

Dear Board of Parks Commissioners and staff,

The board made an error by voting to not amend or comment on the Walnut Grove Park Bike Path in the West Area Plan because of a misunderstanding about whether the path was adjacent or the same as the road that would go through Sycamore Park.

The Walnut Grove Park Bike Path **cannot be adjacent** to the park, as Chair Harrington said, because land on either side of it is private and not owned by the city. I have attached maps that planners have shared for more than a year and they show the bike path would go directly into the park.

Staff from the parks board, city planning, engineering and the city attorney's office should have alerted you that this path was going through park land and the fact that city staff did not disclose that this is grounds for removing the Sauk Creek Greenway East West bike path from the West Area Plan before you refer it to the Plan Commission Chair Ledell Zellers.

The East West Bike Path emerged in 2023 after Transportation Commissioner Robbie Webber surprised us with the suggestion that the planners include it in the West Area Plan despite significant opposition from environmentalists and area voters.

The Transportation Commission forwarded the plan to the Plan Commission July 31 but it was not a unanimous vote with two of the six commissioners voting to not approve the plan with the bike path inside the park. The opponents to the motion were Commissioner Denise Jess, CEO and Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council for the Blind, and Ald. Barbara Harrington-McKinney.

I and the Friends of Sauk Creek, the area environmental organization, strongly suggest that the Board of Park Commissioners reconsider their votes given this new information and give the Walnut Grove Park supporters the same treatment as those who live near Sycamore Park. The bike path has the same effect as the road through Sycamore Park.

I have attached three snapshots that show the planners' intent to put a bike path through Walnut Grove Park and not adjacent to it on private land.

- The original map from July 2023
- A more detailed map from August 2023 showing the starting points for possible East West paths

- The most recent map in the Final Draft of the West Area plan, which you saw at your last meeting

The attachments show that city planners intended the bike path to go into the park when they introduced the path in July 2023 and they have kept that plan as evidenced by their most recent West Area Plan draft.

Thank you,

Ellen Foley and the Friends of Sauk Creek

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**Ellen Foley**

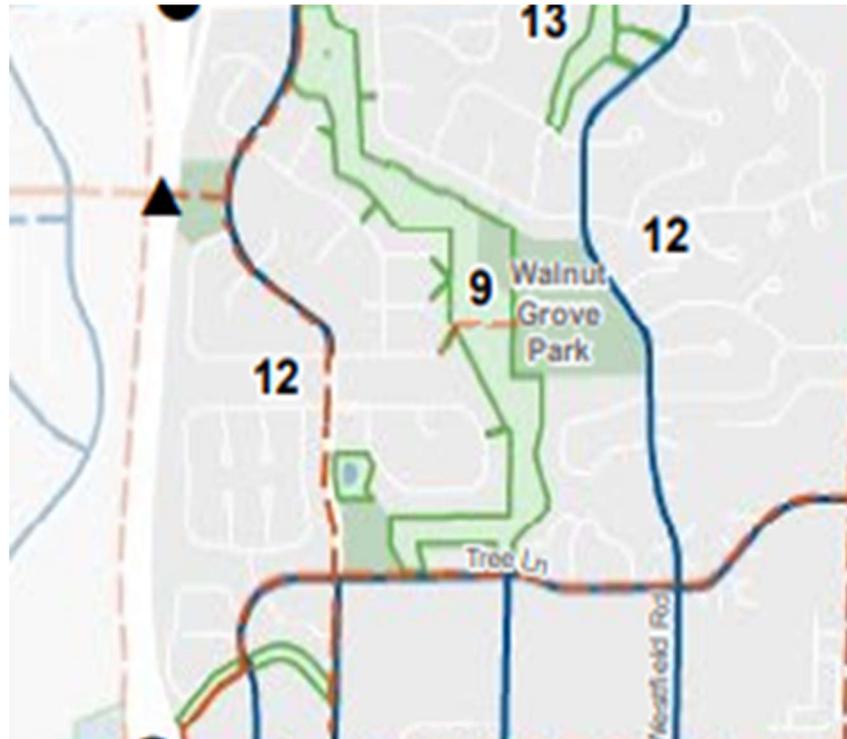
**President**

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## West Area Plan Map of Walnut Grove Park Bike Path with Path Inside Park August 2024



### THE WALNUT GROVE BIKE PATH CANNOT BE ADJACENT TO THE PARK

Here is the text from the West Area Plan that describes the area marked with the No. 9. It says the bike path will go **to** Walnut Grove Park, **not adjacent** to the park. The bike path cannot go adjacent to the park because the land on either side is private and the city does not have right of way.

### From the West Area Plan:

9. During the Sauk Creek Greenway Corridor Plan, use detailed engineering data to consider the impacts and benefits of adding an All Ages and Abilities shared-use path to make an east-west connection across the greenway to Walnut Grove Park. Any All Ages and Abilities path should be designed using environmentally sensitive best practices and minimizing impacts to trees and other vegetation, wildlife habitat, and adjacent properties.

**Planners' First Map of the Walnut Grove Bike Path from July 18, 2023**



**Planners' Map for Walnut Grove With Bike Path Inside Park August 2023**

