

**From:** [Wolfe, James](#)  
**To:** [J W; Zwieg, Andrew](#)  
**Cc:** [Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina](#); [Navarro, Jose](#); [Canton, Aaron](#); [Board of Public Works](#); [Transportation Commission](#); [robkenmorrow@gmail.com](mailto:robkenmorrow@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** RE: Gary St. extension compromise?  
**Date:** Monday, July 28, 2025 10:43:33 AM

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Hello Mary,

Thank you for your thoughtful email and passing along the petition. A mailing was sent out late last week, and should be arriving in mailboxes in the coming days, regarding the next step in the approval process for the planned project on Davidson, Park, Maher, and Gary. That mailing will note that a public hearing on this project will be held before the Board of Public Works on the evening of Wed. August 6, and we'll make sure to include your email, as well as the petition, as part of the public record for that hearing.

In general, the City's adopted street design guide has established standards and stipulates that all streets within the City are to have sidewalks on both sides of the street. This is to ensure that our streets have good accommodations for all modes of travel, and also provides the safest, most accessible options for people of all ages and abilities now and into the future. There are occasions where exceptions to this requirement can be acceptable, and, in those situations, the exceptions are to be reviewed and approved the Transportation Commission.

Overall, the proposed design of the entire project is an exception to the City's design standards, as the current design only includes sidewalk on one side of all of the streets within the project limits. This was primarily due to the City also placing a high priority on the preservation of large canopy trees, and we believe that the current proposed design is a good compromise and balance of all of the competing elements within the City's right-of-way. As you noted, the Transportation Commission has already reviewed this project, and their review also included a discussion on the extents of the sidewalk work along Gary St. Ultimately, the Commission approved this project as an exception to the design standards, and their approval also included installation of the sidewalk on just the north side of Gary St. to the east of Elinor.

Given the Transportation Commission's authority over these parts of a project design, we do need to proceed with taking the design that was approved by Transportation Commission, including the sidewalk on Gary St. to the east of Elinor, for review and consideration by the Board of Public Works.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to the project team, including Jose and Aaron (copied). Thanks.

**Jim Wolfe, P.E.** (he/him/his)

**City Engineer**

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**From:** J W <4mohave@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 1, 2025 9:31 AM  
**To:** Wolfe, James <JWolfe@cityofmadison.com>; Zwieg, Andrew <AZwieg@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Martinez-Rutherford, Dina Nina <district15@cityofmadison.com>; Navarro, Jose <JNavarro@cityofmadison.com>; Canton, Aaron <ACanton@cityofmadison.com>; Board of Public Works <boardofpublicworks@cityofmadison.com>; Transportation Commission <TransportationCommis@cityofmadison.com>; robkenmorrow@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Gary St. extension compromise?

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [4mohave@gmail.com](mailto:4mohave@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Engineer Wolfe and all,

I am wondering if a reasonable compromise can be reached on the Gary St. extension, in this inclusive planning process of the Davidson, Park, Maher, & Gary St. reconstruction project.

I continue to reach out because this discourse is democracy in action & I do not want these concerns to be dismissed as a simple NIMBY issue. Ending the sidewalk at Elinor Street seems like a win-win situation for the city & the residents of the Gary block east of YMCA.

I've written to the Transportation Committee & engineer Navarro prior to watching the live feed of the June 11th T.C. mtg. in which they discussed the "Davidson St., Park Ct., Maher Ave, and **Gary St.**, extension/reconstruction". Two residents of Gary Street who live east of Elinor spoke & advocated for one thing; ***can the sidewalk construction on Gary St. stop at Elinor St. rather than continue east?*** All other aspects of the project: sewer & water, stormwater & other street improvements were supported by the two Gary St. residents who represented.

They were not opposing the reconstruction of the street & sidewalks on Gary St. west of Elinor, adjacent/behind to the YMCA. In the end, the Transportation Committee approved the plan with one sidewalk, to run halfway down the north side of the street, on our dead end block of Gary St., east of Elinor St.

I wrote to my Alder who shared her opinion & and broader feedback. She encouraged me to provide feedback for the July Public Works committee mtg. but said they are unlikely to go against the T.C. decision. I have written to the Public works committee in advance

of the July mtg. as well.  
Now I am writing to you.

Ending the sidewalk at Elinor Street seems like a win-win situation for the city & the residents of the Gary block east of YMCA.

It was only a few months ago, we were notified that the scope of the project had been extended to include our dead end block east of Elinor St. We were appreciative to have some community engagement efforts made in May & early June. The survey gave limited choices that did not address many of our concerns. After talking with our neighbors and gathering input (see attached petition). It seems the majority of residents on our block support improvements, *except for the sidewalk*.

My general experience from this process so far, is that we are being told what the plan is rather than being included in the planning. I understand that our block was a last minute extension to the project, therefore

I would like our input to be seriously considered in the planning process regarding our block.

I walk, bike & drive on the streets in my neighborhood every day.

I keep being told that sidewalks will make things better for future residents on our block, yet who is to decide what will be better for our future than ourselves?

As I see it, ending the sidewalk at Elinor Street seems like an easy win-win situation for all involved. I've listed below why I think resources could be used better elsewhere to address the safety of citizens, as part of the Vision Zero & Green Streets initiatives.

**\* We are not located on a busy thoroughfare, dangerous intersection or popular public destination.**

Our street is safe to walk down *because it is a dead end*.

It is not a busy or dangerous thoroughfare.

The majority of people who use our street regularly are the residents.

(Gary Street, west of Elinor, adjacent to the YMCA is an entirely different situation that I am not speaking about.)

Yes, there are busy & dangerous streets & intersections in our neighborhood, this is not one.

**\* Sidewalk construction provides accessibility only as well as the property owners that can maintain it.** On the north side of the street, that would only extend halfway down the block. There literally is no destination, so anyone who wants to continue to reach the end of the block will have to continue to walk in the street. How does this improve the safety of our block?

**\* The majority of block residents oppose it.** See attached petition and apply Robert's

*Rules.*

**\* A complicated engineering endeavor** Constrained conditions on our block persist, even with the one sidewalk plan. Especially after listening to the presentation by Engineer Novarro & TC discussion.

There are also several reasons why installing a sidewalk on the north side of our dead end block would be a burden to me personally:

**\* Physical limitations to maintain the sidewalk in winter.**

I am 61 and live on a limited income, with my partner Katia Marshall at 810 Gary St. We both have some chronic health conditions that would limit our ability to maintain a sidewalk during the winter on our property.

**\* Damage to the only Mature tree on our property**

Our mature Sycamore tree provides us with shade, which has become even more important during these super heated summer days. I've heard efforts are being made to keep our mature trees which are greatly appreciated. I still remain wary, because plans can change, as we've already seen with the decision to extend street construction.

**\* Loss of food growing space & bee + butterfly cultivars**

We cultivate vegetables to eat in our front yard during the growing season, as well as bee & butterfly friendly plants.

**\* Unsustainable trade of existing of resources**

I do not want to trade food cultivation, shade trees & and pollinator habitat for a concrete sidewalk whose scope ends after my driveway and has no viable destination. How is this part of a green initiative? All over the world people are removing concrete and reviving green space to reduce urban heat, and increase food security.

I am wondering if a reasonable compromise can be reached if this is indeed an inclusive planning process? Ending the sidewalk at Elinor Street seems like a win-win situation for the city & the residents of the Gary block east of YMCA.

Thank you for your consideration & engagement in the planning & approval process of the street reconstruction extension on the block of Gary St., east of the YMCA/Elinor.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mary Welch

810 Gary St.