

**From:** Nicholas Davies <nbdavies@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 10, 2023 4:14 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** No to new street reservations in/by parks

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

Dear Park Commissioners,

The West Area Plan has some valuable recommendations. In particular, a bike/ped connection from Lake Mendota Drive to Marshall Park would be fantastic. But I'm concerned about the proposed new street right-of-ways going in/by Madison parks, both at Rennebohm Park and at Stricker's Pond.

#### Rennebohm Park

It's ambiguous whether the proposed street would go through or next to the park. Either way, I'm concerned that it would negatively impact the park, both ecologically and for its wide array of human uses.

I lived next to Rennebohm Park for years, and I saw firsthand how many wildlife species are supported by the narrow greenway along the creek at the east end, with its population of large, mature trees. The bike path through there was part of my commute, and I saw how well it's used by joggers and residents of the senior housing.

Any new street--and the car traffic it'd bring--would impact the wildlife in that greenway, and impact the stress-free usage of that path by so many people of all ages and abilities, and would most likely require mature tree removals, damaging the tree canopy that humans and animals both value greatly.

In addition, the bulk of Rennebohm Park serves as a communal gathering and activity space, for people of all backgrounds, from the towers to the north and the houses to the south. Rimmed on two+ sides by dense housing with a green core, this block is one of Madison's best examples of dense urbanism integrated with green space, and one of the closest things we have to a Barcelona-style *superilla*.

For apartment residents to have to walk their kids across the street, or for community events to have car traffic rushing through/past, that would be a serious detriment to how this block functions today.

I'm baffled as to who could possibly see this as beneficial. People in cars already have ample parking and access points to the park on its south and west edges and from Segoe Rd.

I recognize the need for a bike/ped connection north to Sheboygan--when I biked through Rennebohm Park for my commute, I'd often cut through the Hilldale Towers parking lot, which

isn't ideal--but that can be achieved more affordably and less intrusively with a path-sized right-of-way.

### Stricker's Pond / Middleton Street

The plan updates also propose destroying a modal filter on Middleton Street, turning what is today two dead-ends into one thru street, which would start at Gammon and continue along Stricker's Pond up into downtown Middleton. This would create a significant opportunity for cut-thru traffic in a residential neighborhood.

But also, the part of Middleton Rd north of the current modal filter runs along Stricker's Pond, and because of the modal filter preventing thru car traffic, this block is primarily used by pedestrians and cyclists, and constitutes part of a route going all the way around the pond (part of which is Madison park land).

There is currently no sidewalk on the west side of the street, which fronts the pond, but that is where people looping around the pond tend to walk anyway. Therefore the street is not currently configured to handle both this pedestrian traffic and thru car traffic, and in a conflict between those two, the heavy machinery will prevail. It will adversely impact people's usage of the pond, which includes usage of Madison park land.

Increased traffic (and higher speeds) on Middleton St would also expose Stricker's Pond, a valuable ecological resource, to increased salt, noise, exhaust, light pollution, and threat of roadkill. Even to flying birds, car traffic creates a "[moving fence](#)" that deters or prevents wildlife from crossing safely or at all.

The project leads on the West Area Plan seem to be including these additional street connections "just because", without considering the adverse impacts they'll have. I hope you'll take this opportunity to speak out against them on behalf of Madison residents--human and otherwise.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
3717 Richard St

---

**From:** Ellen Foley in Madison, Wi <ellen.madaline@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 9:17 PM

**To:** Conklin, Nikki <district09@cityofmadison.com>; Mayor <Mayor@cityofmadison.com>; Lynch, Thomas <TLynch@cityofmadison.com>; Tao, Yang <YTao@cityofmadison.com>; Wachter, Matthew <MWachter@cityofmadison.com>; Stouder, Heather <HStouder@cityofmadison.com>; All Alders <allalders@cityofmadison.com>; Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

**Subject:** Re: Legistar File Number 80665, Agenda Number 16, Discussion Item-Sauk Creek Greenway Shared Use Path

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

Dear Board of Park Commission,

Here are 28 email letters from Madison residents who took the time to write their opposition to the bike path proposal for the Sauk Creek Greenway in the West Area Plan. Thank you, Ellen Foley

---

From: **Ted Drewsen**

I believe the proposed bike path through the Sauk Creek Greenway is a poor choice for numerous reasons. Putting a bike path in the greenway will have a negative impact on the environment because it will require even more trees to be taken down. The trees help with global warming and give needed shade for the area. Trees also give homes to the many animals that live in the greenway. I believe that the bike path will increase crime. This crime will be difficult to deal with since I don't think that Madison Police will be patrolling the greenway. This crime would be not only to the others that use the path but also to the property owner's house with easy access to the back of houses and ease of escape. There is talk of a lit path which would increase the light pollution and bring unwanted light to the property owners. To my understanding, the greenway is for stormwater run off. JoJo from the Engineering Department told us that there is no bike path in the plan. I am surprised to hear from the Parks Department of this plan, which I don't think is a good idea. This greenway is enjoyed by many (including many animals). The natural beauty of the trees as well as the positive effects of tree cover is important to maintain.

Thank you

Ted & Deb Drewsen Ted Drewsen 7621 Farmington Way Madison, WI 53717

[ted.drewsen@gmail.com](mailto:ted.drewsen@gmail.com) 920-251-9640 (cell)

---

From: **Gail Walsh**

While I support efforts to create safe bike paths through Madison, I think this should be addressed with designated paths adjoining roadways. I don't think reducing woodlands for bike paths is a good idea. I don't mind expanding natural walkways in Greenway to make them more accessible to the public, but paving a Greenway is absurd. Once you pave it, doesn't that require ongoing maintenance? That seems like an ongoing cost, with noise interfering with the quiet enjoyment of such spaces.

Gail Walsh 5 Plover Cir, Madison, WI 53717

From: James Long

I understand that the Transportation Commission is finalizing a plan to consider a lighted, paved bike path through the Sauk Creek neighborhood. As a homeowner in this area, I strongly oppose the placement of this bike path, as it would not be a good use of resources and would disrupt the serenity of the shoreline that is currently enjoyed by wildlife and walkers. The proposed path would begin and terminate on lightly traveled streets that currently provide bikers with a safe, lighted route and would need far less maintenance than a creekside path. I am sure the City has better uses for funds than a path such as proposed. This proposed path was described only recently in a West Side Plan meeting and I feel that local input has been lacking and object to finalizing a plan that does not have community input. At the very least, more time is needed to study the plan to see if it meets the needs of those who will potentially use or be affected by the path. Thank you,

Jim Long Madison

---

From: **michelle sharpswain**

Hello, As a resident with a home that faces the Sauk Creek greenway, I oppose the addition of a bike path and lights. The greenway project, as I understand it, is intended to primarily help mitigate flooding. It's clear the creek needs to be restored to better function. It's also clear this work can be done while maintaining as many non-invasive trees and plants as possible. We are losing a great deal of green space in Madison, in general, and this green space is home to many different animals and birds and has important environmental impact. I am a cyclist. I appreciate paths that keep me from needing to use heavily trafficked streets. This proposed path does not serve this function. The roads on either end of the proposed path are easily walked and biked with a high degree of safety. The proposed path is unnecessary. The current dirt/grassy path is regularly used by residents, year-round, who appreciate the forest and are happy to walk on unpaved paths. The proposed path also adds an impervious surface to a space in which the city is trying to reduce flooding. That seems counterproductive. The homes built along this path were built to face the woods...Having lights back there will be intrusive to many homes. It would be reasonable to expect depreciation of property value with paved path and lights back there. I've known a number of residents who have moved away from houses in other areas of the city (and surrounding cities such as Fitchburg and Sun Prairie) where bike paths were put in because of the intrusive nature of the paths/lights and the perceived increase in safety concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

michelle sharpswain 7558 Red Fox Trail

"If we want our students to lead creative, productive, responsible lives, we must give them opportunities to learn in ways that have consequences for others, as well as for themselves."

Judith A. Ramaley, National Science Foundation

---

I am writing as a resident of the Tamarack Trails/Sauk Creek/Walnut Grove area ("Neighborhoods") to give feedback on the above-referenced file number. I am wondering about the checklist that is being discussed and if it is done before a project is considered or afterwards? The Neighborhood is concerned about the Sauk Creek Greenway ("Bike Path") that was shown in the Complete Green Streets Policy Guide ("CGSG") approved on January 3, 2023, and the West Area Plan rolled out in February 2023, and what type of checklist was developed before including the Bike Path in these documents. Overall, the Bike Path is opposed for a number of reasons:

1. Non-Public Participation First and foremost, the Neighborhoods were not notified in the mail (which is in the checklist) that the Bike Path was included in the CSSG. The CGSG was also not mentioned in the City's Sauk Creek Greenway project communication page. The last update on the Bike Path was from 2018 when it was unveiled to the Neighborhoods in 2018 when the City held its first Sauk Creek Greenway engagement meeting. Likewise, the Neighborhoods were never notified in the mail that a Bike Path was being considered in the 2000 Bike Transportation Plan and 2015 Bike Transportation Plan. The city had its first West Area Plan public meeting on February 6, 2023 with the Bike Path shown in the presentation and asking for feedback; however, the CGSG approval was one month before this public meeting. Why would a project be in a major guide before the city seeks input from the public? These actions go against the RESJI standards.

2. Unnecessary Bike Path The 2000 Bike Transportation Plan classified the bike path in the

Sauk Creek Greenway not a priority since there are suitable on-road routes nearby. Westfield Road, which is 1000 feet east of the proposed path, is classified as a “Primary” bike lane per the updated 2015 Bike Transportation Plan, and High Point Road a “Secondary” bike route. Westfield Road is a safe biking route especially now given the speed bumps that were recently added. Per Figure 4-16 of the 2015 Bike Transportation Plan, the planners said there is NOT a bike network gap between the Primary and Secondary bike networks in our neighborhood, which means the path is not necessary from their criteria. The checklist is missing the network gap analysis.

3. Environmental Impact There are seven (7) designated wetland areas in the Sauk Creek Greenway that would be impacted by a bike path. Per the 2015 Bike Plan, an environmental analysis should be done for new shared-use paths that go through wetlands, and the City could minimize the impact to the wetlands by utilizing existing pathways (Westfield and High Point). There is not an environmental analysis criterion in the checklist. Maintaining and growing the City’s Tree Canopy is a City priority per the CGSG. The Sauk Creek Greenway is a dense 26-acre woods that would be significantly impacted by a Bike Path. The City is also not following its Fostering Sustainability Street Values in the CGSG=By adding a 5000+ foot Bike Path that would have an impervious surface. 4. Not Respectful of Stakeholders Petitions against this Bike Path were submitted to the Common Council on November 15, 2022, attached to file #73264, which was before the CGSG passed on January 3, 2023. These petitions were totally ignored, and the Neighborhoods opinions once again were excluded from this process. Likewise, the impact of the Bike Path on the homeowners affected by this decision is not being considered at all or in your checklist. You need to consider this project through their lens instead of trying to check the boxes.

In summary, a number of City Values are not being upheld with this Bike Path and we ask that the CGSG be amended to exclude the Bike Path given the above stated reasons, as well as the City’s imploding debt. Thank you.

**Larry Sipovic** [LVSipovic@gmail.com](mailto:LVSipovic@gmail.com) 608 770-0150

---

**From: Sara McGaughy**

Hello, Asking (begging!!) that you do NOT approve the proposed bike path through Sauk Creek Woods. My spouse and I (both registered voters) and countless neighbors are vehemently opposed to this plan. Thank you for your consideration,  
Sara McGaughy 13 Plover Circle 608 770 8479

---

**From: Michael Gerdes**

All -- My home backs up to Sauk Creek Woods. I am very alarmed that information being provided to the neighborhood through the Friends of Sauk Creek organization reveals that there are numerous separate organizations are working on shocking environmentally oblivious proposals and plans affecting our properties without any communication or notice or requests for input from the neighborhoods ... namely a “West Area Plan” group and now we hear also the group ironically misnamed “Green Streets Group”. Both, we hear, are making proposals to tear down many hundreds of trees – perhaps as many as a thousand --to put a 9 to 12-foot wide lighted concrete or asphalt bike path that runs behind our properties and that will destroy the character of the woods and the habitat of thriving wildlife only to cater to some special interest sport enthusiasts that already have adequate biking lanes on the West sides wide and safe roadways! WHY is there this multi-pronged push to destroy the Sauk Creek Woods? What gives

THESE special interest organizations the authority to destroy trees and fundamentally transform the environmental profile and character of one the City's cherished greenbelts? The Friends of Sauk Creek organization representing the people who live here tries in every way possible to communicate the local opposition to these plans and yet, from many new directions similar repetitive plans keep appearing. Why isn't the council and the mayor vocally standing up for the dwindling green space in this city and the habitat of wildlife? What has happened to Madison? What monied interests are driving this and why are they being allowed to? Please take a stand and make it know that the Sauk Creek Woods will be protected and not sacrificed for environmentally harmful special interests and hobbyists that already have designated bike paths and routes through the area.

Michael Gerdes Farmington Way resident Madison

---

**From: Claire Forrester**

Good morning, As a resident of the Sauk Creek Neighborhood I want to express my opposition to the proposed bike path through the Sauk Creek Woods. This project will result in a loss of far too many trees in the woods, displacing wildlife and reducing the privacy for residents whose homes back up against the woods. The additional proposal to have a lighted path would further disrupt the natural environment and cause a nuisance to those whose backyards would essentially be right along the path. The Transportation Commission should not approve the proposal as residents have not been given adequate notice of the bike path and the environmental and privacy concerns of the path on the west side of the creek need much more study. Thank you,  
Claire K. Forrester

---

**From: Larry and Ginny White**

I have learned that the Complete Green Streets Guide contains a proposed bike trail in the Sauk Creek Greenway. This is despite the fact that no greenway restoration plan has yet been developed. For months, city staff have been assuring concerned residents that we'll be able to weigh in on the development of a plan. Including a controversial bike trail in the CGSG now contradicts what city officials have been saying. I oppose a bike trail in the Sauk Creek Greenway for several reasons: There is already a nearby north-south bike route on Westfield Road connecting Old Sauk Road with Tree Lane. An All Ages and Abilities bike trail would need to be paved, thus reducing water infiltration, and increasing stormwater runoff. Elderly and disabled users of wheelchairs, walkers, and canes would feel unsafe and risk injury if sharing a path with bicycles. A 10" to 12" wide trail would require removal of even more trees than is already predicted to address stormwater runoff and provide vehicle access for future maintenance. Loss of tree canopy adversely affects carbon sequestration and habitat for animals, birds, and native plants. Trails in fragile green spaces lead to fragmentation of vegetation and endanger whole ecosystems. Madison is losing green space at an alarming rate. Constructing an unneeded, unwanted bike path in Sauk Creek Greenway would mean that the city values bicycles over protecting endangered green spaces. Please amend the CGSG to remove any and all references to a bike trail in Sauk Creek Greenway and make my comments part of the official record. Thank you. Regards,  
Ginny White 71 Oak Creek Trail 608-821-0056

---

**From: Aparna Dharwadker**

Dear city officials: As a resident of the Sauk Creek neighborhood with the greenway behind my

home, I am writing to register my strong opposition to the paved and lit bike path the city proposes to construct in Sauk Creek Woods. In a meeting with the Mayor last Fall, we were told that the Woods are not a recreational area, and the main problem they pose is of storm water management, so they involve Engineering rather than Parks issues. The proposed bike path contradicts both the Mayor's statements: it does turn the Woods into a recreational area, and hence involves the Parks division. At the Open House at Rennebohm Park last week, I was also told by a Planning division member that the bike path would provide a "safer" mode of transportation for elderly residents than the roads in the neighborhood—an argument I can only describe as ridiculous, because it is not the function of green spaces to be alternative modes of "transportation." Over the past year, the City has made no effort to contact Sauk Creek residents directly, explain the issues posed by the Woods clearly, lay out specific plans, or invite feedback. We do not know what the City is planning to do, or when. The area behind my home has numerous dead trees that have not been removed for more than a decade, so I have seen no signs of active maintenance in the area. Now the City is evidently considering a plan that will destroy the ecology of the space, disturb wildlife habitats, seriously affect our privacy, and pose safety risks. We in the neighborhood see no rational reason for any of this, and it is the City's responsibility to bring us actively and directly into the discussion. The decision-making process has had little transparency so far, even those it will affect our daily life. I request you to take this email actively into consideration in today's meeting of the Transportation Commission.

Sincerely,

Aparna Dharwadker

Professor of English and Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies University of Wisconsin-Madison  
7125 Helen C. White Hall, Madison, WI 53706 Phone: (608) 263-3790 Fax: (608) 263-3709  
Affiliate Faculty, Centre for South Asia Member, Executive Committee, American Society for  
Theatre Research Member, Editorial Board, Contemporary Literature Member, Advisory Board,  
Studies in Theatre and Performance

---

From: **Sharon Schoolmeesters**

Please reconsider the negative impacts that a lighted bike path, that leads essentially to nowhere, will have on the existing community that has been built up around the wooded greenway for up to 50 years now. This path doesn't lead to or connect to anywhere now or in the future.

Additionally, there are already alternatives available to any user of this path, with lighted bike lanes on all surrounding streets presently. The loss of large, mature trees that soak up runoff water and consume CO2 is against anything I ever thought the City of Madison stood for.

Sharon Schoolmeesters 7629 Farmington Way Madison, WI 53717

---

My name is **Louis Cornelius**. I live in Sauk Creek and have been a resident in the Sauk Creek Neighborhood for over 35 years. I am writing to provide feedback on the Complete Green Streets Policy Guide (CGSPG). I oppose the inclusion of the bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway, which is shown in the guide. As a neighborhood resident, I was not aware that the bike path was included in the CGSPG, and thus, have not had an opportunity to comment on it. I attended the first West Area Plan public meeting on February 6, 2023, but no mention was made that a bike path was included in the CGSPG, which was approved a month earlier. In fact, in a question/answer session after the meeting, city staff presenters were unclear and uncertain about whether a bike path would be included in the final West Area Plan with respect to the Sauk

Creek Greenway. In terms of specific comments on the proposed bike path, the bike path is unnecessary. In recent years, suitable bike lanes have been established on Westfield and High Point Roads, with speed bumps added on Westfield Road to enhance a safe biking route. I understand that the 2000 Transportation Plan did not classify the bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway as a priority due to the suitable on-road routes in the surrounding areas. A bike path through the Sauk Creek Greenway will have a significant negative impact on a beautiful and attractive greenway that is nearly 30-acres in size. There are seven (7) designated wetlands that will be impacted by a bike path. The Sauk Creek Conservancy Greenway also has nearly 6,000 trees with an abundance of wildlife, birds, plants and walking paths. The trees provide an earth-cooling, carbonsequestering, oxygen-providing environment, which will slow the effects of climate change. The construction of a 5,000+ foot bike path will bring in large construction and logging equipment that will change the woods forever and cut down additional trees and supporting vegetation in their path during construction. In addition, the bike path with an impervious surface will likely cause more flooding, not less than the water absorbing tree roots. Finally, the bike trail does not connect to any other bike paths. There is not a “destination” towards which transportation by bike will be facilitated by the construction of a bike path through the Greenway. It creates a bike path from Old Sauk Road to Tree Lane—an area that is presently safely served by suitable on-road bike lanes on High Point and Westfield Roads. In conclusion, I request that CGSPG be amended to exclude the bike path from the Sauk Creek Greenway. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for this item at your meeting. Respectfully submitted,

Louis Cornelius 13 Sauk Creek Circle Madison, WI 53717

---

From: **Susanne Dunham**

We strongly oppose a proposed bike path in Sauk Creek Greenway. We have received no detailed information about this despite neighborhood citizens requesting it. There are important environmental and safety issues involved in the tree loss in this project.

Susanne and Randall Dunham 7426 Farmington Way Madison, WI 53717

---

From: **Debra Oakes**

I live on Old Sauk Road on a property that abuts the Sauk Creek Greenway Woods. I was dismayed to learn of two plans for a bike path (one version including lighting) that plow through the thriving tree canopy enjoyed by all the area residents. My opinion (and that of my neighbors') is that any bike path constructed in the Sauk Creek Greenway Woods is destructive and unnecessary. I enjoy riding a bike. The Sauk Creek area already has many bike lanes that are very nice to ride on. There is no need to destroy thousands of trees so bike riders can gaze at the few survivors of what once was a thriving woodland (that is also home to thousands of birds, as well as deer, foxes, and other creatures). Further, per the 2015 Bike Plan, an environmental analysis should be done for new shared use paths that go through wetlands, and the City could minimize the impact on the wetlands by utilizing existing pathways (Westfield and High Point). The Sauk Creek Greenway is a dense 26-acre woods that would be significantly [and negatively] impacted by a Bike Path. The City is also not following its Fostering Sustainability Street Values in the CGSG by adding a 5000+ foot Bike Path that would have an impervious surface. The installation of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Woods is strongly opposed by me and the majority of the residents in the area. It is contrary to the City's own values. Listen to the residents and strike this bike path from all plans. Do not spend taxpayer money to destroy a thriving woodland



for an unnecessary bike path. Sincerely,  
Debra Oakes Old Sauk Road

---

I write asking the Transportation Commission to delay acting on the approval of the Green Streets Guide which contains a surprising proposal about a bike path in the Sauk Creeks Woods. I oppose the bike path for environmental reasons due to tree loss.

**Kathy Losby**

---

From: **Brian S.**

I oppose the Transportation Commission approval of the Green Streets Guide, which contains another surprising proposal about a bike path in Sauk Creek Woods. A bike path in the woods is not needed and is a bad idea. The neighbors who live in the area are against it. The few bikers who want to bike there can use the sidewalks and bike lanes on the roads. That is what they are there for. It is a bad idea just like the path the city installed in the woods near 7933 Tree Lane. Very few people use that path. There are good sidewalks that bikers and walkers can use. Stop repeating your mistakes. Brian

---

From: **Simon S**

Hello, As a resident with a home that faces the Sauk Creek greenway, I oppose the addition of a bike path and lights. The greenway project, as I understand it, is intended to primarily help mitigate flooding. It's clear the creek needs to be restored to better function. It's also clear this work can be done while maintaining as many non-invasive trees and plants as possible. We are losing a great deal of green space in Madison, in general, and this green space is home to many different animals and birds and has important environmental impact. I am a cyclist. I appreciate paths that keep me from needing to use heavily trafficked streets. This proposed path does not serve this function. The roads on either end of the proposed path are easily walked and biked with a high degree of safety. The proposed path is unnecessary. The current dirt/grassy path is regularly used by residents, year-round, who appreciate the forest and are happy to walk on unpaved paths. The proposed path also adds an impervious surface to a space in which the city is trying to reduce flooding. That seems counterproductive. The homes built along this path were built to face the woods...Having lights back there will be intrusive to many homes. It would be reasonable to expect depreciation of property value with paved path and lights back there. I've known a number of residents who have moved away from houses in other areas of the city (and surrounding cities such as Fitchburg and Sun Prairie) where bike paths were put in because of the intrusive nature of the paths/lights and the perceived increase in safety concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

**Simon Sharpswain** 7558 Red Fox Trail

---

From: **Ellen Foley** in Madison, Wi  
Dear Commission,

I agree with Paul Skidmore that the city should immediately remove any representation of a bike path in Sauk Creek Greenway from the West Area Plan. Residents near the Sauk Creek Greenway have not been informed of a bike path planned for the Greenway and, in fact, they have been given several indications that the city cannot afford to build one and do not agree that its recreational purpose has a role in the Greenway. Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway told a group of

residents from several neighborhoods at Yola's Cafe last year that the Greenway is NOT a place for our recreation and is only to be used for water conveyance to prevent flooding. And Alder Nikki Conklin read to another neighborhood meeting last year at the Tamarack Trails Clubhouse a similar email from the Engineering Department to her. The Greenway is not for our recreational use, it said.

Yet images of a recreational bike path continue to surprise us in documents that city officials share at poorly attended meetings, such as the open house at Rennebhom Park with 37 residents in attendance. One of the key principles of the Green Streets Guide is the engagement of voters affected by changes in our streets, roads, paths, bus lanes, etc. We have not received postcards about a meeting or other specific communication about engagement on a bike path. In fact, at a recent Sauk Creek Association meeting, Ben Zellers, a city planner, told the group he did not believe in sending postcards.

Another principle is that transportation routes need to have a destination, which this proposed bike path does not have. Engineering has told us that the current version starts at Tree Lane and ends in a cul de sac off High Point Road. It is not connected to any other bike paths and is not a destination path for small children to schools, which are East of the Greenway, not North-South. The Green Streets Guide also works to ensure equity for People of Color and low-income people. The hilly terrain of Sauk Creek Greenway could make a bike path unsafe for the families of Indian descent who live in a large nearby apartment complex and use the woods to walk in groups, sometimes with strollers. It also could present privacy and safety issues for low-income seniors who live on Social Security in the area. We are eager for your action to exclude any representation or content about a Sauk Creek Greenway bike path from the Green Streets Guide before your discussion today. Thank you, Ellen Foley

---

From: **Dawn Zimmerman**

Dear Commission, I agree with Paul Skidmore that the city should immediately remove any representation of a bike path in Sauk Creek Greenway from the Green Streets Guide. Residents near the Sauk Creek Greenway have not been informed of a bike path planned for the Greenway and, in fact, they have been given several indications that the city cannot afford to build one and do not agree that its recreational purpose has a role in the Greenway. Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway told a group of residents from several neighborhoods at Yola's Cafe last year that the Greenway is NOT a place for our recreation and is only to be used for water conveyance to prevent flooding. And Alder Nikki Conklin read to another neighborhood meeting last year at the Tamarack Trails Clubhouse a similar email from the Engineering Department to her. The Greenway is not for our recreational use, it said. Yet images of a recreational bike path continue to surprise us in documents that city officials share at poorly attended meetings, such as the recent open house at Rennebhom Park with 37 residents in attendance. One of the key principles of the Green Streets Guide is the engagement of voters affected by changes in our streets, roads, paths, bus lanes, etc. We have not received postcards about a meeting or other specific communication about engagement on a bike path. Another principle is that transportation routes need to have a destination, which this proposed bike path does not have. Engineering has told us that the current version starts at Tree Lane and ends in a cul de sac off High Point Road. It is not connected to any other bike paths and is not a destination path for small children to schools, which are East of the Greenway, not North-South. The Green Streets Guide also works to ensure

equity for People of Color and low-income people. The hilly terrain of Sauk Creek Greenway could make a bike path unsafe for the families of Indian descent who live in a large nearby apartment complex and use the woods to walk in groups, sometimes with strollers. It also could present privacy and safety issues for low-income seniors who live on Social Security in the area. We are eager for your action to exclude any representation or content about a Sauk Creek Greenway bike path from the Green Streets Guide before your discussion today. Thank you,  
Dawn Marie Zimmerman

---

From: **Anne Earl**

I am sending this to voice my opposition to the inclusion of a lit bike path going in the Sauk Creek wooded area. This should not be included in the Green Streets guide. I demand transparency from the mayor, city engineering department and all city health and wellness proponents. Sincerely,  
Anne Earl

---

From: **John A. Oaks**

Commissioners, Could you please tell my wife and I why the City is planning to turn the Salk Creek Greenway walking path into a bike path? Before I retired, I commuted by bike. It always made sense to take the shortest and fastest route. The SCGreenway is not a short route to anywhere in particular, instead it's a scenic route currently used by walkers of all ages and all abilities who enjoy the coolness in summer and the wildlife all year long. For enjoyment and exercise, as a biker of 81, I and those that have joined me on rides, prefer to ride trails that are of greater distance and NOT asphalt, such as the Military Ridge Trail. If we are typical older recreational, noncompetitive, non commuter bikers, we would not choose to ride a SCGreenway's two block long trail, but as a former commuter, I cannot imagine using the trail to go to work. The biking in the streets is much faster. Another consideration of the Military Ridge Trail vs proposed plans for SCGreenway Trail is the width of the trail. It is clear that to make it ADA compliant, it must be wheelchair accessible (ramps over curbs, no hill greater than a 5% grade and wide enough to allow wheelchairs and bikes to safely pass). This means 10-12 feet of the asphalt width. I see two problems: 1. surface runoff, less soil infiltration, 2. Greater bike speed. I have a grandson in a wheelchair, who visits often, and know from personal experience with him, speed of passing bikes can be very serious issue. Lastly, I am concerned that to build a bike trail will require the removal of additional mature and young trees with the loss of carbon sequestration, oxygen production and wildlife. I'm sure you are aware of others concerns including loss of animals as well as plants. Madison has lost a lot of green space in the 40+ years I have lived here, and it is a major part of the ambiance of this City. Please help to keep it that way, and save the City valuable budget \$'s, as well. Don't build a bike path through the Salk Creek Greenway Thank you for listening,  
John A. Oaks, Professor Emeritus UW-School of Veterinary Medicine -- John A. Oaks Crooked Line Etching Studio <http://crookedlineetching.com>

---

From: **kathy lemkuhl pedersen**

Dear Commission, I agree with Ellen Foley and others that the city should immediately remove any representation of a bike path in Sauk Creek Greenway from the Green Streets Guide before you discuss and move ahead with approval of the use of the Green Streets Guide Checklist today. Residents near the Sauk Creek Greenway have not been informed of a bike path planned for the

Greenway and, in fact, they have been given several indications that the city cannot afford to build one and do not agree that its recreational purpose has a role in the Greenway. Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway told a group of residents from several neighborhoods at Yola's Cafe last year that the Greenway is NOT a place for our recreation and is only to be used for water conveyance to prevent flooding. And Alder Nikki Conklin read to another neighborhood meeting last year at the Tamarack Trails Clubhouse a similar email from the Engineering Department to her. The Greenway is not for our recreational use, it said. Yet images of a recreational bike path continue to surprise us in documents that city officials share at poorly attended meetings, such as the recent open house at Rennebhom Park with 37 residents in attendance. One of the key principles of the Green Streets Guide is the engagement of voters affected by changes in our streets, roads, paths, bus lanes, etc. We have not received postcards about a meeting or other specific communication about engagement on a bike path. Another principle is that transportation routes need to have a destination, which this proposed bike path does not have. Engineering has told us that the current version starts at Tree Lane and ends in a cul de sac off High Point Road. It is not connected to any other bike paths and is not a destination path for small children to schools, which are East of the Greenway, not North-South. The Green Streets Guide also works to ensure equity for People of Color and low-income people. The hilly terrain of Sauk Creek Greenway could make a bike path unsafe for the families of Indian descent who live in a large nearby apartment complex and use the woods to walk in groups, sometimes with strollers. It also could present privacy and safety issues for low-income seniors who live on Social Security in the area. We are eager for your action to exclude any representation or content about a Sauk Creek Greenway bike path from the Green Streets Guide before your discussion today.

---

From: **Becky Bittner**

I am sending you a message to oppose the Transportation Commission approval of the Green Streets Guide because neighbors have not had adequate notice of a possible bike path and the environmental and privacy concerns of such a path on the West Side of the creek need much more study. The city departments need to be more transparent and understand what they are all doing to not take advantage of the situation. Thanks for your consideration.

Becky Bittner 301 Sauk Creek Drive

---

From: **Ellen Schneiderman**

Hi! As a resident and frequent user of the Sauk Creek Greenway, I am adamantly opposed to any bike path, whether lit or unlit being built in the woods. We have sidewalks, bike lanes, and wide paved roads in the neighborhood for use by bikers of all ages. What we don't have anywhere else in the neighborhood is a sheltered, serene, Greenway, full of beautiful, walking paths, wildlife, and quiet! Please vote not to approve any such development. Thank you,  
Ellen Schneiderman Brule Cr.

---

From: **Gwen Long**

As members of Friends of Sauk Creek, we oppose the Transportation Commission approval of a bike path through Sauk Creek Greenway, because neighbors have not had adequate notice of a possible bike path and the environmental and privacy concerns of such. A path on the West Side of the creek needs much more study. Our neighbor and friend Paul Skidmore has sent a memo to the Transportation Commission detailing our opposition to this bike path. We support the items

outlined in Paul Skidmore's email to the Transportation Division today.  
Dr. Jim and Gwen Long 225 Sauk Creek Drive Madison, WI 53717

---

**From: Paul Skidmore, former Alder**

I am writing as a resident of the Tamarack Trails/Sauk Creek/Walnut Grove area ("Neighborhoods") to give feedback on the above-referenced file number. I oppose the inclusion of the bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway ("Bike Path") shown in the Complete Green Streets Policy Guide ("CGSG") that was approved in January 2023 for several reasons:

1. **Non-Transparent Actions** First and foremost, the Neighborhoods were not notified that the Bike Path was included in the CGSG. The CGSG was also not mentioned in the City's Sauk Creek Greenway project communication page. The last update on the Bike Path was from 2018 when it was unveiled to the Neighborhoods in 2018 when the City held its first Sauk Creek Greenway engagement meeting. Likewise, the Neighborhoods were never notified that a Bike Path was being considered in the 2000 Bike Transportation Plan and 2015 Bike Transportation Plan.
2. **CGSG Approval Before West Area Plan Announced** The city had its first West Area Plan public meeting on February 6, 2023, with the Bike Path shown in the presentation; however, the CGSG approval was one month before this public meeting. This essentially means that the City is approving the bike path before the neighborhoods can comment on it.
3. **Unnecessary Bike Path** The 2000 Bike Transportation Plan classified the bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway as not a priority since there are suitable on-road routes nearby. Westfield Road, 1000 feet east of the proposed Bike Path, is classified as a "Primary" bike lane per the updated 2015 Bike Transportation Plan, and High Point Road is a "Secondary" bike route. Westfield Road is a safe biking route, especially now given the speed bumps that were recently added. Per Figure 4-16 of the 2015 Bike Transportation Plan, the planners said there is NOT a bike network gap between the Primary and Secondary bike networks in our neighborhood, which means the path is not necessary from their criteria.
4. **Environmental Impact** There are seven (7) designated wetland areas in the Sauk Creek Greenway that would be impacted by a bike path. Per the 2015 Bike Plan, an environmental analysis should be done for new shared-use paths that go through wetlands, and the City could minimize the impact on the wetlands by utilizing existing pathways (Westfield and High Point). Maintaining and growing the City's Tree Canopy is a City priority per the CGSG. The Sauk Creek Greenway is a dense 26-acre woods that would be significantly impacted by a Bike Path. The City is also not following its Fostering Sustainability Street Values in the CGSG by adding a 5000+ foot Bike Path that would have an impervious surface.
5. **Non-Civic Engagement** Petitions against this Bike Path were submitted to the Common Council on November 15, 2022, attached to file #73264, which was before the CGSG passed on January 3, 2023. These petitions were ignored and the Neighborhood's opinions once again were excluded from this process.

In summary, several City Values are not being upheld with this Bike Path and we ask that the CGSG be amended to exclude the Bike Path given the above-stated reasons, as well as the City's imploding debt. Thank you.

Paul Skidmore, ASLA 13 Red Maple Trail Madison, WI 53717

---

**From: Cindy Schott**

I am writing to let you know that a bike path is totally unnecessary between Tree lane and Old

Sauk. It doesn't hook up to other paths, Westfield road is wide enough for bikes and Sauk Creek drive is a safe residential road to bike on. It's a waste of money that is needed for other things. Not sure you could even make a path that won't cross the waterway at some point. With a heavy rain you don't want people back there it's dangerous. Thank you. We live in the area affected and would appreciate being heard.

---

From: **Elizabeth Brunner**

Please do not put a bike path between Tree Lane and Old Sauk Rd. Currently, the trees there are only a few left in the city of Madison and should be preserved. I vehemently oppose the lighted bike path there. Betty Brunner Sent from my iPad

---

From: **Nino Amato**, former alder and chair of Strengthening Neighborhood Ties (SNTs)

The Proposed Bike Path for Sauk Creek Woods Greenway, Is Not Only Unnecessary, It Defies Our City's Environmental Sustainability Plans and Removing several hundred mature trees in Sauk Creek Woods, will Increase CO2 Greenhouse Emissions.

Given Today's Climate Crisis, Our City's Rising Urban Heat Rates & The Urgency for the City of Madison to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, the proposed bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway is not environmentally UNSUITABLE & ENVIRONMENTALLY HARMFUL – it is grossly unnecessary, given the current nearby marked bike lanes on Westfield Road, 1000 feet east of the proposed Bike Path (Primary Bike Path) and High Point Road, which is a “Secondary” bike route.

It is also important to note, Westfield Road is a much safer biking route, especially given the recent installation of the speed bumps and predestine crossings that are now completed on North Westfield Road, across from the Walnut Grove Park.

Lastly, maintaining and growing the City's Tree Canopy's throughout our City, is a priority per the CGSG and play's important natural-based carbon removal, turning CO2 into clean oxygen and lowering the urban heat rates throughout our neighborhoods.

The Sauk Creek Woods & Natural Habitat Greenway is a dense 26,4 acre woods, with 5,595 trees, that would be tragically impacted by a Bike Path, while increasing stormwater runoff. Such a bike path, would be in violation and counter to Madison following its Fostering Sustainability Street & Tree Canopy Environmental Values.

In closing, the proposed Bike Path for Sauk Creek Woods, not only run's counter to our City's Environmental Values, removing several hundred to a thousand trees for an unnecessary Bike Path, is fiscally irresponsible and will contribute to Greenhouse Gas Emissions, at a time, when the City needs to aggressively reduce CO2 Emissions. .

Respectfully submitted;  
A.J. Nino Amato, Chair  
Strengthening Neighborhood Ties (SNTs)  
608-514-3317 / 64 Oak Creek Trail, Madison, 53717

SNTs Represents Several Hundred Residents in Sauk Creek, Walnut Grove, Tamarack Trails and Wexford Village and Wexford Ridge Neighborhoods.

---

**From:** Andrew Bent <afbent6214@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 2:01 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Cc:** Slack, Kristen <district19@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Modify proposed West Area Plan text to grow and preserve Highlands

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

This comment regards the Board of Parks Commissioners (BPC) consideration of and comments to city Planning staff regarding their working draft of West Area Plan (Dec. 13, 2023 Agenda item 80665). We write about an item that is was not noted in the Planning staff's memo about this discussion with BPC, because the matter has come to our attention and gained renewed Planning staff attention after they drafted their memo to BPC. Our comment is about the idea of possibly eliminating the TR-R zoning district. As the current President of the Highlands Community Association, my comments will be a bit longer, to capture key points brought to me by neighbors who are not testifying or filing public comments.

The city's most favorable option is to advise against including proactive rezoning to eliminate TR-R in the West Area Plan. Proactive rezoning of the TR-R Highlands would not successfully serve the larger planning goals of the city, and would in fact work against many of those goals. The Highlands is a unique Madison resource whose beneficial attributes will be lost if the zoning is converted to smaller minimum lots sizes and setbacks.

**Summary of Key Points:**

- a) TR-R zoning was put in place by previous city leaders specifically to preserve the Highlands
- b) The Highlands is a definable locale with historic merit
- c) The Highlands is factually different from most neighborhoods - it serves essentially as a large city park and is a focal point for recreational walking in Madison –that park-like nature and use will be irreversibly harmed by zoning that increases density.

d) A careful analysis shows that present TR-R zoning allows for the Highlands to triple the number of dwelling units from the present ~114 to approximately 348 dwelling units.

e) Zoning for larger lot size and setbacks is noted by many experts including City of Madison Historic Preservation Plan (June 2022) as an appropriate tool for achieving historic preservation, especially in this type of case because a larger landscape is the target for preservation.

The historic and recreational positives for Madison will be lost if TR-R zoning protections of the Highlands are removed.

As current President of the Highlands Community Association I do in this case speak for the entire neighborhood. After we heard on Monday that this zoning change idea had been floated, and we shared that information with our neighborhood email list, the HCA Board has received messages from 42 of the 112 households in the Highlands. That is a tremendous show of interest, and it has generated many well-reasoned, pragmatic responses. All 42 households oppose removal of the large minimum lot size and setback requirements of TR-R zoning, because those requirements are the primary mechanism that conserves as a Madison landmark the historic character and park-like nature of this small neighborhood. The positives that TR-R zoning generates for the entire City of Madison readily outweigh any negatives, as detailed below. Our comments are shared to equip city planners and commissioners with specific information about why the Highlands is a unique landmark and an actively used public resource for the city.

The Statement of Purpose that is provided within TR-R zoning code text is clear: “The TR-R District is established to stabilize and protect the natural beauty, historic character and park-like setting of certain heavily wooded low-density residential neighborhoods. The district is also intended to promote the preservation of the neighborhood's historic buildings, tree cover and landscape plan. This district is not intended for use in new development.”

TR-R was established by the City to protect the Highlands neighborhood, because of two attributes: it’s unique historic features, and the park-like role it plays for Madison residents throughout the city and especially for west side residents living in or within a few miles of the Highlands.

Regarding the park-like role: Many are not aware that the Highlands gets substantial recreational foot-traffic year around, dozens of people every weekday and dozens of people per hour on weekend days. A key point is that a high percentage of these



users come from outside of the Highlands neighborhood. That is far more recreational walking traffic than any of our surrounding West Madison city parks or conservation areas until you get maybe to Walnut Grove Park. The Highlands is a popular locale because of its unique layout, plantings and beauty – it is just a very popular place to go for a walk.

That popularity is not an accident. The neighborhood was designed in 1911-1912 by Ossian Cole Simonds, who along with Fredrick Law Olmsted is one of the most prominent American landscape architects of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Simonds not only designed Morton Arboretum and large parts of Lincoln Park in Chicago; he also designed Tenney Park in Madison, Vilas Park in Madison, and, the Highlands in Madison. **One of our take-home messages** is that we suggest that city planners, commissioners and other leaders encourage high levels of restraint, consideration and process, before moving to change zoning in a way that will essentially eliminate one of the notable surviving works of one of America's preeminent landscape architects.

**A second take-home message** is to recommend that planning staff, commissioners and other leaders carefully consider that it is the striking difference from most of Madison that attracts all of the families walking with strollers, little kids on little bikes, the dog walkers and the old friends walking side by side. These people are attracted to walk the scenic, gently meandering 1.2 mile circle in the Highlands specifically because of it is unique in the city. The attraction derives from the large spacing between homes, the numerous mature trees, the low car traffic or cross-streets, and the notable architecture (historic and recent), placed here and there between large areas of naturalistic landscaping. This park-like city resource will gradually but most definitely be lost without zoning that sustains large lots sizes and setbacks.

### **Greenway and wildlife corridor**

The Highlands neighborhood is a key link in the continuous wildlife corridor and greenspace between from Memorial H.S. area through Owen Conservation Area, Highlands, Skyview Park and out to Lake Mendota at Baker Ave. Public Access.

### **Consistency with Madison's Sustainability Plan:**

Unplanned housing density increase in Highlands will do more harm than good within Madison's Sustainability Plan.

One of the Sustainability Goals in Madison's Sustainability Plan is to sustain open spaces and natural areas; see Goal 17.1 in particular:

17.1. Prioritize preservation and restoration of urban natural areas in City planning, zoning and management policies and practices.

The Highlands is a park-like setting that is used by Madisonians and should not be degraded as a park-like setting for their use.

Regarding Goals 1 and 5 (increase housing supply and transit use): the Highlands is not in, and not within an extended walk to, an Affordable Housing Target Areas or any Eligible Core Transit Area or a Transit-Oriented Development zone. The Highlands can make modest contributions to increased housing in Madison but is an inefficient target for achieving progress on Sustainability Goals 1 and 5.

Conserving current or similar Highlands zoning will also help city achieve Sustainability Plan Goals 3, 6.4, 14, 19, and other parts of Goal 17.

(Goal 6.4 addresses nature-based solutions for climate change resilience)

Goal 19 & 6.4: The city's tree canopy goal will be harmed if adding unplanned density to Highlands, which will cause loss of numerous trees and attendant heat island/temperature modulation for west side of city.

Goal 14 & 6.4: Rainwater infiltration will be harmed. Stormwater retention, but also, numerous added homes and access driveways will reduce the capacity of the Highlands as a current very large water infiltration and groundwater recharge area serving Well 14.

Goal 3: As a park-like area that attracts multiple walkers who do not reside in the neighborhood, the Highlands in fact and practice furnishes substantial parkland and nature-based recreation.

Goal 17.3, 17.4 (linkages between green sites, environmental corridors, wildlife habitats) – Highlands at low density achieves this currently; at higher density this role will fail. Unplanned density increase in Highlands will severely disrupt current long Madison green corridor from Memorial H.S. area through Owen Conservation Area, Highlands, Skyview Park and out to Lake Mendota at Baker Ave. Public Access.

**Some Ideas for future efforts by Highlands Community Association:**

- Pursue possible Historic designation – working with Heather Bailey, Landmarks Commission and others to achieve Landmark designation as a Designed Landscape.
- Design and implement formal tree plans
- Hire private professional planners to work with city Planning staff to identify designed/harmonious approaches to increasing housing density within Highlands landscape, rather than opening the site to unplanned housing addition due to removal of minimum lot size restrictions.
- Add plaques or attractive signs at entries to Highlands, explaining the history of the site.

**Summary:** We suggest that proactive rezoning of the TR-R Highlands would not successfully serve the larger planning goals of the city and would in fact work against many of those goals. The Highlands is a unique Madison resource. We suggest a win-win alternative, that West Area Plan should refer to this topic using something resembling the following (rather than proactive rezoning to 5 house per acre SR-C1 zoning):

"Modification of the TR-R zoning code should be explored to achieve higher residential presence while preserving the historic attributes and park-like role within the Highlands landscape."

We look forward to working with city staff if there is interest in implementing tree plans, historic designations, planned housing addition, signage, or other more focused ideas that refine how we achieve what TR-R zoning was put in place to achieve.

---

**From:** Suzie Eckerman <suziedady@hotmail.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 2:15 PM

**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

**Subject:** Urgent Opposition to Highlands Neighborhood Zoning Change Proposal

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

Dear Board of Parks Commissioners,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed change in zoning for the Highlands neighborhood as part of the West Area Plan Update. The specific proposal to change the zoning from TR-R to SR-C1 is deeply concerning and has the potential to significantly damage the unique character and nature of this cherished neighborhood.

The overwhelming response from residents has been one of strong opposition to this unnecessary and harmful change. The current minimum lot size and setback restrictions in TR-R is designed to preserve the natural landscape by specifically promoting lower-density development and minimizing the ratio of building square footage to lot size. Proposed revisions to the zoning would significantly alter the natural environment, posing threats to quality of life and raising infrastructure concerns. Rezoning also represents a dramatic shift in vision that undermines the historic protective measures.

The Highlands seamlessly extends 3 parks – Icke Park, Willow Park, and Skyline Park – creating a vital green space for both residents and wildlife. The larger lot sizes without fencing provide essential habitat for deer, turkeys, foxes, coyotes, and other animals, allowing them to safely roam and breed. After many years, we are finally seeing the resurgence of red fox and coyotes. Previous coyote mating pairs have relied on Research Park for their breeding habitat, now that this area has been disturbed, the Highlands and Owen Conservation Park are one of the few remaining outposts in the city for them to find refuge. Please do not rezone their home. The recommended rezoning threatens to undo previous conservation efforts, leading to a detrimental environmental impact that contradicts earlier protective measures.

Our neighborhood is a popular destination for walkers, runners, cyclists, and families, attracting people from surrounding areas to enjoy its tranquil atmosphere. This unique park-like setting is only possible due to the existing TR-R zoning and would be lost forever if changed to SR-C1. This park-like setting holds strong ties to the original land design and is a key reflection of the historical landscape. The current zoning was established with the deliberate intention to "stabilize and protect the natural beauty, historic character, and park-like setting" of the Highlands. This purpose remains more relevant today than ever before.

Across the City of Madison, tree canopies have seen a 30% decline and the additional removal of hundred-year-old trees and old growth forest would have a dramatic detrimental impact to the city of Madison. Our neighborhood has worked hard to preserve our tree canopy and park-like setting through bulk tree planting and education. Since the Highlands Community Association was formed, all annual meetings have focused on educating residents about planting and preserving native tree species as well as information on removal of invasive species that can be harmful to trees. In the Sustainability and Resilience Directive from the Mayor's office, urban green spaces are referred to as "an essential part of our community's fabric". They provide space for recreation and connecting with nature, areas for plants and animals to thrive, and for important ecosystem services that provide clean air and water, air temperature regulation, carbon sequestration, noise reduction, and stormwater management.

The community and residents of the Highlands are deeply committed to preserving the environmental significance and historical importance of this unique neighborhood. We appreciate your time and consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Chris & Suzie Eckerman

---

**From:** Gwen Long <gwenlong6@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 2:38 PM

**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

**Subject:** Parks Commission Agenda #16, Legistar file 80665

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

**From:** Dolister, Sandy

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 1:17 PM

**To:** [dollyster@me.com](mailto:dollyster@me.com)

**Subject:** Transportation Commission Agenda item #3 Legistar file number 77560

Greetings members of the Parks Commission,

I am an original resident since 1988 of the Sauk Creek subdivision and my property abuts the Greenway. I have been actively following the activities of the City agencies and the community group. I find this process to be both confusing and frustrating as a taxpayer and citizen of Madison.

Please consider my opposition to a potential planned bike path in the greenway for the following reasons –

1. **Preserve the Character of the Greenway.** After more than 35 years living adjacent to the greenway, the potential installation of a lighted ten-foot wide bike bath in the middle of it would totally change the character of the neighborhood in a manner that is inconsistent with the property we purchased many years ago. In addition there are other alternate means for bike travel as articulately explained by others. The City of Madison should retain this area as naturally as possible to preserve trees, wildlife and the beauty of nature to preserve the area for hikers and walkers.
2. **Hear the Voice/Opposition of the Community.** I appreciate and respect that there has been greater opportunity for concerned residents to register their opinion as this planning process has evolved. However, while we are being given the opportunity to be heard, in my opinion our concerns are not being recognized. The community who lives and purchased property around the greenway does not want the nature of the greenway changed as dramatically as the City would envision. We understand that there are issues to address with the Greenway – they will not be solved by a bike path which is opposed by the majority of the taxpayers and property owners whom it affects.
3. **Spend My Tax \$ Elsewhere.** I am excited by many of the city initiatives which are obviously expensive. I have been on the Board of Olbrich Gardens and now on the Olbrich Foundation. I love Madison, gardens and the beauty of the City. Please use your most valuable time and

resources on projects that merit the use of our precious tax dollars to plan for projects that will serve the needs of more citizens and preserve the character of the Sauk Creek greenway.

Respectfully,

Sandy Dolister  
13 East Geneva Circle  
Madison, WI 53717

---

**From:** Toni Brown <tbrownrsd@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 2:51 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Parks Commission Agenda #16, Legistar file 80665

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

To Members of the Parks Commission and Staff,

I am writing regarding the above-referenced agenda item to be included in this evening's meeting. I ask that a copy of my email be incorporated into the public record, voicing my opposition to the proposed Sauk Creek greenway bike path. I live near Sauk Creek Woods and, like my neighbors, I enjoy walking the woods for the peace and tranquility it brings in a city that is offering less and less green space and more cement. I fail to understand why all of a sudden the city's 'hair is on fire' to mow down thousands of trees and push through a bike path when, for decades, the City completely ignored the woods when they should have been maintaining it. The woods is home to an ecosystem of plants and animals that will be lost should a brightly lit path be built. What should instead be addressed is the creek erosion, rectifying the damage that's been done from the city's lack of maintenance and removing invasive tree species along with the dead wood. This should be at the forefront of the plan, NOT installing a bike path that leads nowhere and duplicates existing paths. It doesn't seem to consider the current global climate crisis and is being pushed through by one of the city planners (Ben Zellers) and the city bike office representative (Renee Callaway). Before pursuing their pet project, it would've been nice if they'd asked the residents what they thought.

We pay extremely high taxes in Madison (this is coming from someone who lived in New York City for 20 years!) – our tax dollars are earmarked for something the surrounding neighborhood doesn't even want! I am asking that the bike path be removed from the West Area Plan as it's neither needed nor wanted... a majority of the residents in the surrounding neighborhood overwhelmingly DO NOT WANT IT.

Thank you for listening,

---

**From:** Gwen Long <gwenlong6@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 3:01 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Parks Commission Agenda #16, Legistar file 80665

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

More opposition to the 12 foot wide "all ages and stages" asphalt path through the Sauk Creek Greenway.

**In today's Wisconsin State Journal:** (I can't make this stuff up.)

Fitchburg built a new playground 34 feet from a retention pond. "mistakes have been made in **not soliciting feedback from residents about the location of the playground equipment...We should have not have installed the playground structure where it is at...**We are going to make this right to the neighborhood." In the meantime ugly snow fencing separates the playground from the retention pond. NOTE: They did install protective fencing along the Sauk Creek bike path from the Beltline to Tree Lane, Phase 1 of the restoration was completed in 2018. Since no one uses that unneeded path, we never noticed until today when we checked.

[https://madison.com/news/local/government-politics/fitchburg-retention-pond-playground/article\\_157f34b4-990d-11ee-8a6c-3b420cc231f1.html](https://madison.com/news/local/government-politics/fitchburg-retention-pond-playground/article_157f34b4-990d-11ee-8a6c-3b420cc231f1.html)

The city committee members we asked have never seen or walked the greenway. Looking at a flat map, they have no idea how steep, narrow and close to the creek the "All ages and stages ADA path" would have to be, to fit through the narrow greenway. The grade is too steep, and within feet of Sauk Creek, for All Abilities and the ADA rules.

According to DOT guidelines, fencing between the path and the creek would need to be installed. What about the animals?? Much less the aesthetics in the woods..

And don't forget how bad Phase 1 & 2 upstream look now. There is a protective fence between the bike trail and the creek in phase 1. A fence would be horrible for the wildlife and environment in the Greenway.

# Neighbors concerned after 200 trees cut down on Far West Side; city says goal is restoration

Emily Hamer | Wisconsin State Journal Oct 25, 2019 0



More than 200 trees were removed from a Far West Side green space at the beginning of October. The cuts were made as part of a restoration project.

**From:** Jeff Parisi <JParisi@walbecgroup.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 3:43 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** FW: The Highlands

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

I am writing to express my opposition to the unilateral rezoning of the Highlands as embedded in the West Area Plan. The reasons for my objection are numerous and I will not go into detail here. I believe through other meetings we will have adequate time to express the basis of our concerns.

I look forward to working with the City of Madison departments to eliminate this change and work to preserve the neighborhood as it has been for the last 100 years.

Thank you,

Jeff





**Jeffrey Parisi**  
**Director of Business Development**

608.358.3900 mobile  
[walbecgroup.com](http://walbecgroup.com)  
*An Equal Opportunity & Affirmative Action Employer*

---

**From:** Ellyn Mohs <ellynmohs@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 3:43 PM  
**To:** Andrew Bent <afbent6214@gmail.com>; Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>;  
suziedady@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Agenda item 80665 Board of Park Commissioners Mtg. 12/13

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

Dear Board of Park Commissioners,

I am writing to voice our opposition of the proposed TR-R zoning change to the Highlands neighborhood on Madison's west side. Anyone who bikes, walks or drives into the neighborhood can attest, its much like an Arboretum setting just minutes from downtown. Areas (both public and private) are maintained by its residents who clearly take pride in being stewards of the land. Public woodland paths meander throughout the entire neighborhood and the city street provides 1 1/2 miles of tree canopy. It is an amazing little paradise that is not such a secret to those in surrounding neighborhoods and communities. We have many diverse people enjoying the ultimate in urban forestry. It doesn't matter the weather, it is truly a destination neighborhood. Joggers, bikers, bird and nature lovers all enjoy the streets, paths and parks. I see people with walking sticks, binoculars, strollers, and dogs. High school sports teams train here to enjoy the shade canopy over the street on hot days and Girls on the Run can be seen running our hills.

My husband and I have been residents of the neighborhood almost 20 years and were originally charmed by the pastoral beauty and the diversity of our neighbors. Native Oaks, Spruce, native berry bushes and trees run throughout, all giving home to an amazing array of birds and other wildlife. As such, several species of owls and hawks and even eagles can be found soaring overhead or nested in the trees. Songbirds not typically found in city settings call The Highlands home as well. I have registered the bluebird population in my yard annually with BRAW (Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin) and I am so proud these beautiful birds choose to make their nests and raise their young in my nest boxes year after year. Habitat destruction and climate change has wreaked havoc on their populations and it is the open areas in this unique neighborhood that helps them thrive here. Wrens, Tufted Titmice, Indigo Buntings and Pileated Woodpeckers love the wooded areas and tall trees. I have personally recorded over 75 species of birds in The Highlands throughout the seasons.

I respectfully ask you to re consider your proposal to change The Highlands R1-R zoning designation. The Highlands neighborhood is such a special and diverse green space and it should

be kept as such for future generations of the greater Madison community. Accessibility to our natural world in our cities should be preserved, not destroyed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ellyn Mohs  
[Ellynmohs@gmail.com](mailto:Ellynmohs@gmail.com)

---

**From:** Larry and Ginny White <lgwhites@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 3:47 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Attach to Parks Commission Agenda #16, Legistar file 80665

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

Dear Parks Commissioners: You're being asked by city planners to approve a paved bike path in the endangered 26-acre Sauk Creek Greenway on Madison's far west side. **We urge you to visit and walk in the greenway before you decide.** Reading a staff report and looking at maps is not sufficient preparation for a consequential decision like this.

If you do your homework and make an on-site visit, you'll see that that the greenway is:

- An urban forest that helps mitigate the effects of climate change
- A unique ecosystem that is habitat for deer, foxes, coyotes, turkeys, birds, and wildflowers
- A channel for carrying away stormwater runoff from parking lots at commercial centers
- Vanishing green space in a city being rapidly built up and paved over
- A peaceful, natural oasis surrounded by neighborhoods, roads and businesses
- An outdoor classroom where children learn about nature.

Our earth is in crisis. Governments should be conserving as much green space and tree canopy as possible to mitigate the effects of climate change. But Madison city planners are promoting a plan first proposed in 1991—and rendered irrelevant by today's climate crisis.

Planners want to make this precious green space a transportation corridor by building a 1-mile asphalt bike path. The narrow, hilly greenway can accommodate a widened, restored creek bed and an unpaved road for future maintenance, but there's no room for a paved path. A 12-foot-wide shared-use path would add 63,360 square feet of impervious surface and contribute to current runoff problems. Connecting the path to existing bike infrastructure would be extremely costly and destructive.

Planners see the greenway as a mere corridor and are dismissive of residents' objections. Immediate neighbors have personal concerns about privacy and security. But they and hundreds of others cherish the greenway as an environmental asset that contributes to everyone's quality of life. Sauk Creek Greenway is one of precious few remaining natural spaces in Madison. It helps mitigate the effects of climate change and provides habitat for animals, birds and wildflowers.

Planners portray neighbors' objections as NIMBY-ism, not deep concern for a green space that has benefits city wide. They dismiss the opinions of research scientists and experts such as Dr. Michael Notaro (Director of UW Center for Climatic Research) and George Meyer (former Secretary of Wisconsin DNR). They are determined to impose their own vision and priorities, while the rest of us are expected to pay higher property taxes and fees every year and cede control over our own neighborhoods.

We're urging you to consider the long-term effects of a paved, shared-use path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. It will be bad for the environment; it will reinforce residents' feelings of being marginalized and it will further erode their trust in city government.

Please exercise your independent judgment and stop this ill-advised plan.

Respectfully,

Ginny and Larry White  
71 Oak Creek Trail  
Madison, WI 53717  
608-821-0056

---

**From:** Gwen Long <gwenlong6@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 3:48 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Parks Commission Agenda #16, Legistar file 80665

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

From Pete Buttigieg's twitter post: Pete gets it! Why doesn't Madison??

## **12 Reasons Why Cities Need More Trees:**

1. Temperature Control

One large tree is equivalent to 10 air conditioning units, and the shade they provide can reduce street temperature by more than 30%.

## 2. Noise Reduction

Trees can reduce loudness by up to 50%. In urban areas filled with the sound of cars, construction, sirens, aeroplanes, and music, trees are essentially the best way to block noise and keep cities — along with the homes and workplaces in them — quieter.

## 3. Air Purity

Trees remove an astonishing amount of harmful pollutants and toxins from the air. In urban areas air quality is often disastrously bad — with severe consequences for our health. Trees make the air we breathe much cleaner.

## 4. Oxygen

And, while absorbing all those pollutants, trees also put more oxygen back into the urban environment. Oxygen levels are significantly lower in cities compared to the countryside; trees help to solve that problem.

## 5. Water Management

Trees do more than just shelter us and our buildings from rain — which is, in fact, extremely important. They also absorb huge quantities of water, reduce run-off, neutralise the severity of flooding, and make flooding more unlikely altogether. Not to forget that their roots absorb pollutants and prevent them from feeding back into a city's water supply.

## 6. Psychological Health

Studies have proven what we instinctively know to be true: that human beings are significantly happier when surrounded by nature rather than sterile urban environments. Our emotions, behaviour, and thoughts are shaped by the places we spend time — and trees have a profoundly positive effect on our psychology. The consequential benefits of being happier and more peaceful — as individuals and as a society — are immense.

## 7. Physical Health

Beyond all the other ways in which trees improve air quality and the urban environment, much to the benefit of our health, they also encourage people to go outside. Cycling, running, and walking are all more common in urban areas with plenty of trees. A knock-on effect of people spending more time outdoors is also social integration and stronger communities.

## 8. Privacy

A simple point, but not inconsequential, is that trees provide privacy.

## 9. Economics

The total economic benefit of urban trees is hard to calculate. There are costs, of course, including the repair of infrastructure damaged by roots and maintaining the trees themselves. But the total economic benefit — a consequence of everything else in this list and more — far outweighs the expenditure. Trees make cities wealthier.

## 10. Wildlife

Trees are miniature cities all of their own, serving as a habitat for hundreds of different species, including birds and mammals and insects.

## 11. Light Pollution

Trees don't only block the light shining down, therefore keeping us and our cities cooler — they also disrupt light shining up, from street lighting, cars, houses, and billboards. Skies are clearer in cities with more trees.

## 12. Aesthetics

And, finally, trees are beautiful. They break up the potential monotony of urban environments — the sharp geometry, the greyscale roads and buildings, the endless rows of cars — with their trunks, boughs, canopies, and flowers.

Just think: the gold and red of falling leaves in autumn, the white and pink blossom of spring, the vast green canopies of summer, and the branches lined with hoar-frost in winter. Every single tree is a myriad of intricacy and texture, of colour and scent, of dappled light on the pavement, mottled bark, knotted roots, of clustered leaves and delicate petals and stern boughs.

Few streets would not be improved by the kaleidoscopic aesthetic delights of a tree, not to mention the many different species of tree, all over the world, whether willow, oak, lime, cherry, aspen, maple, birch, horse chestnut, dogwood, hornbeam, ash, sycamore... the list goes on.

There are some drawbacks to urban trees, most of them context-specific, and they are not — of course — universally appropriate. But it seems fair to say that many cities would benefit from at least a few more trees here and there.

Why does Madison continue to silently remove its trees? Every department needs to be more thoughtful, creative and environmental in project planning to save every tree. People and communities need trees. They take a generation to grow!

<https://www.sierraclub.org/.../feel-less-heat-we-need...>

---

**From:** Sara McGaughy <sara.mcgauhy@yahoo.com>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 4:21 PM

**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

**Subject:** Attach to Parks Commision Agenda #16, Legistar file 80665

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

Hello,

We are writing to you to vehemently oppose the proposed bike path in Sauk Creek Woods.

*We are very opposed to a 10-12 foot wide, 3 lane, lighted, gross asphalt path through this last tract of natural woods on the West side of Madison. What a terrible idea!*

*There WILL be unintended consequences. It WILL cause run off into the creek. It WILL cause hundreds to a thousand more trees to be cut down. We beg you to walk through these woods to truly understand why the Friends of Sauk Creek formed to try to save this very special environmental area. So many **ages and stages**, ALREADY use on the multiple existing paths every day, even bikers as Ben Zellers showed via Strava mapping.*

***Our society craves trees, green spaces and natural areas as seen by how many, of all ages and stages, utilize the existing paths and greenway space daily.***

We are very concerned, and we have not been able to have a meaningful two-way dialogue with the planners to relieve our concerns. We find out we are being quickly dismissed by dept heads who had decided our opinions and input meant nothing. This is authoritarian government, not democracy. I thought Madison was better than this. It's one of the reasons why we moved here in 2015 to raise our family.

Please listen to the people who actually live here! We do NOT want this gem destroyed!

Sara and Seth McGaughy  
13 Plover Circle  
Madison, WI 53717

---

From: Wendy Blanchard <wendyblanchard694@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 4:45 PM  
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
Subject: Attach to Parks Commission Agenda #16 Legistar File 80668

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

I oppose the addition of a paved bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. There are adequate bike paths and sidewalks on parallel roads.

The plan seems ill conceived for the terrain of the woods and the closeness to the creek. Surely the money for this path could be spent in other ways.

---

From: Wendy Blanchard <wendyblanchard694@gmail.com>  
Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 4:45 PM  
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
Subject: Attach to Parks Commission Agenda #16 Legistar File 80668

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

I oppose the addition of a paved bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. There are adequate bike paths and sidewalks on parallel roads.

The plan seems ill conceived for the terrain of the woods and the closeness to the creek. Surely the money for this path could be spent in other ways.

---

**From:** Debra Oakes <dkostlpark@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 6:22 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** attach to Parks Commision Agenda #16, Legistar file 80665

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

Hi, I just want to oppose the proposed plan to develop a lighted bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. The bike path, along with the future work on the storm water channel through the greenway will essentially destroy it. The Greenway is narrow, and when the storm water channel, access roads, space for machinery, a lighted, ADA accessible bike path are installed, the result will be virtually no trees and no animals left - with no real benefit to anyone, except the contractors that do the work. Why are the birds, animals and trees not considered in plans? The bike path is ill-conceived, unsupported and un-needed.

Debra Oakes  
7705 Old Sauk Road  
Madison, WI

---

**From:** Paul Herr <peherr@chorus.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 8:49 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>  
**Subject:** Letter from Paul Herr to the City Parks Department Concerning the Sauk Creek Greenway

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

December 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 Parks Commission Meeting  
Discussion Item: 80665 -- Informational Presentation by City of Madison Planning Division  
regarding West  
Area Plan Planning Process

I was unable to attend tonight's meeting, which is unfortunate since I am very knowledgeable about the Sauk Creek Greenway. Here is an overview of the Greenway that may help you understand why a multi-use, ADA-compliant path is not needed in the greenway.

## **Overview of the Sauk Creek Greenway by Paul Herr**

Dear Parks Commissioners:

I've spent the past 30 years walking with my dog and family in the Sauk Creek Greenway. I am an engineer, geologist, environmental consultant, and former owner of a 250-acre oak forest in Southern Indiana. The day we moved to Madison our next-door neighbor, the President of the Sauk Creek Neighborhood Association, put me in charge of monitoring the state-of-repair of the Sauk Creek greenway and Walnut Grove Park. I took this assignment seriously and have watched over the park ever since.

The Greenway is currently crisscrossed by 2 miles of informal walking trails that I have helped to maintain. My family and I have participated in annual Earth Day cleanups, garlic-mustard pulls, and educational activities to learn more about this mature woodland and the native and invasive species within it. We also walk the creek bed in search of Native American artifacts like arrowheads and hide scrapers. The serenity of the greenway is often interspersed with the tapping of woodpeckers, croaking of frogs, and the squeals of children playing in the woods.

I have also been the City Engineering Department's eyes and ears in the greenway. For example, whenever trees have fallen across the City's sewer-maintenance road, I have alerted my Alder and the Engineering Department. I also report occasional vandalism to the Police Department.

I view the greenway as a precious urban oasis for native plants and animals and a natural classroom for learning about human-caused environmental degradation. This oasis is under attack and the native ecosystem is being tattered. Flash floods rage through the greenway after heavy rains, pushing tons of sediment downstream. These are unnatural floods are precipitated by poor City planning – like the lack of retention ponds upstream. Majestic oaks near the creek channel are being undermined and killed. The creek channel is now littered with their hulking remains. The City has recently changed its terminology from “Sauk Creek Greenway” to “Sauk Creek Corridor” which may be a bad omen of things to come.

The City is planning to re-grade the creek channel and then stabilize it with rip rap (large field stones). This work is necessary and welcomed but will result in the removal of many dead and dying trees along the creek bank. Once the creek channel is cleared, re-graded and stabilized, it will also require a parallel “maintenance road” to provide long-term access for heavy equipment – another regrettable injury to the woodland ecosystem that will remove healthy trees.

To add insult to injury, the City is planning to simultaneously construct a multi-use, ADA-compliant, path through the greenway that will require the removal of many more healthy trees. At the end of all this disruption, the ecosystem will likely be unrecognizable and unlivable for its current inhabitants.

The City's website states,

*“Greater Madison is the bike capital of the Midwest. We have more bikes than cars! And more than 200 miles of scenic biking and hiking trails. Traversing the city on bike is both easy and beautiful.”*

The City's policy seems to be, “Build bike paths wherever you can, regardless how many trees, native species, serenity, or unhappy residents get in the way.” I hope the Parks Commission will save the day and JUST SAY NO to an unnecessary and unwanted multi-use path through the “Sauk Creek urban oasis.” I'd be happy to take interested parks commissioners on an informational hike through the greenway.

Warm Regards,

Paul Herr  
14 East Geneva Circle  
Madison, Wi. 53717  
608-576-7616

---

**From:** Madison Parks <[parks@cityofmadison.com](mailto:parks@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2023 3:00 PM  
**To:** Park Commission <[pacommission@cityofmadison.com](mailto:pacommission@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** FW: Basic Fact About the Sauk Creek Greenway by Paul Herr

**From:** Cleveland, Julie <[JCleveland@cityofmadison.com](mailto:JCleveland@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 14, 2023 2:59 PM  
**To:** Madison Parks <[parks@cityofmadison.com](mailto:parks@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** FW: Basic Fact About the Sauk Creek Greenway by Paul Herr

**From:** Paul Herr <[peherr@chorus.net](mailto:peherr@chorus.net)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 9:37 PM  
**To:** Plan Commission Comments <[pccomments@cityofmadison.com](mailto:pccomments@cityofmadison.com)>  
**Subject:** Basic Fact About the Sauk Creek Greenway by Paul Herr

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

*December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Parks Commission Meeting  
Discussion Item: 80665 -- Informational Presentation by City of Madison Planning Division  
regarding West Area Plan Planning Process*



*NOTE: I was unable to attend tonight's Parks Commission meeting, which is unfortunate since I am very knowledgeable about the Sauk Creek Greenway. Here are some important facts that may help you with your deliberations about the multi-use, ADA-compliant path that the Planning Department has proposed for the Sauk Creek Greenway.*

Dear Parks Commission Members,

I attended the December 7, 2023 Planning-Commission meeting and noticed that Mr. Zeller had difficulty fielding some of the commission's questions about the proposed multi-use path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. Here are my answers to these questions.

Question 1: There is quite a bit of topographic variation within the Greenway. Would the City Engineering department need to modify grades in the greenway to make the proposed multi-use path compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)? Mr. Zeller could not answer this question.

My Answer: In general, Walnut Grove Park is a key destination for the proposed multi-use path and sits on top of a bluff 40 feet above the Sauk Creek channel. The ADA states that the maximum grade for an ADA-compliant path is 5%. My calculations indicate that a path from the creek bed straight to the top of the bluff would have a 17% grade which greatly exceeds the 5% limit.

On the other hand, if the proposed multi-use path started at the Tree Lane entrance to the greenway south of Walnut Grove Park, it could run parallel to the bluff and gradually climb to the top at a 2% grade (33 ft of elevation rise over a span of 1,500 ft). This route would only require moderate grading where a few humps likely exceed the 5% grade limit.

Question 2: How wide is the greenway? Mr. Zeller was unsure.

My Answer: I measured the width of the greenway at nine map locations equally spaced along the greenway at 500-foot intervals. I calculated an average width of 97 yards and a range of 51-196 yards. In golf terms, I could hit a golf ball across the greenway with a pitching wedge at seven of the nine locations (it is long and narrow).

Correction 1:

Mr. Zeller's first slide was titled "Sauk Creek Greenway" and indicated that it was 150 acres in size. This is incorrect because Mr. Zeller included residences within his definition of the "greenway" (my house is in the greenway according to Mr. Zeller's slide). The greenway proper is a narrow, 26-acre, City-owned parcel. I suggest that Mr. Zeller create a new term, like "the Sauk Creek planning area" as opposed to "greenway."

Correction 2:

Mr. Zeller made a statement that the greenway does not have any connections across or through it. This is incorrect. There are, in fact, 2 miles of informal, heavily used trails crisscrossing the entire greenway that are currently used by hikers, bird watchers, dog walkers, cross country skiers, kids playing in the woods and a few bikers. I mapped these trails with my Garmin GPS and would be happy to provide a copy of the resulting map to the Parks Commission.

I'd be happy to take Mr. Zeller, and anyone else involved in the planning process, on an informational walk through the Sauk Creek Greenway so everyone is on the same page regarding the basic layout, resources, and problem areas within the Greenway.

Warm Regards,

Paul Herr,  
Engineer, Geologist, and Environmental Consultant  
608-576-7616

---