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To: [Transportation Commission](#); [Conklin, Nikki](#); [Mayor](#); [Wachter, Matthew](#); [Stouder, Heather](#); [Lynch, Thomas](#); [All Alders](#); [Tao, Yang](#)
Subject: Oppose Bike Path in Sauk Creek Greenway
Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 3:43:26 PM

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Dear Transportation Commissioners: You're being asked by city planners to approve a paved bike path in the endangered 26-acre Sauk Creek Greenway on Madison's far west side. **We urge you to visit and walk in the greenway before you decide.** Reading a staff report and looking at maps is not sufficient preparation for a consequential decision like this.

If you do your homework and make an on-site visit, you'll see that that the greenway is:

- An urban forest that helps mitigate the effects of climate change
- A unique ecosystem that is habitat for deer, foxes, coyotes, turkeys, birds, and wildflowers
- A channel for carrying away stormwater runoff from parking lots at commercial centers
- Vanishing green space in a city being rapidly built up and paved over
- A peaceful, natural oasis surrounded by neighborhoods, roads and businesses
- An outdoor classroom where children learn about nature.

Our earth is in crisis. Governments should be conserving as much green space and tree canopy as possible to mitigate the effects of climate change. But Madison city planners are promoting an idea first proposed in 1991—and rendered irrelevant by today's climate crisis.

Planners want to make this precious green space a transportation corridor by building a 1-mile asphalt bike path. The narrow, hilly greenway can accommodate a widened, restored creek bed and an unpaved road for future maintenance, but there's no room for a paved path. A 12-foot-wide shared-use path would add 63,360 square feet of impervious surface and contribute to current runoff problems. Connecting the path to existing bike infrastructure would be extremely costly and destructive.

Planners see the greenway as a mere corridor and are dismissive of residents' objections. Immediate neighbors have personal concerns about privacy and security. But they and hundreds of others cherish the greenway as an environmental asset that contributes to everyone's quality of life. Sauk Creek Greenway is one of precious few remaining natural spaces in Madison. It helps mitigate the effects of climate change and provides habitat for animals, birds and wildflowers.

Planners portray neighbors' objections as NIMBY-ism, not deep concern for a green

space that has benefits city wide. They dismiss the opinions of research scientists and experts such as Dr. Michael Notaro (Director of UW Center for Climatic Research) and George Meyer (former Secretary of Wisconsin DNR). They are determined to impose their own vision and priorities, while the rest of us are expected to pay higher property taxes and fees every year and cede control over our own neighborhoods.

We're urging you to consider the long-term effects of a paved, shared-use path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. It will be bad for the environment; it will reinforce residents' feelings of being marginalized and it will further erode their trust in city government.

Please exercise your independent judgment and stop this ill-advised plan.

Respectfully,

Ginny and Larry White
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