

From: [Mark Redsten](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Agenda Item #5, 70626, Final Approval of roadway geometry of LMD
Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 10:54:54 PM

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Please register these comments on the registrar and provide them to the Transportation Commission for the meeting April 13, 2022, in reference to agenda item #5 70626: Final approval of roadway geometry of LMD.

Dear Transportation Committee and Mayor Rhodes-Conway,

I am a lifelong Madisonian and long-time supporter of the mayor and progressive politics in Wisconsin. I also run an environmental organization that collaborates with the city of Madison on climate change and water quality. I'm writing in my personal capacity, as a resident of Lake Mendota Drive, asking you to slow down this project to protect our health and the environment.

To successfully enact citywide plans, such as Complete Streets, green infrastructure, or climate resilience plans, Madison needs to listen to neighbors impacted by those plans. Neighbors can and should be vital and respected partners in developing a plan.

For the past 8 years, my organization has been working on installing green infrastructure in Milwaukee, together with neighborhood associations, the city of Milwaukee's ECO office, and Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage district (the other MMSD) in Milwaukee's North Westside neighborhoods. Neighbors there were frustrated with MMSD's big plan to capture rainwater, despite being the victim of devastating flooding that has caused hundreds of millions of dollars of damage to property. Original MMSD projects captured stormwater but created unintentional problems in the community. So, neighbors rightfully insisted on being part of green infrastructure planning, to have a voice in what occurred in their neighborhood. Milwaukee listened, understanding the concerns from their early unwelcome efforts, and MMSD now contracts with nonprofit organizations to respect and listen to neighborhood voices, and to integrate their knowledge and experience into designing neighborhood green infrastructure plans. The outcome of these plans, the neighborhoods and the city are all better as a result.

Contrast this approach with what is occurring with this project. Madison's city staff are taking a rigid, heavy-handed approach to designing streets that is opposed by most of our neighborhood. On top of that, with this and other street projects, the city's engineering department wants you to approve road layout first, then look for opportunities to build in green infrastructure, or incorporate the input of the neighbors, later.

This is literally the opposite way streets are designed in more progressive communities which also struggle with similar stormwater runoff and access/equity issues as Madison. Madison can address equity and access concerns in a street design while also protecting our environment and public health. But this is not happening here. You have said you allow for flexibility, but then please listen and respond to neighborhood concerns.

City of Madison staff and our alder point to their public information sessions as evidence that they are listening. There have been long informational sessions, but during these sessions, city staff robotically reject nearly every meaningful suggestion from the neighborhood, repeat their talking points, and repeatedly dismiss concerns about public health and the environment. While there have been minor adjustments to the road design, these are not sessions in which “listening” takes place and will NOT help the city’s big plans in the long run.

Spring Harbor residents have offered serious and workable suggestions, worthy of more consideration from the city. Spring Harbor residents want to address equity and access, while we also want to:

- protect historically and culturally important native burial mounds.
- protect the mature tree canopy and improve tree diversity.
- maximize opportunities to remove pavement, install green infrastructure and plan for climate resilience.
- protect our drinking water, and Lake Mendota water quality.

Alderman Furman is ramming this plan through, despite neighbors’ clear and resounding frustration, and despite workable alternatives. Committee Members, please slow down Lake Mendota Drive’s reconstruction by a year so that Madison can be a place where progressive ideas flourish and where our citizens, lakes and environment are all protected.

Sincerely,

Mark Redsten
5536 Lake Mendota Drive