

From: [Kiera Wilhelm](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: beltline comments
Date: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 3:56:51 PM

You don't often get email from kierabwilhelm@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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

Good afternoon madison transportation! Below are my comments about the redesign of the beltline:

I moved to Madison in 2022 for a postdoc at UW Madison, and I decided to stay in town after that position in large part due to the biking infrastructure. I've since bought a house in the Eastmorland neighborhood and bike to my biotech job on the east side of town.

For me, widening the beltline takes Madison in the wrong direction, and would further disincentivize me from accepting a job in the west side's thriving biotech hub. Even with bike lanes at intersections, my experience biking in Madison and elsewhere heavily shows that cars are too busy paying attention to everything else at highway on/exit ramps to think to check for a cyclist on their right. The infrastructure prioritizes cars, and that leads to drivers prioritizing themselves at the expense of pedestrian and cyclist safety. Moreover, the beltline already is a mental and physical barrier that breaks up the neighborhood. Making it wider will divide the community and discourage movement between parts of town, regardless of the goodwill of the designers.

I would be much more likely to go to the west side of town for a potential future job, shopping, and visiting friends job if it was easy, fast, and safe to get there on a bike, eBike, or bus. The city of Madison has made significant investments to make this a reality. These efforts should be bolstered by redirecting the huge funds that it takes to maintain and expand highways toward infrastructure that moves PEOPLE between the east and west side of town.

The project states that the beltline is the only major east-west connection between Lake Monona and Lake Waubesa, and therefore we need more of it. But the McFarland boardwalk and capital city trail also connect through this corridor (and is the first that comes to mind for me). How can the city use this capital investment to generate other major connections that allow busses, bikes, and pedestrians to move directly and easily across town, rather than making the worst road in the city even more imposing?

The project claims to take community connectivity, environmental impact, and non-car modes of transit into account, but it is ultimately conceived from a car-first mentality. Our city deserves better.

Best,

Kiera