

RECEIVED DEC 13 2007

T E CARLSEN, P.E., LLC

1602 Red Tail Drive, Verona, WI 53593, 608-848-8602

December 11, 2007

Public Works Committee
City of Madison
210 Martin Luther Dr.
Madison, WI 53701

Dear Public Works Committee Members:

I am concerned about the proposed traffic circles to be installed on Red Tail Dr. in Hawks Landing. Please review the enclosed letter I have written and distributed to neighbors in the vicinity of these circles. Given the poor experience in other neighborhoods I am even more concerned that this plan may go forward. I believe that the installation of proposed traffic circles is ill advised and waste of our tax dollars. City budgets are always tight. Now with the added costs of snow and ice maintenance, this winter, it's not a good time to add to that burden.

I appreciate any time that you may spend reviewing this matter. If anyone would like to discuss this me; I can be reached by phone at 848-8602.

Sincerely,



Tom Carlsen.

Enclosure

1602 Red Tail Drive
Verona, Wisconsin

December 10, 2007

Dear Red Tail Dr. Neighbors,

By way of introduction to those that don't know me, I have spent my professional life as a Transportation Engineer and a passionate advocate for highway safety. It is with that continuing concern for safety, particularly as it pertains to our neighborhood, that I'm writing down my thoughts and sharing them with you in hope that we can act before it's too late to correct an unfortunate decision. As you may know, the City Council recently has approved plans to install median circles along Red Tail at three intersections: at Lawn Brook, Hill Creek and Redan.

I empathize with those parents who asked the City for help when they perceived that their children were at risk because some people are driving too fast on Red Tail and other streets in the neighborhood. However, I believe that the neighborhood accepted a less than well thought out solution before thinking of the consequences. As the early winter storms arrived I thought about this even more.

While much of Madison has been griping about lack of responsive snow and ice removal on its streets this winter; we have seen that Red Tail Drive has been cleared early and well maintained. It's one of the good things about living on an arterial street. Along with that, though, we have more traffic and, at times, not unlike other neighborhood streets, some drivers proceeding a bit faster than they should. If speeding becomes a problem on any street, law enforcement should be the first way to deal with it. Yet, I have not personally seen any speed enforcement on Red Tail, nor educational efforts, such as the portable electronic signs, which remind drivers that they are exceeding the speed limit.



Proposed Traffic Circle at Red Tail Dr. & Lawn Brook

I have discussed my concerns, earlier, with the City Traffic Engineer, our Alderman Jed Sanborn and some of my closer neighbors. **There is nothing to suggest that the traffic circles, as proposed, will have any positive affect on safety.** The City has no data to indicate that the circles, such as those already installed in other neighborhoods, improve safety. Alarmingly, they have never installed circles at T-intersection such as we have at Lawn Brook and Hill Creek. And, when I discussed my concerns with the City Traffic Engineer, he was not even aware that City busses turn left onto Lawn Brook from Red Tail; he expressed doubts that a large bus would be able to make this turn! I agree that most drivers will slow down through the circles and that some traffic may be deterred from driving on Red Tail. My professional opinion is that the risk of crashes will increase, and with that, raise the probability of resulting injuries. (Now a day after I started writing this, I see the attached article in the Sunday State Journal expressing the same neighborhood concerns that I have, several years after islands have been installed on North Franklin Avenue. **I don't want our neighborhood to suffer the same regrets!**)

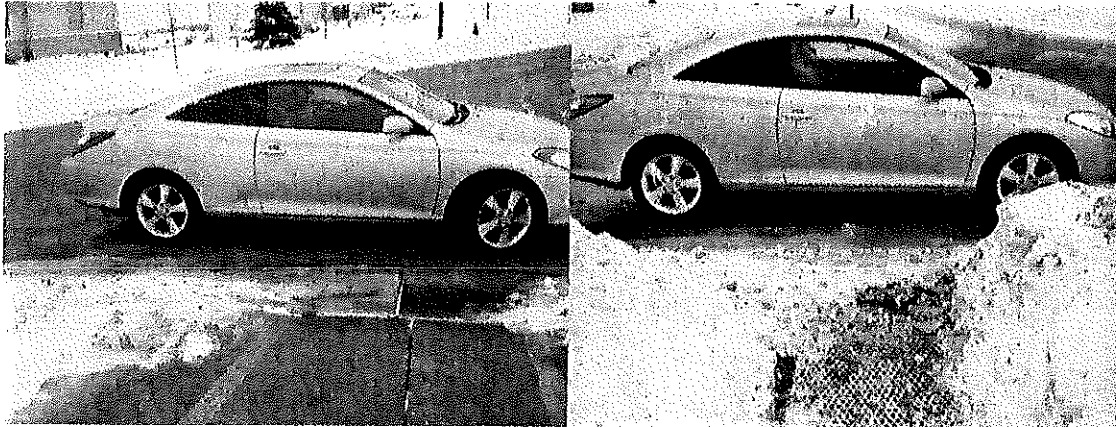
My reasoning is this: Red Tail Drive was designed and constructed to a higher standard; it is wider and better maintained because it is an arterial street. This becomes even more important with the opening of our new neighborhood school. **The introduction of retrofitted traffic circles directly compromises Red Tail's traffic carrying function and safety.** The cost of maintenance and snowplowing will increase. All you need do is drive through the Linden Park circle (which is designed to a much higher standard) to see that **snow and ice removal is a problem.**



Traffic Circle in Linden Park

My most burning concern, though, is school children safety. Every school day morning I see **children waiting for their school bus at all three corners** where the circles are to be installed. **Traffic will be forced to drive within a few feet of these kids**, most probably with patchy icing as we see in the Linden Park circle, during the winter months. **Drivers' attention will be focused on negotiating the circle and away from the children...** I don't think this is safer than the present condition,.....Do you?

School Bus Stops



Red Tail and Lawn Brook

Red Tail and Hill Creek

If these circles are installed they will be hit by drivers and snowplows. After hitting the circles, drivers may further loose control of their vehicles, causing more damage and possible injuries. Costs to install the islands are borne by all of us, as taxpayers. City budgets are so tight; why should we be wasting our tax money and, in fact, raising the cost to maintain our streets, especially noting the problems we're having with this winter's snow and ice?

Please read the attached article. **The real life experiences of the North Franklin Avenue neighborhood should cause us to pause.** I urge you to join me in asking the City to reconsider this proposal. Once it's done it will be too late!

Thanks for your consideration,

Tom Carlsen

CC: Hawks Landing Homeowners Association
Alderman Jed Sanborn
City Engineer Larry Nelson
City Traffic Engineer David Dryer
City of Madison Public Works Committee

December 9, 2007

SOS We'll answer your call for help

Neighbors not fans of traffic island

By CHRIS RICKERT

Between the "flying hunk of metal" and the regular car-versus-curb crashes, Jean Zanoja said her block was a lot safer before the city put in the traffic island.

Yes, she admitted, she was one of the neighbors who several years ago asked the city to do something to slow the cars that were zooming down the 400 block of North Franklin Avenue toward University Avenue.

But what they got has made the safety situation worse, Zanoja said.

Send us an SOS!

Is something wrong in your neighborhood, your city or Wisconsin? Send an SOS: rickert@madison.com, 608-252-6198, or P.O. Box 8058, Madison, WI 53708.

"It's really dumb," she said of the narrow concrete traffic island, topped by a "Keep Right" sign, at Franklin and Stevens Street, directly in front of her driveway on the Near West Side.

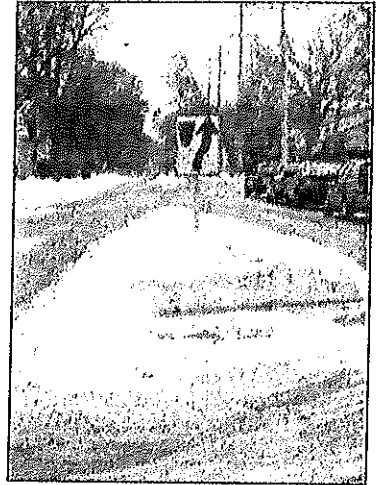
"It doesn't slow the traffic at all," she said, and the sign must have been knocked down "eight

million times."

That might be a slight exaggeration, but it's been at least 60, said Zanoja, who kept a log of how many times it was hit for several months after it was installed in 2005.

The island is more narrow than the others farther south on Franklin — it looks more like an abbreviated traffic median — and was designed that way so as not to hinder the Metro Transit buses that head up Franklin from University, Zanoja said. Problem is, it's so narrow cars don't bother

Please see ISLAND, Page D2



CHRIS RICKERT — State Journal

This traffic island doesn't slow traffic, and vehicles are constantly running into it — sometimes knocking down the sign — say two of the North Franklin Avenue residents who live near it.

D2 • Sunday, December 9, 2007



LOCAL

Island

Continued from Page D1

to slow down for it.

It also presents a challenge to drivers turning left onto Franklin from Stevens.

"Anybody who takes a left, that island is right there," Zanoja said. It's usually those drivers who run into the island, sometimes taking down the sign as well.

Then there was the time the sign became a piece of shrapnel.

Zanoja said she was sitting in her living room when she heard the by-then familiar sound of the median being hit and, out of the corner of her eye, saw something fly past her picture window.

She went outside to find the sign in her next-door neighbor's driveway, about 25 feet from the traffic island. "It would have killed someone if it hit them," said the neighbor, Peggy Lemon.

Zanoja and Lemon said they've called the city many times about the problems with the traffic island, to no avail.

"The city has been totally unwilling to hear anything about it or do anything about it," Lemon said.

Madison Traffic Engineer Bob Arseneau told SOS his department is aware "that vehicles do occasionally drive over the nose of the island" and that there are records of the sign being knocked down a few times.

To address those concerns, Arseneau said the tip of the island has been painted bright yellow to make it more visible

and the sign has been moved as far back on the island as it can be without losing its effectiveness.

He questioned whether the sign could have become a projectile, because the signs are designed to lay flat when hit. He suggested maybe someone moved it after it was knocked down.

Zanoja said she knows what she saw.

In any case, city traffic engineers have no plans to do anything more about the island.

"Modifying the shape of this island or removing it would at least partially defeat the intent of this traffic-calming device," Arseneau said, pointing out that the "traffic calming islands on North Franklin Avenue were installed at the persistent request of the neighborhood."