

May 14, 2009

Larry D. Nelson, P.E.  
City Engineer

City County Building, Room 115  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Sir:

This letter is being written in response to the Notice of Public Hearing before the BPW with regards to a proposed Special Assessment for street improvements on Blackhawk Road. This notice was sent to affected property owners along Blackhawk Road.

The primary purpose of the proposed improvement seems to be to add designated bike lanes on both sides of Blackhawk Road. The city is projecting that as a property owner at 8901 Blackhawk Road, I will be liable for 100% of the cost of a new curb and gutter to abut the bike lanes as well as four feet of the roadway itself in addition to 50% of the cost of replacing existing drive aprons for the same reason which is estimated at \$9035.45

I'd like to point out a few reasons why adding bike lanes to Blackhawk Road at this point in time is neither expedient nor necessary.

- 1) No cyclists pass through Blackhawk Road without using it as an access route to one of the other major trails – primarily County J/Military Ridge Trail to the south as shown by the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board map of bike trails. Old Sauk Road which runs parallel to the entire length of Blackhawk Road less that half a mile south of it has dedicated bike lanes on both sides and serve this purpose just as well if not better. Dedicated lanes on Blackhawk so close to a major roadway that runs parallel to it with pre-existing lanes that serve the same users is inherently wasteful.
- 2) The east half of Blackhawk Road – which is the target of the proposed improvements is primarily accessed by Pleasant View Road (from Old Sauk Road) which has no designated bike lane – this will lead to a floating section of roadway with a bike lane. Again this doesn't seem to have any viable purpose.
- 3) The residents of Blackhawk Subdivision itself – who incidentally aren't all in the proposed SAD which is based solely on frontage with Blackhawk Road – have easy access via inner roadways to Old Sauk Road which as mentioned above has dedicated bike lanes.
- 4) Blackhawk road is not a major thoroughfare, is lightly used by motor vehicles and is therefore reasonably able to handle motor and bicycle traffic without dedicated bike lanes

In addition to the above, I'd like to note that per Wis. Stats. § 66.0703(1)(b), the amount assessed against any property for any work or improvement which does not represent an exercise of the police power may not exceed the value of the special benefits accruing to the property. The published preliminary resolution does not assert an exercise of police power.

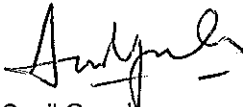
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I'd like to request an explanation of how addition of these bike lanes to a road with no continuous biking lane access to any other road is proposed to add more value to my property – to the tune of over \$9000 - than it has lost in the past general assessment cycle due to the housing crisis alone.

"Special benefits" under sub. (1) (a) is defined as an uncommon advantage accruing to the property owner in addition to the benefit enjoyed by other property owners – I further fail to see how a bike lane on a minor roadway (Blackhawk) otherwise connected to larger roads like Pleasant View that have no bike lanes is proposed as a uncommon advantage to me just because my property has frontage with the road. Any advantage – while completely unessential as stated above, nevertheless benefits all residents of the subdivision.

Please record this letter as a strong written objection to the proposed Special Assessment. I urge the Common Council to reconsider the necessity and prudence of undertaking expensive, nonessential projects like these in the current economic conditions.

Sincerely,



Sunil Gopalan

CC:

- City Project Engineer – Janet Dailey
- City of Madison Board of Public Works
- Alder Paul Skidmore, District 9