee meeting, the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (Bike Fed) submits the following comments:

The Bike Fed strongly opposes the narrowing of Williamson Street to narrower than 46' southeast of Baldwin Street (the existing is 48' and proposed is 44') for the following reasons:

- The outside lane in each direction currently serves as a parking lane and de facto bike lane during non-rush hour times;
- This shared lane currently serves as an adequate, although substandard, bikeway;
- Narrowing the outside lane would effectively eliminate the use of the lane as a shared bicycle and parking lane as it would place bicyclists using the lane farther into the "door zone" and increase the chances of car-bike crashes.

The Bike Fed recommends the following configuration for this section of Williamson Street:

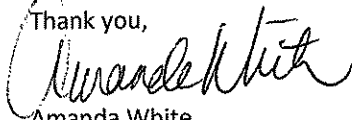
- 46' total width;
- Two 10' center travel lanes;
- Two 13' shared parking/bike (and peak hour through traffic) lanes;
- The Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook strongly recommends a minimum width of 12' for shared parking/bike lanes (§2.5) and recommends adding more width when feasible.

This proposed design for Williamson Street provides the following benefits:

- It provides one extra foot on each side of the street for an expanded terrace area;
- It shortens the street crossing distance for pedestrians;
- It provides an outside lane of adequate width for bicyclists to ride next to parked vehicles with a minimum risk of "dooring."

The presence of nearby bikeways does not reduce the need for Williamson Street to serve as a safe and convenient bikeway for users of all levels. Neither Jennifer Street nor the Capital City (East Isthmus) Bike Path provide as direct or as fast access to local businesses or through the neighborhood. People in motor vehicles are not required to use less convenient routes to access Williamson Street; people on bicycles should not have to either.

Thank you,



Amanda White
Associate Director



Kevin Luecke
Lead Planner