

From: [Austin Griesbach](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Lots to Say, Mostly Want Safer Crossings
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Hello,

I am writing regarding Agenda Item 3, file [92139: Public Works Transportation Projects - Regent St.](#) I sincerely appreciate the sidewalk space that has been allocated to pedestrians in the updated design. But I have serious concerns about the safety of the street's new design for vulnerable road users, and concerns with the design's level of compliance with [Complete Green Streets \(CGS\) guidance](#).

The increase in parking over previous designs and the increase in travel lane width are both extremely disappointing. If you asked a random person to look at the design and guess what our stated modal hierarchy is, they absolutely wouldn't guess correctly. In particular, I'm flabbergasted by the lane widths that are significantly wider than the CGS guide's 10' max for Community Main Streets. The 14' called out for much of the road is outrageously too wide (even if that specific number includes the gutter) and will directly induce speeding and unsafe driving. These lanes should be as narrow as possible, much narrower than the current design.

The pedestrian environment *on* the sidewalk looks fairly good, though there could be more cafe space, trees, and amenities like non-business seating if there were less parking. However, the road crossings in particular leave much to be desired, which is disappointing considering how much of Regent's current and future-designated non-driver traffic involves North/South crossings. The pedestrian crossings are the widest parts of the road, even though they should be the narrowest. On uncontrolled intersections there are arguably more car travel lanes than the CGS guide recommends, with left turn lanes only mentioned in the guide for controlled intersections, not uncontrolled ones. The overly-wide travel lanes also work against us here. All-in-all, the design calls for crossings in the realm of 30'-40' that by guidance should be much closer to 20'. The current design will almost certainly induce pedestrians to often cross mid-block, for sake of a narrower crossing.

For the uncontrolled crossings there also don't seem to be any of the recommended crossing enhancements at all (raised crosswalks, curb extensions, etc.), these are just bog standard uncontrolled crossings, and extremely uncomfortable for pedestrian use.

In previous designs the cross-streets also had curb extensions or neck-downs to slow traffic and narrow the East/West crossings for pedestrians. In the new design those have been removed in favor of nice wide turn radii to allow drivers to comfortably speed through at worst, or sit on the crosswalk while waiting to turn at best. I would very much like the curb extensions back, at least on **every** unsignaled cross-street (though I think they're also appropriate on controlled intersections and on Regent itself). And in the case of one-way streets like Orchard, I think it's appropriate to give the curb a 90 degree square profile instead of a smooth radius so a driver couldn't turn incorrectly down the one-way even if they wanted to, let alone unintentionally.

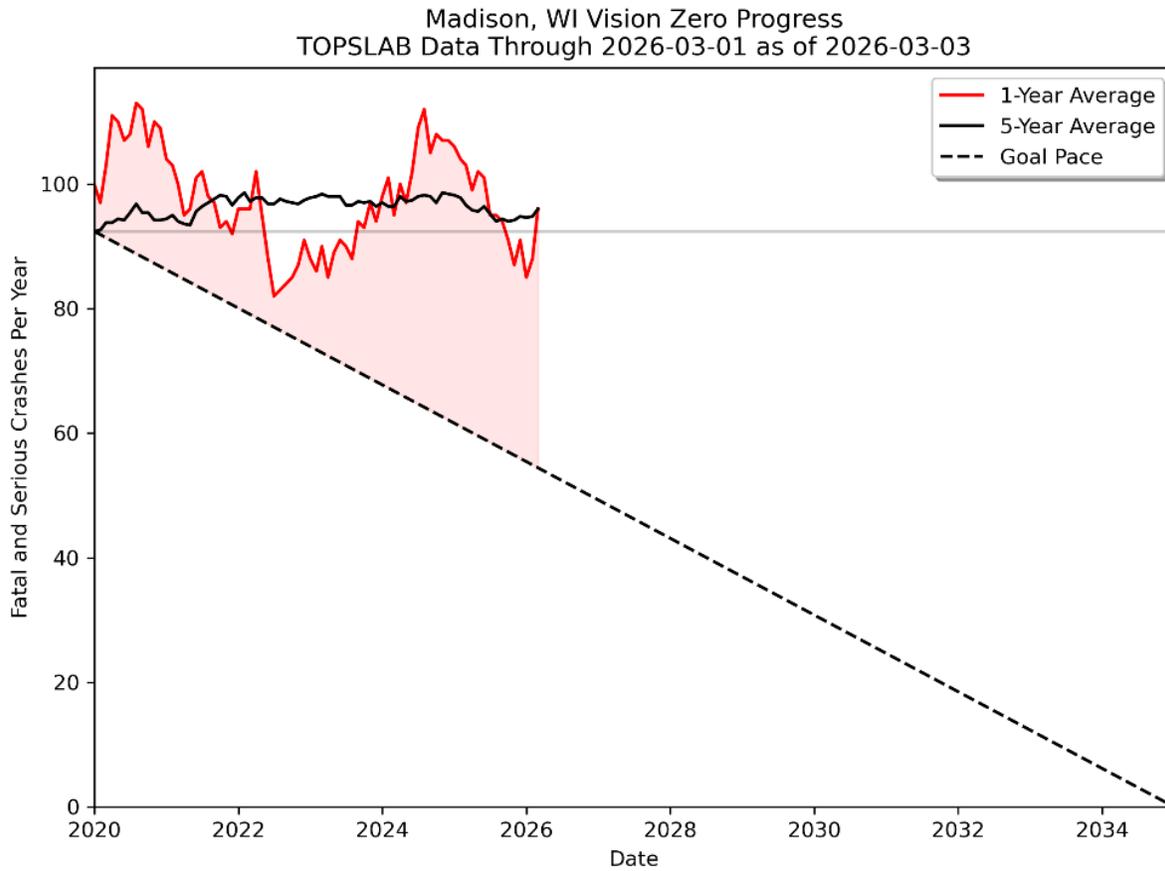
While the CGS guidance does admittedly consider parking and loading rather important for Community Main Streets, it still calls bike infrastructure a higher priority, with recommendation to shift parking to side streets or structures if that's what's needed to accommodate bikes. Loading is explicitly supposed to be on side streets regardless. An absence of bike infrastructure will certainly result in some level of bike traffic in the car lanes, and some level of bike traffic on the sidewalks themselves, regardless of any ordinances, creating modal conflict that could be avoided. There's much spare ROW currently allocated to overly-wide travel lanes and bus pullouts. Protected bike infrastructure would provide the same pedestrian buffer and traffic calming that's currently being solely credited to parking, and the private vehicle storage does much more to block emergency vehicles than bike facilities would (countless cities successfully run emergency vehicles on bike paths, and bike paths can be much more easily vacated than a line of cars, especially unattended ones). However, the City clearly considers drivers to be more important members of the public and more deserving road users, so I'll shift my ask. But I do want to be on the record that this is what's happening. If bikes are to be banished to parallel routes and North/South cross-traffic, then I feel we need much more detail on what these parallel options entail. Maybe the presentation tomorrow will have more detail, but the mention of Bowen, Milton, and Mound on the slides is very vague. Further, Mound and most of Southwest Commuter are further than the explicit "within 500 feet" CGS guidance for parallel bike connection.

The crossing safety I mentioned for pedestrians also becomes all the more important if the bulk of bike traffic on Regent is to consist mostly of North/South crossings. In the absence of *actual* bike infrastructure, the intersection curb extensions I mentioned above would also provide good space for bike parking, allowing cyclists going to Regent destinations to make the last mile on foot. This was also in a previous design, but now removed to allow cars to speed through intersections faster and more comfortably, and is such an afterthought that the arrow calling out a bike rack on Orchard Street is pointing to either the gutter or the road itself. I reiterate my ask to design safer crossings than currently presented, and to implement curb extensions. On the topic of bikes, I would also ask for these curb extensions to include bike parking, as the previous design did. Covered bike parking in particular would be great, if it doesn't conflict too much with intersection daylighting.

Lastly, I'm against the bus pull outs. They slow down transit operations and take away huge amounts of space that could be put to other uses. They're ostensibly there to keep the (clearly-most-favored) car traffic from getting slightly inconvenienced, but chances are high that the signal engineers would need to stop traffic with the stop lights anyways to allow busses to pull back in to the travel lane, rendering the pull out obsolete for purposes of keeping cars speeding along.

On a larger scope than Regent itself, I think the City may need to revisit the Complete Green Streets guide and consider an amendment if some of the guidance is truly impossible to follow. In part so we can be honest with ourselves about how our public spaces are actually allocated and how serious we are about safety, and in part so that we can be better in the habit of following the guidance rather than constantly disregarding inconvenient details. The City clearly has no interest in building the 900 block of Regent Street (between Brooks and Park) as anything even remotely resembling the Community Main Street it's currently classed as, maybe it should be re-categorized. And if emergency vehicle operations or transit operations make the 10' travel lanes truly impossible (I don't think they are), then the guide shouldn't call for it, because those factors won't disappear on other projects. They're currently listed as the *preferred* lane width for all road types with such a prescription, and with very good reason. It's

[well-established](#) that in urban and suburban settings wider lanes lead to increased speeding and decreased safety. Any amendments to the guide's 10' recommendation should also come hand in hand with safety measures to directly counteract the consequences of our devotion to cars.



Thank you,
Austin Griesbach