

**From:** [Nicholas Davies](#)  
**To:** [Transportation Commission](#)  
**Subject:** No to West Area Plan cut-thru traffic proposals  
**Date:** Sunday, December 10, 2023 3:07:09 PM

---

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

Dear Transportation Commission,

The West Area Plan (let's not abbreviate that) does include a lot of positive and relevant updates. I think the proposed road diets all make sense, and the school route improvements are all really important. However, it proposes new street connections, seemingly under the reasoning that "we can therefore we should".

In general, these proposed connections show an overall ignorance about modal filters: how they work, and how they provide value in making off-arterial areas safe and walkable. In general, I think we should be looking for more places in the city to place modal filters. Certainly not every residential block needs to be a thru street. The fact that so many are is a failure of transportation planning. Modal filters are the only real cure to cut-thru traffic--things like chicanes and speed humps are only palliative.

Therefore, I have serious concerns about some of the proposed connections in the West Area Plan updates:

#### Middleton St

The modal filter on this street is really important for protecting Stricker's Pond as an ecological resource, and allowing the section of street along the pond to be predominantly for walking/biking, as part of a route going all the way around the pond.

Without this modal filter, the road would be susceptible to cut-thru traffic, offering an alternative to Gammon/Park to the east and High Point to the west.

Should we ever have an opportunity to bring more residential density or other usages to Middleton St, making it a more useful transit connection/destination, then I could see rethinking the modal filter to accommodate that, but as is, destroying the modal filter here will just increase and incentivize car traffic through the neighborhood, at the expense of everyone else.

#### St. Dunstan Dr

Expanding this into a bidirectional road, as proposed in the plan updates, would make Allen Blvd to the north continuous with Stonefield Rd to the south. This would also become an appealing cut-thru route for traffic westbound on University.

I don't think we should be so cavalier about making this connection without taking into account how it stands to increase opportunistic VMT, and the impact it will have on the neighborhood.

#### Rennebohm Park

While not called out in the staff notes, the plan updates also include a proposed right-of-way that is ambiguously through or adjacent to Rennebohm Park. The block that Rennebohm Park

is in is already a great example of what dense urbanism in Madison can look like.

People of all backgrounds come from the high-rises to the north and the single-family houses to the south, and gather in the shared greenspace. The creek corridor in the east end of the park is also a valuable ecological asset, supporting a lot of wildlife. When I lived next to it, in Karen Arms, we saw foxes, groundhogs, owls, possums, and much more in that little unmanaged space. Dense urbanism doesn't preclude living close to greenspace and wildlife. It doesn't have to, anyway.

There's already a multi-use path providing a connection through the park, a path that is valued by bikers, joggers, and residents of the senior housing on Segoe. A road through there would likely impact usage of that path and require removal of mature trees.

I hope that you'll recommend leaving these proposed cut-thrus out of the comprehensive plan, or at least dig into what benefits of these additions to the street network could possibly outweigh the serious drawbacks.

Thank you,

Nick Davies  
3717 Richard St