

April 15, 2012

Dear Mayor Soglin and Common Council,

The Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association (TLNA) supports the Madison Common Council Resolution accepting the East Johnson Street Traffic Study (File ID 25669) commissioned by the City Engineering Division, created by Strand Associates and submitted on March 20, 2012. We support the long overdue reconstruction of East Johnson Street in 2014. We also support referral of the one-way to two-way question to the City's proposed Transportation Master Plan expected to begin later this year. We have significant concerns with the Strand Study's analysis of this question and we hope the Transportation Master Plan will explore the issue comprehensively and in greater depth. Our concerns with the Strand Study are presented below.

Contrary to what its authors contend, the Strand Study does not satisfy the recommendation for Johnson and Gorham streets in the adopted Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan (City adoption date: 2/5/2008). TLNA has long advocated for the return of Johnson and Gorham to two-way operation as a key component of neighborhood revitalization. However, we also understand that the question has implications beyond the scope of one neighborhood. For that reason, the Neighborhood Plan specifically recommends that the analysis of two-way conversion be conducted as a part of a larger, comprehensive transportation and parking plan that addresses the central city as a whole.

In addition to a larger geographic boundary, we also requested that the analysis address questions of the effect of transportation policy on land-use goals. The TLNA Plan notes that for Johnson and Gorham "the juxtaposition of primary arterial street use with residential and local retail land use is detrimental to the land use." (pg. 37) We proposed that this misalignment "should be rectified as part of a comprehensive transportation strategy for the Isthmus and downtown." (pg. 36) The Strand study does not examine the effect of one-way primary arterial operation of Johnson and Gorham on land-use.

We also specifically asked for analysis of strategies that might effectively enhance travel options and diminish reliance on the single occupant vehicle, especially for routine daily commuting. A resulting plan would "implement Transportation System Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies that will (1) make central neighborhoods more livable and (2) improve mobility for all residents and visitors by distributing trip demand across multiple modes (auto, bus, streetcar, commuter rail and pedestrian)." (pg. 38) TLNA maintains that diversification of trip demand particularly for daily commuters will enable two-way conversion to work without creating unacceptable levels of congestion. The Strand Study omits this dimension.

Given the limited scope and engineering-only bias of this study, it is not surprising that its recommendation is to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, it is gratifying to see that at least three viable scenarios for two-way conversion were developed in such a short time. It is also heartening to read the recommendation that no reconstruction project in 2014 be designed to physically preclude a subsequent conversion to two-way.

In conclusion, TLNA is encouraged that the City is pursuing the creation of a Transportation Master Plan. We hope that such a plan will forthrightly address the letter and spirit of the recommendations in the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Plan. Madison would not be alone among cities re-thinking the

April 15, 2012

operation of one-way street networks in their central areas. While attention is given to New Urbanism experiments in suburban areas, cities must not ignore the great value and potential for revitalization in our original urban neighborhoods. The economic revitalization of the Tenney-Lapham neighborhood is of value to the entire City. The two-way conversion of Johnson and Gorham is a necessary catalyst for unleashing that value. We look forward to a thorough and constructive civic conversation on this question as the Transportation Master Plan is developed.

Sincerely,

Richard Linster,  
President  
Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood Association