

February 18, 2008

Pedestrian/Bicycle/Motor Vehicle Commission
City-County Building, Room 115
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Proposed Traffic Circles on Red Tail Drive (Hawks Landing Neighborhood)

Last August, we received a survey from the City of Madison regarding the construction of three traffic circles along Red Tail Drive in the Hawk's Landing neighborhood. I live on Redan Drive, one house removed from the intersection of Redan and Red Tail, a proposed site for one of the traffic circles. I opposed the installation of these circles and submitted additional comments.

At the January Hawk's Landing Homeowners meeting, we were notified that the circles had been approved with construction to begin later this spring. Many in attendance were disappointed when told this was "the only solution the City of Madison would consider." I remain opposed to the installation of these circles and am hopeful that the commission will revisit this decision and consider an alternate approach (or approaches).

First, I do recognize there has been some speeding on Red Tail and that something needs to be done to control this for the safety of the residents, particularly young children. I applaud the efforts of several neighbors who have addressed this issue in an attempt to curb the speeding. They have worked hard and given much of their time in an attempt to reach a resolution. Their efforts, while initially driven a concern for their children's safety, benefit the entire neighborhood, one that will be the home of a new elementary school this fall.

Since the initial survey was conducted, several issues have surfaced that warrant consideration before moving forward. First, an article appeared in the State Journal questioning whether these traffic calming devices improve safety or make it worse. Certainly, professional engineers need to look at the available data and take that into consideration.

Secondly, Mr. Tom Carlson, a resident of Red Tail Drive and a professional transportation engineer who has spent his career advocating for highway safety, shared his concerns in a letter to neighbors. Mr. Carlson raised several important issues: city buses turning left at one of the proposed circles, higher maintenance costs (including snow plowing issues), and all three sites are school bus stops. All of these issues raise the same concern: **are they improving safety or making the areas less safe?** It would be a horrendous decision for the City of Madison to make an investment that would decrease the safety of the residents it's empowered to protect.

Several people at the Neighborhood meeting expressed disappointment that this information was not available at the time the survey was conducted, implying it would have had an impact on how they voted. There was also disappointment that the obvious, simple solution – installation of a stop sign – would not be considered by the City.

In addition to the above issues, I would like to offer the following in support of reconsidering the installation of the circles. First, the new school, which wasn't mentioned in the information provided with the survey, will become reality this fall. Redan Drive will become a major vehicle and pedestrian route to the school. With no stop signs any where along Red Tail Drive, where will the children be able to cross safely? Will getting cars to merely "slow down" be sufficient for the children, or would they be safer crossing Red Tail if traffic came to a complete stop at this intersection?

My second concern also addresses the Red Tail – Redan intersection. A vehicle turning north on Redan (toward the new school) will be traveling up a hill. Over the past 6 – 8 months, I have observed several construction and delivery vehicles having a difficult time making the turn at this intersection. With a circle, I'm convinced buses and delivery vehicles will find this a difficult intersection to navigate. The solution in other entrances to the neighborhood is to simply drive over the circle and destroy the landscaping. (Increased maintenance?) This is our fifth winter living on Redan, a narrow street that has been poorly plowed by the contractors. The addition of a circle at this intersection will only complicate any efforts to keep Redan drivable during the winter months. Somewhat surprising given the snow we've had this winter, the conditions have not been any better in previous years. This was obviously not a consideration when the proposal was made for the circle at this location.

To summarize: I believe the neighborhood is in favor of slowing traffic on Red Tail Drive and hope that a less costly and easier to implement solution (e.g. a stop sign or other options) would be considered. I appreciate the opportunity to present this information and hope that it is helpful as you move toward a final decision.

Thank you for your consideration.



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C: Board of Public Works, City of Madison
Larry Nelson, City Engineer, Madison
Bill Enright, 1105 Stonebriar Drive (Hawks Landing resident)
Tom Carlson, 1602 Red Tail Drive (Hawks Landing resident)