

From: [Paul Herr](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Answers to Questions Posed to Ben Zeller During the December 7th Meeting
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 5:29:49 PM

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Dear Transportation Committee Members,

I attended the December 7th planning meeting but left before the committee questioned Ben Zeller regarding the proposed Sauk Creek multi-use bike path (all age all ability path). I subsequently watched the video of the meeting (from time stamp 1:55:30 to 2:26:13) and noticed that Mr. Zeller had difficulty fielding some of the committee's questions. I am very knowledgeable about the greenway and can answer some of these questions.

Question 1: Would the City Engineering department need to modify grades in the greenway to accommodate residents with disabilities (to make it ADA compliant).

Answer: In general, Walnut Grove Park, a key destination for the proposed multi-use path, sits on top of a bluff. The Americans with Disabilities Act places states that the maximum grade for an ADA compliant path is 5%. My calculation from the creek bed directly to the top of the bluff showed a 17% grade which greatly exceeds the 5% grade limit.

On the other hand, if the multiuse path starts at the Tree Lane entrance to the greenway, it could run parallel to the bluff and gradually climb to the top at a 2% grade (33 ft of elevation rise over a span of 1,500 ft). This route would only require moderate grading of a few bumps that probably exceed the 5% limit.

Question 2: How wide is the greenway?

Answer: I measured the width of the greenway at nine locations equally spaced along the greenway at a 500-foot interval. I calculated an average width of 97 yards, and ranges from 51 yards to 196 yards. In golf terms, I could hit ball across the greenway with a pitching iron at seven of the nine locations (it is long and narrow).

Correction 1:

Mr. Zeller's first slide was titled "Sauk Creek Greenway" and indicated that it was 150 acres in size. This is incorrect because Mr. Zeller included residences within his definition of the greenway (my house is in the greenway according to Mr. Zeller's slide). The greenway is only 26 acres, not 150. I suggest that Mr. Zeller create a new term, like "the Sauk Creek planning area" as opposed to "greenway" because the "greenway" always referred to a 26-acre, City-owned parcel.

Correction 2:

Mr. Zeller made a statement that the greenway does not have any connections across or through it.

This is simply incorrect. There are, in fact, 2 miles of informal, heavily used trails crisscrossing the entire greenway that are used by hikers, bird watchers, dog walkers, skiers, kids playing in the woods and a few bikers. I mapped these trails with my Garmin GPS and would be happy to provide a copy to the transportation committee.

I volunteer to take Mr. Zeller, and anyone else who is interested, on a walk through the Sauk Creek Greenway, so everyone is on the same page regarding the basic layout, resources, and problem areas in the Greenway.

Warm Regards,

Paul Herr
608-576-7616

Cleveland, Julie

From: Craig Weinhold <cweinhold@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 11, 2023 2:59 PM
To: Plan Commission Comments
Subject: Agenda 13, 81028, West and Northeast Area Plans

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The petition against a Sauk Creek path ([Sauk Creek Greenway Bike Path Petition 12-06-23.pdf](#)) contains many factual errors and misrepresentations. The people behind the petition know their facts are wrong, yet presented the petition anyway.

Below is an Infographic of their petition and my objections:

The group insists on calling it a **bike path** ignoring the truth that paths are for everyone: walkers, joggers, wheelchair-users, young, old, birders, lovers, and anyone on wheels or feet.

Grossly exaggerated. Most tree removal will happen regardless for the creek maintenance road. A bike path will remove relatively few additional trees.

Grossly misleading. A path has no curb, gutters, or drains. Like a sidewalk, stormwater will run off and be absorbed within a few feet of where it falls.

Petition Against Proposed **Bike Path** in the Sauk Creek Greenway

We, the undersigned are in strong opposition to the construction of a bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway as proposed by the City of Madison because such a bike trail: (i) goes against the City's Stewardship/Green values by **reducing a Tree Canopy** and adding **impervious surface**; (ii) the 2015 Bike Plan said there is **NOT a bike network gap** in the neighborhood; (iii) the 2000 Bike Plan said **it is not a priority** since a Primary bike path on Westfield Road exists (now more safe with speed bumps) and a Secondary bike path on High Point Road are within 1000'+feet; (iv) it **does not have a connecting destination**. Therefore, the proposed bike path should be removed from the West Area Plan and SC Greenway City Engineering project.

WTF? A Sauk Creek path will immediately connect Old Sauk Rd bike lanes with Mineral Point Rd's widened sidewalk which connects to Junction Rd, Pleasant View, and the BRT terminal. Longer-term, WISDOT plans a Beltline overpass at Sauk Creek Park.

False. The 2015 plan's future map (p39) includes the path and the "major gaps" map (p49) lists "Lack of north-south route" between Mineral Point Rd and Old Sauk Rd.

Disingenuous. It said "3rd priority". Since the 2000 plan was drafted many of the other "3rd priority" paths have been completed (e.g., Wingra Creek, Blackhawk Park, Olbrich, Starkweather) and others are in process (e.g., Bassett to Broom).



If the infographic is missing or unviewable, here is a printed version:

claim: "Bike Path"

The group insists on calling it a bike path. They wilfully ignore that a path is for everyone: walkers, joggers, wheelchair-users, young, old, birders, lovers, and anyone on wheels or feet.

claim: "reduce a Tree Canopy"

Grossly exaggerated. Most tree removal will happen regardless for the creek maintenance road. A bike path will remove relatively few additional trees.

claim: "add impervious surfaces"

Grossly misleading. A path has no curb, gutters, or drains. Like a sidewalk, stormwater will run off and be absorbed within a few feet of where it falls.

claim: "2015 Bike plan said there is NOT a bike network gap"

False. The [2015 plan](#)'s future map (p39) includes the path and the "major gaps" map (p49) lists "Lack of north-south route" between Mineral Point Rd and Old Sauk Rd.

claim: "2000 Bike plan said it is not a priority"

Disingenuous. It said "3rd priority". Since the [2000 plan](#) was drafted many of the other "3rd priority" paths have been completed (e.g., Wingra Creek, Blackhawk Park, Olbrich, Starkweather) and others are in process (e.g., Bassett to Broom).

claim: "it does not have a connecting destination"

False False False! A Sauk Creek path will immediately connect Old Sauk Rd bike lanes with Mineral Point Rd's widened sidewalk which connects to Junction Rd, Pleasant View, and the BRT terminal. Longer-term, WiSDOT plans a Beltline overpass at Sauk Creek Park.

The group behind the petition in Internet posts and social media messages has wilfully and repeatedly tried to conflate the proposed path with the [Sauk Creek Greenway](#) project, claiming that bikes are the cause of tree removal. They know this isn't true. The greenway project will be removing hundreds, possibly thousands of trees regardless of whether a path is built.

Please support a path in the Sauk Creek Greenway, just like we have them in Pheasant Branch Creek, Yarmouth Greenway, Wingra & Starkweather Creeks, Chapel Hill Greenway, and many other places. Do not listen to the fear-mongering of the organization behind this petition.

-Craig Weinhold

From: jhirsch@chorus.net
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Conklin, Nikki](#)
Subject: Missing Middle
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 1:01:48 PM

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Chair Zellers and Commissioners:

The **Missing Middle** housing options are still missing from the West Area Plan!

Janet Hirsch
District 9

From: jhirsch@chorus.net
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Conklin, Nikki](#)
Subject: West Area Plan Public Engagement
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 12:50:28 PM

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Chair Zellers and Commissioners:

I am writing to express my concerns about the inadequate meetings that were held to obtain comments from the public regarding the West Area Plan.

February 2023:

- Two ZOOM meetings/ February 6th and 13th. Breakout sessions were included; no regrouping to share what others were saying.
- In-person meeting on February 9th was cancelled due to a snow storm.

March 2023

- In-person meeting at Memorial on March 9th had minimal attendance due to another snow storm. 20 people at most.

May 2023

- May 10, 2023 - Open house at Lussier Center. An inadequate space for this type of meeting. Well over 100 people in attendance, beyond the capacity of the room. Many left when they couldn't enter the room or hear/see what was being presented. There was no opportunity for audience members to ask questions of the presenters or make comments about the plan. Following the short presentation, the audience was invited to talk with staff individually. Again, more people left when they grew tired of waiting to speak to staff, or because they couldn't hear.

August 2023

- August 2, 2023 - Open house at Rennebohm Park. For many people, this was their first look at the plans. They expressed their disappointment that there was no presentation; this would have given them an understanding of what they were looking at. The plans were placed flat on picnic tables. The junior staff members were not able to answer many of the questions. Those who had attended prior meetings were surprised to see changes which were not included at the earlier meetings.

As the City develops plans for other areas of the City, I ask that we do a better job of involving the public and keeping them informed.

Janet Hirsch
District 9

From: [Timothy Burns](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#); [Slack, Kristen](#)
Subject: Planning Commission agenda for December 11, 2022, Item 13 81028, escalator clause
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 12:40:17 PM

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My name is Timothy Burns. My wife Beth Robinson and I live at 17 E Spyglass Ct, Madison.

I have reviewed the agenda item noted above together with the Staff memo of November 30.

Diane Sorenson has written an email to the Commission covering the issues on the escalator clause. Rather than reiterating her arguments opposing the Planning Department's request regarding the escalation clause, I join in the statements in that email.

I note that the Planning Staff wants certainty in knowing what to tell developers. In a neighborhood meeting with the developers some time ago, there were comments opposing the density of their proposed development. One of the members of the developer's group said something to the effect that they could put **70** units per acre in there if we want to (his emphasis).

He seemed certain that they could do that, even before the Planning Commission or Common Council had dealt with the issue. That level of certainty had to come from somewhere, and had to come before anyone in the neighborhood had any idea of the proposed development. That bothers me. Perhaps our voices are not being heard on our objections as the decisions have already been made. I'm just not sure what to think here.

My wife joins me on this email. Thank you for considering our opinions.

Timothy Burns
Beth Robinson

From: [Gwen Long](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Fwd: Before and after pictures of completed of Sauk Creek reconstruction.
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 12:13:36 PM
Attachments: [Doc3.docx](#)
[Greenway before-after.docx](#)

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Friends of Sauk Creek formed after seeing the destruction of the woods in the previous two Sauk Creek Reconstruction projects.

Attached are before and after aerial pictures of the deforestation of the woods after Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Sauk Creek Reconstruction in 2018 and 2019.

Phase 1 from Beltline to Tree Lane \$900,000 for 1 block

Phase 2 and Tree lane (the street curves) to High Point Road. Not sure the price tag on that. WSJ came out (too late) and wrote an article about the upset Oak Bridge community. They felt lied to by the City about how many trees would be removed during thier community input meetings. [article_1de8e9c6-7574-570e-a76a-3e3ed883fdbc.html](#). They are still upset by how the beautiful wooded area behind their homes has been turned into a weedy mess. We do not what that to happen to the rest of the Sauk Creekl Greenway.

Friends of Sauk Creek felt the Plan Commission last week totally dismissed, minimized, and marginalized our 12 or more neighbors who took the time to provide comments, wrote 77 letters to the commission, obtained 330 signatures on petitions opposing the bike path petitions. It is NOT easy to get anyone to come out and speak in front of a commission with a few days notice, We got 12 or more!! Then after we had left and could not respond, the Commission only seemed to listened to Ben Zellers.

This is not what we expected from Madison Government.

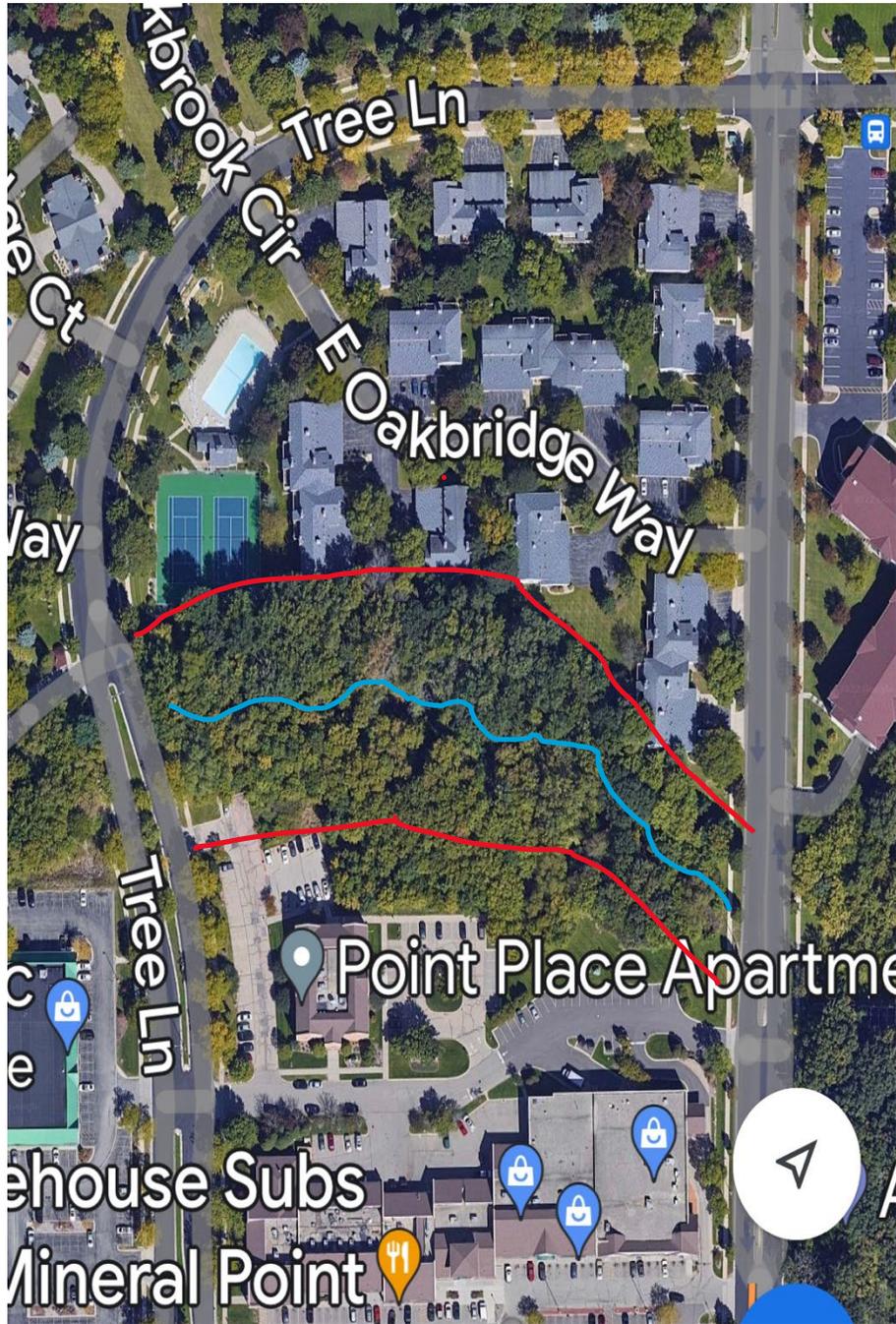
Only one commision member has even seen or walked the hilly, serene and meditaitive Sauk Creek Greenway.

It is a gem for Madison that should be preserved for so many many reasons. Bike path construction (that is redundant to the nearby safe bike paths and too steep for ADA compliance) following the greenway reconsrcution would just cause even more tree loss and destruction to this last island of native woodlands.

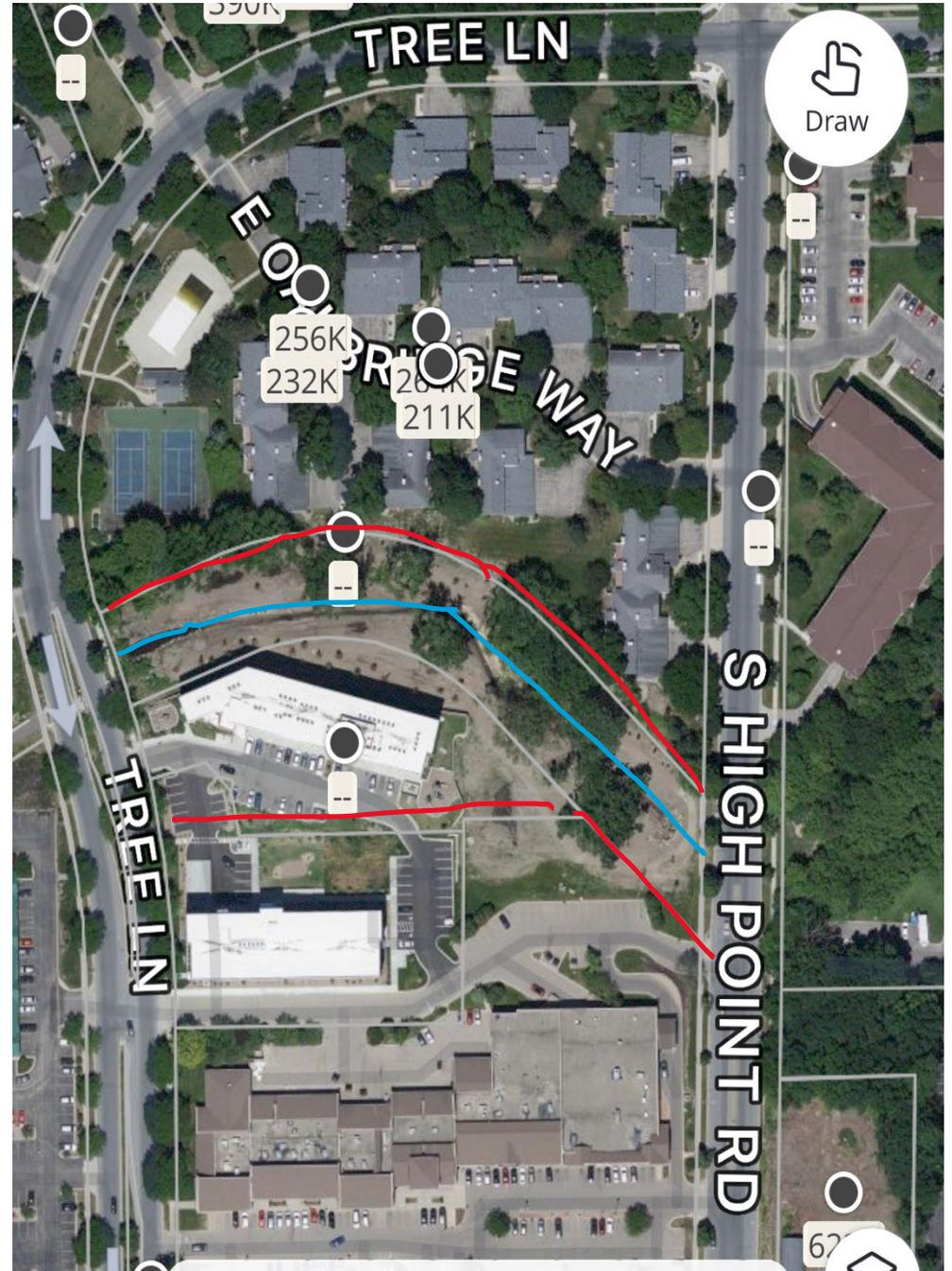
Do not support a bike path through the Sauk Creek Greenway.

Gwen Long
225 Sauk Creek Drive
Madison

BEFORE City Engineering "Restoration" Project
Tree Lane to High Point Rd



AFTER 2019 Project. 80% of trees removed and Creek
straightened. Many remaining trees are on private property.



Before City Engineering "restoration" project, Beltline to Tree Lane



AFTER 2018 City Engineering removed 90% of trees, installed a one block raised concrete "Bike Path to nowhere". Now area is full of weeds.



From: [Bill Connors](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Cc: [Ledell Zellers](#); sundevils98@yahoo.com; rasoldner@madison.k12.wi.us; [Field, Derek](#); [Duncan, John](#); klanespencer@gmail.com; mcsheppard@madisoncollege.edu; [Nicole Solheim](#); pwheck@gmail.com; [Figueroa Cole, Yvette](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Horvath, Linda](#); [Zellers, Benjamin](#)
Subject: Smart Growth's Comments on Proactive Rezoning of Highlands Neighborhood
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 9:26:04 AM

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Chair Zellers and Plan Commissioners:

Smart Growth Greater Madison opposes the proposed proactive rezoning of the Highlands neighborhood and respectfully recommends that this recommendation be removed from the draft of the West Area Plan. The ongoing review of the drafts of the West Area Plan and Northeast Area Plan are item 13 on your agenda for this evening's meeting, Legistar 81028.

Smart Growth does not oppose proactive rezoning to implement new plans when property owners are fully informed and do not object to the rezoning of their properties. However, Smart Growth strongly opposes proactive rezoning to implement new plans when a property owner objects to rezoning. Proactive rezoning in that situation is an abuse of Madison's property owners and residents.

Smart Growth opposed the first attempt to proactively rezone the Amazon distribution center after Amazon had invested heavily in the facility. That attempted rezoning clearly was a hostile action and would have been a disincentive to future business property investment anywhere in Madison if it had passed. Fortunately, it did not pass. The property owner did not object to the second proactive rezoning to a different zoning district than was proposed in the first attempt, and Smart Growth did not object to the second proactive rezoning.

Smart Growth also opposed the proposed proactive rezoning of properties on Merry St near the intersection with Winnebago St over the objection of the property owner. Fortunately, that attempted hostile proactive rezoning also was defeated.

In the current case, many residents of the Highland neighborhood have communicated to you that they object to rezoning their properties. It would establish a damaging precedent if the city government proactively rezoned their properties over their objection. No property investment in Madison would be safe from being undermined by proactive rezoning.

It is appalling to suggest that the property owners in this neighborhood could protect themselves from the harm of having their properties proactively rezoned by petitioning to be harmed by the establishment of a new local historic district and all of the onerous regulations that come with it. Offering the neighborhood property owners the option to be subject to the extra time, expense and loss of control of their properties that would result from being in a local historic district is not a reasonable mitigation of the hostile rezoning of their properties over their objections.

If the draft of the West Area Plan were changed to say that owners of properties in the Highland neighborhood are encouraged to apply for their properties to be rezoned from TR-R to some other residential zoning district, without any statement about proactive rezoning, those property owners who want to rezone their properties can take advantage of that plan language.

Please do not establish a terrible precedent by proactively rezoning the Highland neighborhood over the objection of the property owners. It would be extremely unwise and damaging to the city as a whole to establish such a precedent.

Bill Connors
Executive Director
Smart Growth Greater Madison, Inc.
608-228-5995 (mobile)
www.smartgrowthgreatermadison.org

25 W Main St - 5th Floor, Suite 33
Madison, WI 53703

From: [Jenn](#)
To: [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: West area plan meeting tonight 12/11/23
Date: Monday, December 11, 2023 10:00:57 AM

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Hello,

I am writing to voice my complete and unequivocal objection to the bike path(s) planned to go through the Sauk Creek greenway. The committee needs to understand the EXTREMELY negative consequences the bike path through the steep narrow greenway would have for the environment, animals, heat zone, and our neighborhood. It is NOT wanted by the west side community based on 77 letters of opposition sent in, 330 signed petitions opposing the bike path, and lack of support at all of the community meetings. The east-west crossing from Brule to Walnut Grove Park is way too steep for an "All Ages and Stages", disability accessible bike path.

Please remove the proposed bike path(s) through the Sauk Creek greenway from the west area plan.

Thank you,
Jennifer Rygiewicz
Sauk Creek resident

Sent from my Galaxy

From: [Fun to Build](#)
To: Ledell.Zellers@gmail.com; [Slack, Kristen](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Plan Commission Comments](#)
Subject: 12/11 Plan Commission Meeting, Item 81028
Date: Sunday, December 10, 2023 10:27:41 PM

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I would like to ask that these items are answered at the 12/11/2023 Plan Commission meeting:

- 1) Who has the authority to choose what properties are increased in their density designation in the West Area Plan?
- 2) Specifically who has decided and who has approved to increase these properties: a) St Thomas Aquinas's Catholic Parish to MR?, b) 6706 Old Sauk Rd east to Sauk Ridge Trail to LMR? c) Blue Ridge Pkwy to Cooper Lane Bike Path to LMR? and d) the area bound by Pebble Peach Dr and Oak Grove Dr and Harvest Hill Rd to LMR?
- 3) How can concerned neighbors and homeowners that could be greatly impacted by these designations have a say in the process?

Thank you, Gary Foster
6506 Old Sauk Rd