

From: [Scallon, Peggy](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Cc: [Transportation Commission](#); [Furman, Keith](#)
Subject: Lake Mendota Drive project- please listen
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2022 12:50:13 AM

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

Dear Transportation Commission and Mayor Rhodes Conway:

I am disappointed and angry about the way that some members of this Commission treated members of my neighborhood who participated in the TC meeting on 3/9/2022. I felt that the TC disrespected the Spring Harbor neighbors who are in opposition to this project and who are asking to slow this process down.

Commission Member Brigit Brown stated that SH neighbors sounded like “conservatives from the North suburbs of Milwaukee.” Ann Kovich stated that she was certain that there must be many members of the community who support sidewalks who simply didn’t attend the meeting, even though the numbers of those in opposition to sidewalks were overwhelming, compared to 2 people who favored sidewalks.

Denise Jess stated that another neighbor was “ableist” because she stated that a former neighbor of hers had used her motorized scooter on Lake Mendota Drive. In short, it was pretty stunning that rather than actually listen and engage with neighbors, the TC had their minds made up, made disrespectful statements and completely disregarded the voices of neighbors who overwhelmingly spoke in opposition to this plan.

This process has been almost completely top-down, paternalistic, and disrespectful. This project is rushed and there has been no compromise from City officials regarding sidewalks. It is unclear why this is being rammed through when other projects of this magnitude take much longer and engage with neighbors and utilize input from those who live there.

I would ask that the TC pause to consider that instead of having selfish concerns, that SH neighbors are trying to advocate for the health and quality of Lake Mendota, the preservation of the trees and habitat and the beautiful character of the neighborhood. As public officials, it is your job to balance a variety of interests, and not just promote one agenda. Who speaks for the owls in the trees, or the shade that the trees provide, or the ducks, birds, fish and swimmers, boaters, and kayakers?

I live on Lake Mendota Drive and walk, run, and drive on LMD and I also observe the traffic and pedestrian and bike traffic. My neighbors and I will be here long after this project is completed and we don’t want this plan as proposed. LMD is a lovely street, and it is unique in its direct proximity to Lake Mendota.

The tree canopy and the green space makes LMD a lovely place for people to walk, run or bike.

There are very few cars on the West end of Lake Mendota.

There have been no pedestrian injuries or fatalities on LMD. Many people walk and otherwise enjoy LMD, and it has a relaxed, rural feel. Most neighbors do not want the character of the neighborhood to be forever changed by adding sidewalks, unnecessary pavement, and runoff into Lake Mendota. This is a plan in search of a problem. As a taxpayer, I’d ask for City money to be spent where it is needed and wanted. To repeat, there are not safety concerns here and most neighbors do not want these sidewalks.

We are asking for this project to be slowed down. There has been no real engagement from the City or responsiveness to feedback. Our first meeting about this was January 11, 2022. The next day your

commission had a meeting which was not announced at that meeting. Our Alder, Keith Furman, has been unresponsive to most neighbors who do not want sidewalks. He has not been open or transparent with the announcement of meetings or input. This has been a top-down process. We have been presented with a plan that appears to be a “done deal”. He has been contemptuous and has been engaging in a ridiculous (but actually disturbing) exercise of having City staffers confiscate “Save LMD” signs from the front lawns of neighbors.

Our concerns with the proposed plan:

1. There is a significant loss of trees, which will change the character of the street and take away habitat for owls, birds, and other animals. We can't lose the shade, cooling, and canopy of these trees.
2. The sidewalks as proposed leads to unnecessary pavement. We should be decreasing our paved footprint, not keeping it the same.
3. Pavement leads to more runoff of sediment and salt into Lake Mendota
4. The plan for stormwater management is outdated. We should be much better than this.
5. The cost of this project could be better used in other parts of the city which do have safety concerns. As a taxpayer, I wonder why money is being spent on projects that neighbors do not want.
6. The assessment to neighbors is high, as is the maintenance of sidewalks. This will force elderly or disabled people out of their homes.
7. This street has historical and cultural significance as it is in proximity to Native effigy mounds.
8. We need to consider the health of Lake Mendota, however, environmental considerations have been addressed in only outdated and superficial ways.
9. The “sidewalks at all costs” movement comes at the expense of the health and beauty of the lake and don't consider the natural and environmental world.

Why the rush? Slow down this project. This street is unique and has ecological and cultural significance. The plan as it is proposed has excessive paving, tree loss and will forever change the character of this beautiful neighborhood. And most importantly, we have an opportunity to improve the quality of Lake Mendota through updated green infrastructure, and instead we are taking a step backwards.

Sincerely,

Peggy Scallon

█ Lake Mendota Drive

Peggyscallon@gmail.com