

From: Monica Host <monicahost@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 27, 2022 12:11 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Olbrich Park and the possible bike path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Commissioners Gnam, Harrington, Miller Fienen, Leopold, Abbas and Figueroa Cole,

I am writing to you in your role as a Board of Park Commissioner regarding the Olbrich bike path options to be considered at your April 13 meeting.

I am concerned with the options that put a bike path through the park, both path option 1 right along the lake and option 3 that bulges into the park, because that area of the the park is used by many residents for many activities and has been for years. Do you know the park? The walking path at the lakefront now provides easily approachable, safe, quiet, and calm access to the water. It gives a place to sit or walk and be removed from the hectic times of life as well as an area to watch and discover the lake. It is beautiful and peaceful, even in the storms. The grassy area abutting that part of the lake is used for family gatherings, impromptu play and sports, formal sports, community events like the solstice bonfires, fireworks watching and drum circles. People have their weddings and family celebrations there. I know that it has been used for Lowell school events and Goodman Center children's programs outings. I have seen families with small children use the park. Kids use that area for kite flying and simple running and playing. Teenagers use the open park for spur of the moment active play. Adults walk. And of course, there is the sledding hill that draws folks from all over the city. The park is well used. People and families of all cultural backgrounds, races, economic levels, social standing and educational levels use that park. Openly and without cost. How marvelous is that?

I am a long time resident of Madison's east side, a biker and a walker. And while I understand wanting to support bicyclists, the current path option 2, works except for few months in the winter when the sledding hill prohibits plowing. Might another path be designated for those few months for bikers who ride that path year round? Changing the path is not worth destroying access to the lake and that open space. Bikers will use whatever path is chosen to move from one point to another; they will ride fast. They are going somewhere; they are not there to use the park or view the lake. With bikes on a multi-use path at that area, the safety issues created for park users is great: for children, adults, families, walkers, joggers and people who need assistance or are disabled.

I know that a survey of path options is being conducted. Postcards were sent to the neighboring houses by city engineering. But I also know that biking groups were sent that survey and encouraged to fill it out. And the bike lobby is strong. I wonder about the results if stakeholders, the actual users of the park, had been recruited for the survey: the sledders and families, the solstice event folks, families out for a Sunday gathering, staff and families of schools and community centers nearby etc. Many people do not know about the issue or may not weigh in. Perhaps they do not have access to the information, or the technology, or the time.

Engineering wants to get about the business of developing the road. The Transportation Committee wants to facilitate movement. Because of redistricting, I have a new alder. He is a strong proponent of his own ideas and he supports the path along the lake. When addressing the issue, he does not recognize nor acknowledge that a number of his constituents disagree with his position and prefer to save the park.

At the Transportation Committee on Wed March 23, the Park Department staff spoke clearly to recommend against the lake path (Option 1). You, as the Board of Park Commissioners, are the

guardians of the parks in Madison. You make the final decision. I am hoping that your stewardship extends to keeping Olbrich Park just that, a park.

Thank

you,

Monica

Host
38 Dixon St, 53704
608-239-0770

From: Betty Chewing <betty.chewing@wisc.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2022 7:22 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: A Park Visit Request

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Commissioners – Again, thank you for your service on the BPC.

On April 13th, the bike routes through Olbrich Park will be discussed and perhaps decided. It has become apparent that this issue harbors deeply held, and unfortunately conflicting visions. There are some who want the Park foremost as a scenic transit route that is plowed in winter. There are some who want the Park to continue as the safe place, the destination to unwind and replenish themselves, family and friends.

Quite simply, may I ask you to visit the park at your convenience before the April 13th if you have not had a chance to do so? It's a lovely place and I think you will enjoy yourself.

Thank you
again.

Betty
Chewing

From: Ben Nerad <bmnerad@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 10, 2022 9:28 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Olbrich park path - please support option 1

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Hello,

I'm writing in support of Option 1 for the Olbrich park bike path. This option received the most

support on the community survey and would provide the greatest use of the park to Madison residents.

Thanks
Ben
Nerad
209 Division St, Madison, WI 53704

From: Anne Benishek-Clark <abenishekclark@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 10, 2022 5:20 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Another safe option: Ped-Bike signal at Margaret/Atwood

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Dear Friends,

I'd rather not have the proposed ped-bike path come from Cottage Grove Road, all the way west to Walter Street, without some mitigation.

The intersection at Walter and Atwood in/out of the parking lot at the Biergarten is heavily used at the height of spring-summer-fall.

Folks going in/out of the Biergarten parking lot don't watch for pedestrians and bicyclists now. Why would that change?

How about another option: A self-serve ped-bike signal across Atwood to the lake at Margaret?

Given that Monona is not going to collaborate with Madison on this project, I think such a signal offers an additional way for pedestrians and bicyclists, inc. neighbors coming from Eastmorland and Cottage Grove/Lakeview neighborhoods, to get across Atwood with less traffic than at the Walter and Atwood intersection.

Such a signal would also serve to slow speeds along Atwood between Cottage Grove Road and Walter (similar to signals on Williamson and elsewhere in the city).

I live right on the corner of Walter and Atwood. I love seeing the panoply of people from every direction using the Park. Let's think about how to allow everyone to use the Park and travel through the area safely.

Thank you,
Anne Benishek-Clark
3528 Atwood Avenue, #100
Madison WI 53714

From: Kay Drew <kaydrew63@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2022 12:44 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Atwood Avenue Bike project

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I want to voice my support of Option 1, 2, or 3 for a path through Olbrich park.

For over a decade I have run Option 4 several times a week year-round. I can't imagine expecting casual bicyclists to bike it. The hill -- in both directions -- is not only steeper than the current sledding-hill route, but suddenly so. This makes it a challenge to bike up, and a danger at the turn from Welch onto Lakeland. Though car traffic is not heavy on Welch or Lakeland, it is difficult for drivers, pedestrians, and bikes to see each other due to parked cars and the sharp turn. There are always cars parked on these two blocks (as well as along Oakridge), so banning parking here would likely be problematic.

Thank you for creating so many opportunities for neighborhood input.

Kay Drew
4150 Monona Drive

From: Nicholas Davies <nbdavies@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2022 3:51 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Yes on Olbrich Park path alignment 1 or 3

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Park Commissioners,

If nothing else, I want to offer you some photos from a recent visit to the park, so you can get a more human-scale impression than the top-down maps may provide. I've uploaded them to a Google drive folder here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ACs0mgOUjMHPuiB_EGP5sdZOPXjPNptb/view?usp=sharing

The city's survey has shown that option 1 for the Olbrich Park path has the most public support by far. It would make the lakefront and creek accessible to all park users in all weather and seasons. Option 3 (the clear runner up) is okay too, and would represent some improvement over current conditions, but it's fundamentally designed around a problem that doesn't exist.

We are redoing a section of the Lake Loop here, and we should take the opportunity to imagine how one of Madison's premiere recreational circuits could look. While other sections of the lakefront are privately owned, forcing the Lake Loop on street and away from the lakefront, this section of lakefront is public. It would be a shame not to showcase it.

Accessibility

This is about more than the Lake Loop though. For park users coming from the south and east (or from other parts of the city and parking in other Olbrich Park lots), getting to the lakefront today involves a muddy rut through the grass. It's not passable for pedestrians in snow or wet conditions, let alone for people with strollers, wheelchairs, assistive walkers, etc.

The slope down from Lakeland Ave is not going to meet ADA standards regardless of path alignment. Folks in wheelchairs for example may need to enter the park another way. This makes a path along Starkweather Creek crucial for establishing equitable access to park amenities, including the restrooms, the playground, and the lakefront itself. All of which are things that park users of all modes deserve access to, regardless which way they approach the park from.

Even if you choose option 2 or 4 for the multi-use path, I encourage you to also create a walkway along Starkweather Creek to fill this need. But then, why not make it a multi-use path so it can be enjoyed year-round?

Path-playground distance

Because of this missing link, the park's current configuration prioritizes access from the neighborhood to the north, and that's what this is really all about. A few vocal, influential residents of that area don't want that to change, because they think they cannot enjoy the lakefront if others can. That's why these individuals have put forth a constantly shifting array of pretexts.

The latest is that supposedly there are toddlers just free-roaming this lakefront park without parental supervision. So now the non-issue is the distance between the proposed path alignment(s) and the existing playground.

There is nothing unprecedented about routing a path like option 1 or 3 past a playground, even when there's an incline in the path. Madison has hundreds of parks, including many with both playgrounds and multi-use paths, sometimes in close proximity, sometimes with an incline in the path.

Here are a few examples:

* Paunack Park - Another part of the Lake Loop, with an incline in the path where it passes within ~20' of the playground. A side path, also used by bikes, passes within ~5'.

* Indian Hills Park - Bike traffic coming down the hill on Merrell Springs hill to connect to University Ave path passes within ~15' of the playground.

* Garner Park - Path heading down the hill goes right past playground equipment, <5' between playground edge and path.

* Wexford Park - Path inclined down to Stricker's Pond goes right past the playground at ~12'.

* Ontario Park - on Cap City Trail / Lake Loop, has a paved path down an incline past the playground, <20' apart.

* On the Walter St side of Olbrich Park, the sidewalk that is going to be turned into a multi-use path section of Lake Loop is within ~18' of another playground, yet no one has objected to it.

So how does this part of Olbrich Park compare?

There's currently something like 40'-60' between the playground and either of the paved thru-ways, which for one thing, is not convenient for folks large and small who come to the playground with a bike or stroller.

It also means that there is a LOT of space to work with. Even if alignment 1 or 3 halves the distance between the path and the playground, it would still be more than what's needed in similar settings elsewhere.

Precedent

If people on bikes—young and old, fast and slow, experienced and beginner—are suddenly not accepted as park users like anyone else, and are now exiled from these public spaces, that would be a radical change. Biking has long been a valid and celebrated usage of our parks. The last Ride the Drive was dedicated to highlighting that.

Even if we do exile bikes from the park, on the basis of a few individuals' traumatic past experiences with individual cyclists (and their sense of informal-but-exclusive ownership of the lakefront), that isn't fair to the wide variety of people whom options 2 and 4 would keep the park inaccessible to.

Further, we shouldn't be making this decision based on a fallacy that cyclists and other path users can't coexist. Try telling that to the hundreds, perhaps thousands of people who walk/roll on our multi-use paths alongside bikes every day, myself included.

I would welcome a wider path with dedicated room for pedestrians. I would look forward to making use of it myself. That's what it could mean to build for anticipated volume and usage.

Alignment also isn't everything. Once an overall alignment is selected, city staff are ready to make detailed adjustments. This could include things like pavement markings and crossing signs, as well as checking sightlines and adjusting the grade for safety. If speed is an issue, we could also texture the pavement, or even post a speed limit.

But if we set a precedent here, that these modes of transport must be segregated from each other for "safety", and that they require wholly separate sets of infrastructure, in the long run that's going to cause a lot more problems than it solves.

Ethics

I've also heard troubling suggestions that opponents of a multi-use path through the park have been able to draw out this process and bring forth increasingly impractical options because of their personal connections to Parks Commission members.

Since I don't know the precise extent of this dynamic at play, I considered not mentioning it. But to let cronyism sway the debate on this issue, without acknowledging its presence, would be to legitimize it.

I hope I can trust each of you to do the right thing. However, if there are friendships at stake in the decision before you, making it hard to decide impartially, then recusing/abstaining would be another responsible option.

I look forward to speaking to you on Wednesday, and hearing what you decide.

Thank you,

Nick Davies
3717 Richard St

PS. I also support the multi-use path down to Cottage Grove Rd. Walking this stretch is currently unpleasant and biking it is a no-go! A multi-use path here would be a big improvement, and it would connect forthcoming mixed-use development at the Cottage Grove Rd intersection to our path network. I reached out to Monona city council in support of a path on the western side, which could be even better, and I received a mix of responses.

From: Eleanor Conrad <conradeleanor@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 11, 2022 7:54 PM
To: Transportation Commission <TransportationCommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Atwood/Olbrich Path at Parks-Biking through Olbrich park

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Board of Park Commissioners,

I am writing to support Option 1 (and, secondarily, option 3) for a connective bike path on the south side of Atwood along Olbrich Park.

Olbrich Park is of special significance to me. I have so many memories from Olbrich Park. I grew up playing soccer, sledding, rolling down the hill, hanging out with friends at the play structure, and attending Lowell school events at Olbrich Park.

It would have been really nice to have been able to ride my bike safely to the park. For children coming from east of the park, Atwood can be a treacherous road to cross. Having a bike route that is separated from the noise, pollution, and speed of the street would have been so helpful.

My young nephew now lives east of the park, and my brother would love to be able to take him safely by bike to play on the hill. Having a bike path in the park would mean that my nephew would be able to (once he can bike alone) bike all the way to the park and to visit friends in the SASY neighborhood safely, without needing to cross Atwood at more dangerous intersections.

Please consider option 1 for Olbrich Park.
Thank you,

Eleanor

From: Holly Cohn <hollycohn1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2022 5:55 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Vote on Olbrich Park bike route

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Board of Parks Commissioners,

This email is in regards to the vote this Wednesday that will decide on the future of the bike route through Olbrich Park. Considering all of the uses that this park provides, Option 2 is the only one that honors the pedestrian use of the playgrounds and green areas. Option 1 and 3 will only serve the biking community and not those that spend time enjoying that park.

Fast bike traffic through a park makes no sense and I fear for the safety of children as well as adults. I have a family member who broke their arm when falling due to being hit by a fast moving cyclist on a bike pathway. Luckily, they didn't hurt themselves more.

I understand that the SASY transportation committee recommends option 2 as well. It seems that the cycling community was heavily notified about the survey and that the neighborhood park users were not as well informed that a survey was being taken.

With these thoughts in mind, I hope that you will consider favoring route 2.

Thank you,
Holly

From: Mary Cole <marycole4@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 12:27 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Olbrich Bike path

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

As a biker looking at the path options in an earlier survey, I immediately picked the option along the lakefront. I've since changed my mind after hearing from families that use that playground and park.

Please strongly consider any option that keeps bikes from cutting through the park.

Thanks -
Mary Cole

From: Amy Miller <ajmille2@uwalumni.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 7:13 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Olbrich Park

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

1507 Rutledge St.
April 13, 2022

Dear Park Commissioners,

I appreciate all the work that has been expended by City staff in planning the Atwood Avenue redesign. I spoke at the Transportation Committee meeting on March 18 and sent a follow up letter about my concerns about the overall project. After hearing the presentation, I became even more concerned about the implications of the proposed design.

I am responding as a neighborhood resident who bikes, walks, and runs through the portion of Olbrich Park that will be affected by the bike and pedestrian path proposals. I regularly run on the current pedestrian path out to the concrete pier and use the current paved road at the base of the hill to walk to Olbrich Garden and Garver. I also drive on Atwood and Monona Drive and use the Capital City bike trail for biking and walking.

I often compare Madison and Minneapolis and bemoan the lack of green space along the lakes here. Alas, we can't recreate our lake shores, but it makes it imperative to protect and preserve our current green space along the lakes. If one looks at the parks system along the lakes in Minneapolis, the placement of the bike paths are limited to the outer perimeter with the green space adjacent to the lakes preserved as spaces for people to gather. And the bike and pedestrian paths are separated.

As you know the East Side has limited green space. The addition of McPike Park has helped, but it is not a neighborhood park like Olbrich. Outside of the skate board board, festivals, and farmer's market, it is rarely used. There is no playground equipment there, even though many children live in the apartments across the street. On Saturday I biked through Brittingham Park and had to bike very carefully to avoid pedestrians, some of whom were not observant as they crossed the path from the Bay. Brittingham, while heavily used, does not have the multi-purpose uses of Olbrich where it really serves the residents of the neighborhood. The portion near the sledding hill is heavily used for informal softball games, soccer for little tykes, picnicking, kite flying, drumming circles, and people like myself who use it as a transportation route too.

I oppose the placement of a bike and pedestrian path close to the lake for safety and to preserve green space. We don't need to heighten usage of this neighborhood park by routing a bike path close to the lake. Kids and adults are unpredictable and adding a bike path increases the likelihood of mishaps or worse. It also reduces the green space and likely would make it difficult for kids soccer, kite flying, and softball to continue.

I also have concerns about the placement of a longer and wider impervious bike and pedestrian path along the Lake and the Creek. We need to protect our lakes, and we need to avoid the risk of run-off.

Of all the options that have been proposed so far, I favor maintaining the status quo with narrowing of the road and elimination of parking. This means there would not be a cleared path in the winter. I accept that in my runs and walks currently. If I find it too icy, then I use the road and circle around the Park. By maintaining the status quo, there would be no risk of collision between people heading to the restrooms, the canoes, or walking the path to the pier. The maximum amount of green space in the Park would be maintained.

As Renee Calloway, the City Pedestrian-Bike Administrator, stated in an interview for the Cap Times of March 24, 2019:

“Sometimes what’s best for a pedestrian and what’s best for a bicyclist, it’s not always the same thing, so you try to look at trade-offs. But if you think about cities that you like to visit, they’re ones that are walkable, where it feels comfortable walking places. The cities you want to go back to are the ones where you feel like there are other people out, you can walk to these different destinations and there are logical connections.”

Again, thank you for your work and I hope that you arrive at a plan that supports the neighborhood as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. The East Side is a very walkable community and that is a big reason that it is so appealing to many.

Many regards,

Amy Miller

From: mongkitos@gmail.com <mongkitos@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 8:50 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Olbrich park

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Hello my name is Elmore Lawson. I’m a father of five beautiful children. We live right on the top across the sledding hill. Olbrich park has been and still our neighborhood park. Our community is growing and we’re working in making our neighborhood a safe place for gathering and for children to have a safe place to play.

I'm also a drum circle facilitator throughout Wisconsin. I facilitate a weekly drum circle at Olbrich park every Sunday. We have about 15 hundred members in our drumming community. We all feel that our space at Olbrich park is sacred and that inclusion is our focus. I support option 2 and 4 because it priorities safety and security for all the park users. Please consider our request.

Thank you so much,
Elmore Lawson
3132 Lakeland Ave.
Madison, WI 53704

From: Ellen Zweibel <egzweibel@wisc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 8:56 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Bike Path in Olbrich Park

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

Dear Board of Park Commissioners,

I understand that you will vote tonight on plans for a bike path through Olbrich Park. I'm an avid biker (and long time member of the Bike Federation of Wisconsin) a runner, and a walker, and live about a mile and a half west of the park. Although I also live close to Yahara Park, Olbrich is unique for its size and varied opportunities.

I'm very happy to live in a city where biking is valued, and I was glad when the city improvised a bike lane along Monona Drive adjacent to the park. In my opinion, that, together with the bike path behind Olbrich Gardens, is where commuter and recreational biking belong. The lake front itself is already heavily used by pedestrians and as a meeting place, playground, and peaceful space. The sledding hill is, as far as I know, the only one of its kind in our part of town and is also heavily used. There's also a lot of traffic in and out of the bathrooms.

In addition to the unnecessary competition between bikes and feet that a bike path would create, the additional paving will change the pattern of runoff and impact the trees. The ground along the narrow path to the pier is often soggy and the path itself is icy in winter, suggesting that that part of the shore is a borderline wetland already and needs natural drainage.

Please keep Olbrich Park a park for all people and deny permission to build the bike path. Thanks for considering this message.

Sincerely,

Ellen Zweibel

--

William L. Kraushaar Professor of Astronomy & Physics Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor

From: Douglas Steege <dsteege@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 10:25 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Agenda item 70601, Atwood Avenue, Olbrich Park bike path.

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

We live two blocks from the Lakeland Avenue entrance into Olbrich Park and bicycle and walk the existing path multiple times weekly throughout the year. The connection of the path to Lakeland Avenue is perhaps the most critical element of the path design due to the highest volume of pedestrian and bicycle traffic, the addition of street automobile traffic on a 90 degree corner and finally a steep slope creating high speed bicycle traffic down into the park. This safety and access choke-point has not been addressed by any of the options under consideration but is critical to whichever option is chosen for the final plan to be constructed. Recently a plan was prepared by Lou Host-Jablonsky working with SASY neighborhood members that addresses the need to separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic at this location. We support this plan and ask that the commission make clear by resolution that a necessary component of Olbrich Path project include a separated bicycle and pedestrian path at the Lakeland Avenue entrance to the park, no matter which path option is selected. Thank you.

Douglas Steege
Kristine Euclide
2910 Lakeland Avenue
Madison WI 53704

From: Brian Mott <mottpiano@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2022 5:06 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Olbrich Park Plan

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I understand these proposed changes are being made at the instigation of Engineering, who should not be interfering with Parks Dept. authority in this case. We should not encourage high speed bicycle and e-bike traffic roaring past sledding hill. I support Plan 2, and don't want Lakeland extension plowed in winter

Thanks,
Brian Mott
1401 Frisch Rd. (Former Elmside Blvd. resident)

From: John Martin <regardingjohn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 14, 2022 7:33 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Olbrich park path options (input)

Caution: This email was sent from an external source. Avoid unknown links and attachments.

I'd like to voice support for Option 1 because it opens up more of the lakeshore to more people for more of the year.

We're lucky to have a beautiful lake, and should make it as accessible to as many as is practical. Routing pathways further away from the lake seems senseless.

A paved path is more accessible than a paved dead end, or the current a dirt path that closes the loop. That it also allows strollers to do a loop in the park without crossing Atwood is another bonus.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback, and for listening to the neighborhood on this subject.

Appreciatively,
John Martin
3150 Lindbergh st.