

From: [Vasanth Subramanian](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Cc: [Callaway, Renee](#); [Tishler, Bill](#)
Subject: Comments on TC agenda item 82194
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Dear Transportation Commission,

I am a regular, year-round user of the Madison shared-use paths both as a pedestrian (alone and with my daughter in a stroller) and cyclist (alone, for exercise and errands, and hopefully soon with a child trailer).

I would submit three thoughts on TC Agenda Item 82194 for your consideration:

- 1. Setting clear expectations on behavior, e.g. via simple signage, will help everyone use the paths safely and reduce context. These expectations should be set for all path users, not just cyclists or e-bike users.
 - All users should be reminded that being predictable and limiting group width makes conflicts / crashes / near-misses less likely. Parents should help their kids understand how to use the path safely and with courtesy for others; dogs should be kept on an appropriate leash. Predictability is a basic principle of driver's ed, and it applies to path behavior too.
 - "Advanced" users should be mindful of context - be courteous, slow down (or choose an alternate route) when the path is especially crowded, e.g. summer weekend afternoons, or by a school during dismissal. But in my experience, the vast majority of the time, the paths are not this crowded and all path users can be accommodated safely.
 - Clarifying certain norms, e.g. whether or not to use a bell or give audible warnings, would help. I have never heard that this practice should be limited to rural areas. This makes no sense to me: you give a warning to make your presence known and avoid a potential conflict, and this is usually more necessary in urban areas because more people are on the paths.
- 2. A heavy-handed regulatory / punitive approach is inappropriate for the paths. It will scare people off the paths needlessly and take away an ingredient of Madison's quality of life - our access to outdoor recreation. Path conflicts can be resolved person-to-person in the moment with courtesy.
 - Path users - including exercise cyclists "in lycra," or for that matter the kids playing catch on the SW path near Allied Drive - should not live in fear of fines or license points. Nor should City policy try to force legal path user - pedestrian or cyclist - off paths and onto streets.
 - An arbitrary numerical speed limit (below 20-25 mph) is inappropriate and unnecessary. Many bikes don't have speedometers. Most cyclists have a good sense of their ability and bike safely. Most paths are not crowded and can accommodate a variety of users and speeds.

- I am deeply concerned that enforcement will be inequitable - that it will fall hardest on lower-income residents and people of color, and that it will make all people feel unwelcome and unsafe biking on public paths through neighborhoods with more advantaged, well-connected residents.
- 3. Investing in infrastructure will do far more to improve path safety than signage or speed limits, because the primary danger to pedestrians and cyclists comes from cars, not each other. The University Bay Drive overpass is a huge improvement; more can be done. Some ideas just for the West Side:
 - Install flashing beacons on the SW path at Hammersley Rd, Verona Frontage Rd, Carling Dr and Lovell Ln; and on the Cannonball path at Post Rd.
 - Automate the flashing beacons on the SW path at Midvale, Odana and Glenway (an overpass at Midvale would be even better).
 - Work with Shorewood Hills and the UW to make the Blackhawk path into a continuous route to downtown. Install path instead of forcing cyclists out onto Locust Dr and Purdue St, straighten the sharp curve near University Station, and clarify wayfinding through the UW campus to reach University Ave.
 - Improve lighting at path intersections to make path users visible to drivers at night.

Thanks for your time and your consideration of this issue.

Vasanth Subramanian
Hill Farms resident

cc: Renee Callaway, Alder Tishler