

From: [Mark Shahan](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Midvale Blvd. Has a Clear Need for Bike Lanes
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Midvale Blvd. has a clear need for bike lanes as has been documented over the past 50 years including in: the [1975 Madison Bikeway long-term plan](#), the [2000 Bicycle Transportation Plan](#), the [2014 Hoyt Park Neighborhood Plan](#), the [2015 Bicycle Transportation Plan](#), and the [2024 West Area Plan](#). Yet the city seems to be saying we can enhance bike facilities on Segoe Road or Midvale Blvd. or Meadow Lane or Owen Drive but we can't enhance more than one of those streets. Why not? Why can't you enhance bike facilities on both Segoe Road and Midvale Blvd, the two most viable options.

Despite what some would have you believe, Midvale is currently used by bicyclists despite its designation as high stress and in poor condition for bicyclists. Stava data provided to you by Craig Weinhold demonstrates that Midvale gets slightly less bicyclist use than Segoe at Mineral Point Road, slightly more use than Segoe at Regent St., and more than double the use of Segoe at University Avenue. Midvale would undoubtedly be used by more bicyclists if it had bike lanes.

Others would have you believe because of the data described above that there is no need to have bike lanes on Midvale, that it is fine the way it is. What is the problem if bicyclists "may have to deviate around two or three parked cars." That is exactly the danger of Midvale as it currently exists for bicyclists. Those parked cars cause bicyclists to move into the adjacent motor vehicle lane in quick maneuvers between platoons of fast-moving cars that usually exceed the speed limit. As one medical technician at UW Health related to me, this type of maneuver scared the heck out of her when she drove down Midvale and she wondered why bicyclists did that and why they didn't take a different route. I explained that bicyclists are allowed on Midvale and that it was safest for bicyclists to take the lane when going around parked cars since there isn't enough room for a bicyclist to try to squeeze by the parked car with a car in the same lane and that Midvale was the most direct route for many trips.

Which brings up the two main reasons why Midvale is superior to other routes for many trips. The first reason a lot of bicyclists use Midvale is there are a lot of destinations along the street: restaurants, retail, a library, UW Credit Union, Pick & Save, multiple professional offices, etc. The second reason people use Midvale is it is the logical most direct route for people living in the eastern part of the Midvale Heights Neighborhood, the Westmorland Neighborhood, or people coming from further south along Midvale or via the SW path. The Midvale crossing of University Avenue is also one of the safer ones as it has a regular stop light.

Alternatives:

Segoe: Segoe works for bicyclists in the western part of the Midvale Heights neighborhood as it cuts southwest to northeast towards Hilldale but it creates a detour of up to 1.4 miles round trip for bicyclists in the eastern part of the Midvale Heights Neighborhood and the Westmorland Neighborhood. People at public meetings have stated that bicyclists bike for

exercise so they don't mind detouring to get to their destination. This is false. Bicyclists are trying to get to destinations just as quickly as people in cars. In fact, bicyclists are more sensitive to detours than cars because the time penalty is higher for bicyclists as they are slower than cars. In addition, the hills on Tokay, Hilltop, or Agnes that a bicyclist might use to get to Segoe are steeper than the hill on Midvale for a return trip.

Meadow Lane: This street is useless for those people living south of Mineral Point Road because there is no access to Meadow Lane from south of Mineral Point. A bicyclist would have to access Meadow Lane from the very section of Midvale that lacks bike lanes. This route would then direct people to try to cross University Avenue at Blackhawk Avenue where there is no traffic light. The City proposal for placing a Rapid Flashing Beacon is wholly inadequate for a six lane road. A traffic signal like the ones at Midvale & University or Ridge & University would be required to get pedestrians and bicyclists safely across University Avenue. There have still been several bike vs. motor vehicle crashes at the SW Path and Midvale despite the beacon at this location. I would expect the safety performance of a beacon on the 6-lane University Avenue to be worse than that on the 4-lane Midvale.

Owen Drive: Owen suffers from the same problem as Meadow Lane as it has bicyclists crossing University Avenue at Blackhawk. The biggest problem with Owen is the 8.5% grade north of Hillcrest Drive. A lot of bicyclists simply can't get up such a steep grade and most people don't have an electric bike nor should they be required to have one to get to desired destinations.

Lastly, people on Midvale say they can't get by without the parking lane. They don't know how contractors would come to their house, people would come over to visit, delivery trucks would make deliveries, or how they would stop on the street to scoop snow out of their driveway if there is no parking. Yet just a few blocks away on Mineral Point Road, where driveways open directly onto the road, people deal with this day in and day out year after year. I think it is poor public policy to expect the city to provide free parking on arterial streets which should be for moving people via all modes of travel.

Sincerely,

Mark Shahan