



Madison Parks Division

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July 10, 2022

To: Board of Park Commissioners
From: Eric Knepp, Parks Superintendent

CC: Alder Grant Foster, District 15
Alder Brian Benford, District 6
Yang Tao, City Traffic Engineer
Chris Petykowski, City Engineering
Renee Callaway, Traffic Engineering

Re: ADA Access Study Regarding the Paved Path Connecting Lakeland Ave to Atwood Ave through Olbrich Park

BACKGROUND

As part of the larger project of rebuilding Atwood Ave from Fair Oaks to Cottage Grove, City Engineering has been considering improvements to the paved path connecting Lakeland Ave to Atwood Ave. The existing connection uses an abandoned section of Lakeland Avenue beginning at the top of the hill at the corner of Welch and Lakeland, continues on the abandoned roadway to Atwood Avenue.

In 2017 and 2018, Engineering began the Atwood Avenue reconstruction project, which included proposed changes to the ped/bike connection between Lakeland Ave and Atwood Ave. During the design development stage leading up to the first time the BPC saw this project on 7/11/18, the Engineering team provided only one option to the public, which has been termed [Option 1](#) throughout the process. Based on concerns of inconsistencies with the [Olbrich Park Adopted Master Plan](#), Parks staff offered a second option to the BPC at the 7/11/2018 meeting referred to as [Option 2](#). The BPC supported Option 2 and the issue was referred to Common Council. Option 2 was never approved by PBMVC, nor subsequently by the Transportation Commission. The Council adopted a substitute resolution ([Legistar #52035](#)) that approved the original geometry (Option 1) but directed City Engineering to “review and possibly include the following recommendations in the final design based upon feedback received.” No significant additional work was completed on this at the time in 2018.

In the Spring of 2021 Engineering staff, assisted by Traffic Engineering and Parks staff, worked on reviewing options for the connection between Lakeland Ave and Olbrich Ave. Working with Alder Foster, the group developed a third option, that would allow for a plowed path in the winter but would not bring the through bikers into the park as far as Option 1. This is referred to herein as original Option 3, and can be viewed on page 3 of the [October presentation of options to the BPC](#). Option 3 was reviewed and recommended by both the Transportation Commission and Board of Park Commissioners in 2021.

Since the last time the BPC considered this issue in October of 2021, a few things have occurred. In the Fall of 2021, local residents contacted Engineering and Parks expressing concern that

Option 3, as shown at the time, would interfere with sledding, a long established drum circle and an area where neighborhood gatherings such as solstice occur. In addition, they expressed concern that the path alignment for both 1 and 3 will provide an obstacle for park visitors accessing the restrooms, the canoe launch and the lake shoreline. The neighbors were interested in reviewing the options again. They favored Option 2 and in addition they submitted an additional concept for consideration removing bike traffic from the Park, which is referred to as [Option 4](#).

Over the winter, it became obvious to staff that the original Option 3 the design did not provide sufficient spacing to allow for uninterrupted sledding. We continued to hear from residents that expressed concern that Option 3 went through an area used for seasonal festivals and gatherings as well as a well-established drum circle.

Based on these concerns, Engineering conducted a detailed survey of the sled run out area, and working with Parks and TE staff, the team developed a new [Option 3a](#). Staff held a public information meeting on March 22nd of this year, we heard multiple perspectives from a variety of stakeholders. Unfortunately, a clear consensus was not reached at the meeting. Some residents continued to express concerns that the paved path shown in Option 3a also creates an obstacle for those wishing to access the restrooms and the canoe launch.

The issue then went before the Transportation Commission on March 23rd of this year. The TC recommended Option 1, with Option 3a as an alternative, stressing the importance from a Transportation Commission perspective of the year round access for bikes. The BPC directed staff to move forward with Option 3a with the additional direction to explore making the path as accessible as practicable given the site limitations. The table below provides an overview of the series of meetings and options considered, as well as outcomes of those meetings.

Summary of Legislative and Public Meetings

First Round	Date	Leg File Number	Options Shown	Outcome
Various Public Information Meetings	Various	N/A	Option 1	Option 1 supported
Ped/Bike and Motor Vehicle Commission	6/26/18	52035	Option 1	Option 1 recommended
Board of Park Commissioners	7/11/18	52354	Option 1 and 2	Option 2 recommended
Common Council	6/19/18	52035	Option 1 and 2	See substitute resolution, attached
Second Round				
Transportation Commission	7/25/21	67043	Option 1, 2 and 3	Option 3 favored but did not provide an action
Board of Park Commissioners	10/21/21	67067	Option 1, 2 and 3	Option 3 selected
Third Round				
Public Information Meeting	3/22/22	N/A	Option 1, 2, revised 3 and 4	No clear outcome, voices on all sides
Transportation Commission	3/23/22	70601	Option 1, 2, revised 3 and 4	Option 1 recommended with Option 3 as alternative
SASYN Transportation Committee Meeting		N/A	Option 1, 2, revised 3 and 4	Recommended Option 2
Board of Park Commissioners	4/13/22	70601	Option 1, 2, revised 3 and 4	Recommended Revised Option 3a with request for access study

ANALYSIS OF ACCESS STUDY

The background information on the process for this important project above highlights the many perspectives and iterations this project has been through. As requested, Parks Staff has done further study regarding an accessible slope. Please see materials provided in the Legislative File for details.

The study shows

- An accessible slope will need a berm that is eight feet high in some locations.

- An accessible slope will impact views from the park to the lake and from the lake to the park.
- The necessary berm will impact sledding by impeding the sledding hill with the side slope of the berm
- The necessary berm will crowd the existing restroom.
- The existing sculpture will have to be moved to another location to accommodate the necessary earthen berm.
- Additional park trees will need to be removed to accommodate the larger berm.
- The eight foot high, 4:1 slopes (in some locations) will present a safety hazard to a bicyclist that strays from the paved path.
- The construction of such a berm will have an impact on sledding opportunities in the park.

CONCLUSION

Staff intends to proceed with the Option3a as directed by the BPC at the April 2022 meeting. The resource intensity and impact on the park of constructing an additional accessible route down the hill are too significant for staff to support. The accessible route for this section of the Park will need to continue to be on the sidewalk. The path will provide additional accessibility from the Gardens to the lake shore.