

From: [Josh Olson](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Legistar 86772 - We can do better than a signal
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Attachments: [image.png](#)

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Hi,

I will not be able to attend this meeting so I wanted to provide some feedback.

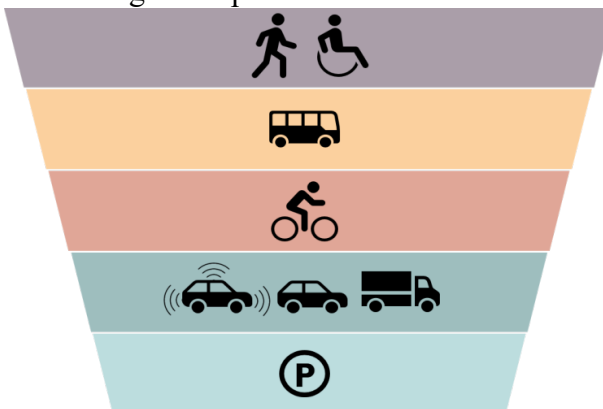
I am a big supporter of the lane reduction on W Washington. I think that was the correct decision to make when the four crashes occurred in September and I applaud the City for making a quick decision to increase safety.

As seen in the report, the RRFB that was installed correlated with increased injuries. This isn't surprising, as a Strong Towns supporter I'm aware that drivers typically don't adhere to signs or they can become fatigued by continuous noise. It is not an excuse for drivers to not pay attention to the street environment, so if drivers are struggling at a ped/biker heavy intersection we should put more protections in place for peds/bikers. I would prefer if we put physical limitations in place that slowed vehicles down and reduced the severity of crashes.

The lane reduction test points to the success of physical limitations. When forced into a single lane, cars have to drive slower and pay more attention to path traffic. When path users only provided positive comments, and drivers provided both positive and negative comments, it looked like it was a win; when do we ever see drivers provide positive feedback on changes like this?! That indicates it was a good change!

I know the OCR has put the City into a bind, but if we go with a full signal intersection and back to two lanes, we are doing the City a disservice:

1. We continue to emphasize that car traffic is the most important element to intersections, even though Complete Streets has them 4th on the list



2. We put lane reductions on the back burner for other projects, even though this has proven so far to be beneficial to the majority of users

The vehicle volume for W Washington does not warrant two lanes. The John Nolen project,

while difficult for 2 years, is not a reason to make such a permanent change to the intersection. Because this will have effects beyond 5 years, I don't think we should consider it.

The path volume does warrant placing pedestrians and bikers as the first consideration. Southwest Commuter path is one of the few areas in Madison where users aren't in fear of being hit by a car the majority of the time. We should encourage more path users, which means that when there are intersections which have mixed traffic, the "advantage" on safety, accessibility, and convenience should be for path users. Not cars.

This is close to the heart of downtown. I take the bus down this route. Many people bike or walk to work, school, or lunch. If cars want to drive in this area, they should have to do so slowly. They should have to wait. We shouldn't encourage vehicles to drive in this area by making it more convenient for them at the expense of path users. Even at signalized intersections, I sometimes don't feel comfortable as a pedestrian. Cars go through lights consistently in this City! I understand from a traffic engineering perspective that backups present problems, but those can be resolved through other means. Putting a signal here to resolve car congestion will only make it worse in the future, for this area and other parts of the City. At some point you have to say "if you don't want to deal with congestion, don't drive here. Otherwise, you can wait!"

To summarize:

- it's a bad idea to signalize this intersection: it benefits cars and only-in-name helps with bike/ped safety because it removes the burden of safety from the car to the bike/ped
- lane reduction here seems to be well received, and this would blow that up. We should stick with a lane reduction and add other elements to slow drivers down and increase ped/bike safety
- we should encourage more walking/biking in the City and that means doing the right thing and slowing cars down in areas that peds/bikers frequent, which would be this intersection

Thank you,
Josh Olson