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To: [Transportation Commission](#); [Wolfe, James](#)
Subject: More on Lake Mendota Drive project
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Some more observations about LMD current proposed plan.

1. Yes I'm still against the traditional sidewalk, however, If you are dead set about installing sidewalks, which all your comments are suggesting please make them all on one side, on the non lake side of the street. (I think that would be the south side the whole distance) why?

A. You are saying that Eventually, every street in the neighborhood will probably get sidewalks. (Capital, Norman Way, and existing at Spring Harbor.) They will need to connect to the existing one. If the sidewalk is on lake side it connects to nothing. The sidewalk needs to be on that side where those streets come in not on opposite lake side.

B. The non lake side of LMD has far less driveways or lake courts that will need to be redone at the time of construction. Costing home owners more initially to replace them and destroyed landscaping as well as having to back out over a sidewalk every single time they use their cars. Far less opportunities for pedestrian accidents. (5700-2 vs 3 driveways and 2 lake courts, 5600 is 3 vs 7 driveways and 3 lake courts. 5500- 5 vs 6 driveways 5400- 5 vs 8 driveways and 2 lake courts, 5100- 3 vs 12 driveways and many side parking spots, 5000-2 vs 17 driveways and Merrill Springs Rd and there isn't a single driveway on non lake side of street from Merrill Springs to Risser Road with numerous driveways and parking spots on the lake side. Clearly far less interference and probably less cost to city, as well.

C. Those lake courts are all gravel. The city typically re-gravels them every couple of years when they get rutted out. Running a sidewalk across 6 gravel fire lanes with regular wear and tear and weather, they will need to be filled in with additional gravel often. A substantial amount of construction, maintenance and even landscaping will be required. How will snow plows not destroy them every winter when they are plowed out by the city? There are 6 of these lake courts or fire lanes.

D. There are far less trees and existing homeowner landscaped areas on non lake side of LMD then in lake side. The few big trees on the non lake side (5500) could have bump outs or more curves in road like you've already accommodated. You keep offering rain gardens and spaces for homeowners to maintain which is nice but it's hard to want to embrace idea after you've just destroyed all previous home owner expensed landscaping on their existing terraces for new sidewalks. Like...why bother now? , if you're going to rip it all up again in 10 years because of another initiative? Can you appease them somewhat? So much of non lake side of street has little to no landscaping at all. It grows wild with weeds or grass or is completely unmaintained. Almost all of 5600, half of 5500, 3/4 of 5400. Then up the big hill 5100-5000 there is none. It's almost all just wild with a few trees.

E. You've said Shorewood will also eventually be putting in sidewalks. You would want our sidewalk to connect with that. If they follow existing small sidewalks that are already in place at corners in Shorewood, they are all on non lake side of street and they would want to connect up with those. The lake side of LMD in Shorewood is in our same situation with too many trees and driveways on lake side while the other side has one driveway and far less trees on golf course side. In addition, extra street space on lake side of street along hole 16 is used for Shorewood marina parking which is located directly below hole 16 on the lake. They will never put a sidewalk there if it interferes with that. (Just a side note, when that parking is full, they park further down west in LMD. Proposed Sidewalks on lake side there will interfere with that marina parking and not allowing parking there at all could be problematic for Shorewood. Have you spoken with them about limiting parking there?)

F. Having gutters and sidewalks diverting rainwater from down hill into storm sewers on non lake side catches more water and less sediment from street before hitting lake side and eventually the lake.

F. Please meet/discuss this project with the Mendota/Grassman Greenway System project at Baker Avenue. It's supposed to start this summer to reconstruct run off flowage area into the lake from rain and may or may not interfere with LMD project.

2. Please keep in mind that during the winter many ice fishermen use the lake courts to access the lake. They park their trucks and cars on LMD. Sometimes on both sides for several cars. Baker and Capital get the most. Please do not restrict parking in those areas.

3. A big part that's clearly being missed when some spoke of our presumed "accessibility bias" in the closing comments of the meeting Wednesday is that we already have so many disabled and elderly people living here that ARE indeed out using our streets. Our 200+ respondent neighborhood survey found that 81% of our residents that responded to survey are over 50 years old (18 listing as disabled and 35% of those are 70 or older, with 40% living in their house for more than 21 years. 90% of those in the survey reported using LMD. These people DO use our streets as they are. They DO feel safe. There is no accessibility to streets or safety issue here. Especially if average cars are going 17-19 mph. (See City's survey) There is no problem and if it ain't broke don't fix it. The only thing broken here is the street surface top. There is a blind woman that regularly walks LMD and surrounding streets by herself. Almost daily. Sometimes she has another elderly woman with her with a cane. I also see a couple of wheelchair riders and others using canes or walking sticks. Families walk in big groups, 4, 5 and 6 across, with or without bikes and strollers. Even in the winter. Everyone stops and talks. We share the road. We respect each other and pedestrians always have the right of way and cars yield and slow down to make room. I guarantee that any speeder or anyone who doesn't follow this does not live here. You don't know this because you don't live here and don't see it. (Google maps street view of this area actually shows people walking in the middle of the road.) We ARE accessible. Your argument that our street isn't, is based on inaccuracies. Kids DO walk, bike and play in and along the street as we did here when I was a kid. They jump in puddles and pick up sticks and help turtles cross the road. (By the way, all those baby turtles

and the many ducklings that hatch around here, and there are many, will all end up dying in those street drains you're putting in unless you put screens in them to keep them out) Just past the proposed project area in Shorewood there is an actual basketball hoop IN the road. Same street but further down. Kids play basketball in the middle of the road. Geez... in New York City there are kids playing in the middle of the street with cars parked on both sides. If they can do it, so can we. My suggestion for a Woonerf is soooooo applicable here. Especially from Spring Harbor to Baker where it's a bit more level, but ideally it should be done the whole length of the mile. It could be so wonderful and a real statement and feather in Madison's cap, especially if the Ho Chunk Nation becomes a part of the project. How wonderful to acknowledge the historical significance. As a few at the meeting had said, "a real missed opportunity." The immediate shoot down of the Woonerf idea by some at that meeting showed lack of the knowledge of the concept, lack of creative problem solving and willingness to compromise. (mischaracterizing it as a big parking space when it's actually a big walking activity space that cars and pedestrians use) From Google,

"A woonerf is a street or square where cars, pedestrians, cyclists, and other local residents travel together without traditional safety infrastructure to guide them. Also sometimes called a "**shared street**," a woonerf is generally free of traffic lights, stop signs, curbs, painted lines and the like."

(Please Google it for accurate information and Google images to see what it could look like.)

But...Once again. The city response is the same or no comment at all. Stuck in the box. Pat answers. Over and over. "No can't do that." The few who were genuinely interested in it gave me hope, only to be told our "high traffic area" wouldn't allow it. (which also was a lie claiming 800-900 cars when city's own data said Capital to Baker is 300-350 cars and School to Capital is 450 cars, it's the East end with higher count of 1150 cars) (which by the way is where the basketball hoop is in Shorewood at other end with the exact same amount of traffic going through there. Everything seems to be a "no." We're trying to come up with alternatives that we can all be happy with. A Woonerf would do it. And what an awesome feature to add to this city.

It's so frustrating for us and I'm sure for you, as well. I listened to the Hammersley session before ours. Do you know how sad it was to hear all those praises of their alderman? They are lucky. It made me so sad that we don't have someone that understands our neighborhood's needs to do that for us. Our alderman hasn't lived here that long. He Moved in and moved again in a few years when he built a new house next door to his first. He really has no concept what our traditions and history of our neighborhood is here. His property actually had an old bait store on it I think. I wonder if he even knows that. When you've lived here pretty much your whole life or for 20, 30, 40+ years it means so much more to us. He's really not helping solve this or helping to come up with compromises and he's alienated so many by his comments to us. He said absolutely nothing at this last meeting. He's made this whole thing so much worse than it ever had to be. Which brings me to my last unfortunate topic.

I debated whether to say anything at all but I needed to explain it.

4. Ever since alderman Fuhrman **LIED** to you in that first transportation meeting on January 12 saying I said, (and yes "I" am the **LIED** one who was supposedly quoted, although incorrectly) that people in wheelchairs "don't matter", your view, opinions and concerns of our neighborhood have been irreparably poisoned by him saying that. Some of the comments about us at the end of this recent meeting reflect all the way back to his false comment at that meeting. My email to alderman Fuhrman read, "I understand the need for wheelchair accessibility, but frankly I don't think people in wheelchairs can afford to live here." **THAT** is what I said. That is **ALL** I said. **HE** added "so it doesn't matter." I **NEVER** said that. That's **NOT** what I said. That was never my intent. **HE** added that remark. He added the "so it doesn't matter" remark intentionally to make me/us look bad. It was unprofessional and deliberately done to sway you against us. You can go back and review it in the video and the additional 5+ minutes later on of you all talking about his **LIE** and awful it was for someone to say that, shows just how much it influenced everyone. I wanted to jump through the computer screen when I heard it. I and No one in this neighborhood is like what he portrayed and what clearly many of you still think of us. He made us seem privileged and uncaring when in actuality I'd venture to say we are probably some of the most generous, philanthropic and welcoming neighborhoods in the city. **AND**, you may still think my statement was offensive even without his additional remark and frankly, you would be right. It **IS and it is** because it's sadly true. The exorbitant amount of taxes in this area make it cost prohibitive for anyone on a fixed income to live here. Disabled or not. My comment comes from my own experiences living here. My next door

neighbor, in a wheelchair for years, spent a lot of money to install ramps and an elevator in her house. She regularly was out in the neighborhood on our streets. She and her also disabled daughter and son were forced to move because she could no longer afford the taxes here. My elderly, health compromised parents in their 70's, retired, living on savings and social security, were forced to move out of this neighborhood because of high taxes. They were afraid their money wouldn't be there for medical and long term care needs. It's not the streets or lack of sidewalks or lack of street accessibility that are forcing disabled people out of this neighborhood, it's the cost of living here. I myself, was temporarily incapacitated after two separate leg surgeries. I understand the need for access, the biases and discrimination, especially at businesses and services. As was said, "we are all one accident" or illness away from being affected. But the very people you claim to be advocating for will be forced to move because they can't shovel a sidewalk, can't afford to pay someone to do it AND can't afford the higher taxes assessed to their property on their fixed income. Forget the extra upfront cost of the sidewalk. A woman in our neighborhood said this just last week and although not on LMD, her street is next on the list and she said she'll be forced to move when it happens. One in four Americans have some sort of a disability and where they live is far more dependent on income, affordability and proximity to services. The city's goal of "Accessibility to all" should also refer to affordability to live somewhere. Affordable housing is the probably one of the biggest issues in Madison. You know this. This neighborhood is more likely to be not accessible because it's cost prohibitive to live here not because of lack of sidewalks or safety. The city's own data says no pedestrian accidents ever! And by the way, living here is cost prohibitive to the elderly, retired, singles, and young single income families with kids, as well. Unless you have a substantial income, a big nest egg or multiple incomes, it's just not economical to live here. Disabled or not. There ARE some wealthier people in this neighborhood for sure, that live on the lake. Many of them are older with grown kids. The rest of us are far from being wealthy. We are the highest assessed neighborhood in the city because of that lake property where people are paying \$12,000-30,000 per year in property taxes or more. The rest of us are also paying more because of the desirability of the neighborhood because of the natural environment, off beaten path, proximity to UW and lake accessibility. We moved here and stay here because of these things and are willing to pay more to stay until we're forced out or die. We are not elitist. We are not who we've been portrayed as. You need to know that. I have worked with students with all kinds of disabilities for 30 years. Although few of them were in wheelchairs, all their struggles are equally valid and challenging. For Mark Fuhrman to characterize me or anyone in this neighborhood as "anti disabled" or that wheelchair users don't matter is not only a lie but insulting and extremely unprofessional. I needed you to know that.

I understand that James Wolfe is trying very hard. I think he probably had no idea the size of the fire he was jumping into. You, too must be equally frustrated when the front end of a project or idea or preparation and the stakeholders of it are not involved from the get go. Top down philosophy in any endeavor is a risky business and fraught with many pitfalls and much turmoil. I guess we're there.

Thank you for taking the time to read this long email. Please try to hear and understand us. Try to Step out of the box. We all want what's best for all, and our lake and environment should have a vote. We speak for far more than just those of us living here now. We speak for Lake Mendota, all the lakes and the many people who will enjoy them generations from now.

Thank you,
Lesia Reisdorf

A response is not required unless you feel so inclined.