

From: Debra Oakes <dkostlpark@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 3:37 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Agenda Item 84383: Oppose Any Bike Path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

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Hi, I'm writing to express my opposition to any bike path development in the Sauk Creek Greenway. The Sauk Creek area already has a depleted tree canopy, at only 16% (and the goal, city-wide is 40%). Cutting more trees down so people can have a short bike ride through what was once a thriving urban forest is absurd. It's bad for the people, trees and animals who live there.

Why are a few people who want to take a short a bike ride more important than the people, animals and trees that actually live in the Greenway?

There is no logical or moral reason for this monumental and tragic waste of money.

Debra Oakes
608.630.2605

From: Susan Bruegman <susan.bruegman@att.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 12:14 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Cc: Ben D. Williams <Benjamin.d.williams@gmail.com>; catie.mcdonald@gofarewell.com; Myadze, Charles <district18@cityofmadison.com>; Michelle Probst <mscarpance92@gmail.com>; Moira Harrington <mfharrington@wisc.edu>; Figueroa Cole, Yannette <district10@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Agenda Item 84383: Oppose Any Bike Path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

You don't often get email from susan.bruegman@att.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Commissioners,

Below is a letter signed by 43 residents opposing any bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway.

Sincerely,

Susan Bruegman

313 Sauk Creek Drive

Madison, Wisconsin 53717

Aug. 13, 2024

Dear Park Commissioners:

We thank you for your excellent work managing our parks with your thoughtful nature-endorsing and environment-sustaining policies in your [Land Management Plan](#), particularly the 2023 Parks and Open Spaces Plan.

We oppose an east-west bike path in Walnut Grove Park that will cross the Sauk Creek Greenway because bikers say it is unneeded and we oppose the environmental damage of a path and its high cost in a time of a \$22 million deficit that the mayor says may require park cutbacks or additional park fees. We urge you to remove the east-west bike path from the West Area Plan in your deliberations on Aug. 14.

In January, a prominent biker, Craig Weinhold who is a board member of Madison Bikes, told the city that bikers will not use the east-west path because it is inconvenient, and they prefer street bike lanes around the greenway. (See January 2024 letter to the city in the attachment.)

Given this fact, the cost of cutting down dozens of life-promoting trees, removing important Riparian vegetation and disrupting wildlife outweighs the benefits of unneeded bike paths. Endorsing the bike path this week will show us that you have not listened to us after the 2022 protests against another inappropriate bike path proposal.

Sauk Creek Greenway neighbors gained trust in the Board of Park Commissioners because you stopped that problematic mountain bike trail that was too disruptive in Walnut Grove Park. Your public engagement plan failed because we learned the bids for the project already were approved before the May 5, 2022, engagement meeting. We are impressed that you realized those issues after our protests and made an important decision to stop that project.

However, recently we were very concerned when we received a letter through a FOIA request in which Park sta\ members described us in May 2022 as “older folks” who “aren’t great or willing users of the internet.” It also said that we “disliked” children. Neither of these statements were correct. We were not allowed to ask as many questions and were muted during this online-only meeting. The technology, new to all of us in COVID time, was used to silence our concerns by parks employees and we wanted a more open online meeting. And any spin through our neighborhoods or the greenway shows we do not “dislike” children or grandchildren because we are out playing with them. Both characterizations of our neighbors were disrespectful, and we need to work harder to rebuild our relationship. See attached FOIA letter.

We never heard back from the parks sta\ when we notified them of our chagrin, so we request that you show us your good intent to work with us in partnership in the future by stopping this unneeded east-west bike path with a robust engagement process that avoids these incorrect assumptions about your supporters.

The Friends of Sauk Creek, the area environmental advocacy, has studied this east-west bike path and other city plans for two years. It finds that the city’s practice and plan to cut swaths of trees--- as it did in recent years behind the nearby Walgreens---does not adhere to your mission statement in the Parks and Open Spaces Plan 2023 calling for the city to “preserve and expand our forest resources through a well-planned and systematic approach to TREE MAINTENANCE, planting and natural area management.”

The current east-west proposal includes a route that has a 40-foot drop on the slope at the west end of the park where Walnut Grove Park meets city land managed by city engineers. You acknowledge in your plan that “(s)teep grades may make accessibility paths unfeasible in some area parks.”

In addition, neighborhood opposition in the form of petitions and letters to you in 2022 show that a bike path in the busy Walnut Grove Park would conflict with children playing soccer, using the playground equipment and elders and dog walkers often using the asphalt path. Your stakeholders vociferously opposed it, and we don’t see any reason since 2022 that would change our minds. We are concerned that the city is proposing a bike path again that you know your stakeholders oppose for many solid reasons.

The east-west path was not on city planning maps and was not under consideration until December 2023 when Robbie Webber, a Transportation Commissioner and Madison Bike board member, broached it and our alder proposed it in April 2024. Yet City planners admit in the recent Transportation Commission meeting that there is no link for this bike path to other paths in the city because of the significant problems facing a Beltline overpass. Despite compelling evidence of the lack of worthiness of this east-west bike path, Webber and others linked to the bike lobby voted to keep it in the West Area plan. We urge you not to make the mistake of taking advice from the bike lobby.

Many of us in the Sauk Creek neighborhood are bikers and our children and families are bikers. We support bicyclists. However, there is ample evidence that the Sauk Creek Greenway and Walnut Grove Park are not appropriate locations for an expensive, unneeded bike path when Tree Lane,

Westfield Road and High Point Road offer safe, convenient bike lanes that do not require any money from Parks or other city agencies to build and will not raise the ire of your constituents particularly those in the neighboring Tamarack Trails community that strongly opposed the 2022 mountain bike path in the park. Federal or state grants can pay for part of the costs of a bike path but in recent years the federal government requires co-pays of 50 percent of the cost from the city and the grant application needs community support.

The FOIA effort to gather additional FOIA information about the parks and city planning/engineering process shows us that for many years prior to 2022, your agency and other city agencies were considering bike paths and other environmentally detrimental actions without consulting with your taxpaying stakeholders. For example, employees discussed removing box elder trees in the area where your policies only target buckthorn and hackberry as invasives. Given the \$22 million deficit and potential cutbacks to the parks and added fees, we strongly urge you to stop that process of secretly planning for changes in the Sauk Creek Greenway and Walnut Grove Park if you want our support for financial turbulence.

If you approve the West Area Plan with an unneeded east-west bike path that even prominent bike leaders say is inconvenient, too steep and fraught with conflicts between bikers and dogwalkers/child hikers/elders, you will send us a signal that you do NOT want a robust engagement process with your neighbors and others about the use of park land and that you will not adhere to your Parks and Open Spaces Plan 2023 and your Land Development Plan.

Remove the east-west bike path from the West Area Plan before you send it back to the city council as a strong statement of your intent to manage the parks with your thoughtful guidelines, your keen attention to the city's deficit dilemma, and your growing relationship of trust with your stakeholders who cherish the environment more than unneeded bike paths.

Thank you,

Toni Brown

Judy Bluel

Anne Earl

Ellen and Tom Foley

Ben Bramble and Rebecca Bush

Benny, Jenny, Mona, and Jamie Iskandar

Lynn Hummel

Britta Wunderlich-Herr and Paul Herr

Jim and Gwen Long

John A Oaks

Rebecca Oakes

Stan and Zoe Richardson

Sharon Schoolmeesters

Rick and Sue Stark

Amy Kell

Mara Eisch

Grace Kwon

Barbara Hughes

Dilsha Happel

Janet Hirsch

George and Jane Meyer

Louie Cornelius and Pris Boroniec

Randy and Susan Bruegman

Rev & Mrs. Ted and Deb Drewson

Larry and Karen Sipovic

Michael Notaro and Dawn Marie Zimmerman

Larry and Ginny White

Nino Amato

ATTACHMENT OF LETTER FROM BIKERS SAYING THEY WILL NOT USE BIKE PATH

From: Craig Weinhold <cweinhold@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 2:22 PM
To: OBrien, Joanna
Cc: Callaway, Renee; Zellers, Benjamin
Subject: Re: Two Sauk Creek greenway questions

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Thanks Jojo, And thanks for posting the

I've been reaching out to some of the more level-headed voices in the Sauk Creek path kerfuffle. One is Tom Dosch (public comment on pg 72-76). Another is Simon Widstrand, (cap times letter-to-the-editor). It's worth reviewing their input.

One question that continually comes up is who and what the "All Ages and Abilities bike network" is for, especially in the context of Sauk Creek. I struggle to answer that. Few bikers will choose a Sauk Creek path over other routes since it'd be longer, add climbing, and have more bike/ped/dog conflicts. They'd only choose it for novelty and nature reasons. Timid bicyclists will use the path, but I don't see them venturing past Mineral Point Rd, Gammon, Beltline, or Old Sauk. (i.e., the "network" part is a bit hollow)

That doesn't mean a path isn't worthwhile, but the current messaging is unpersuasive. I'd recommend some adjustments:

1. Stress the need for east/west connectivity through the greenway, especially given WisDOT's plans for a bike/ped beltline bridge at Sauk Creek Park. Today, the east and west sides of the greenway may as well be on different planets.
2. Stress the value of the path as a neighborhood amenity. The path would look just like Fitchburg's many backyard paths (e.g., Oak Meadow Park, Seminole Glen, McKee Farms, Nannyberry, and Bluestem/Buttonbush). These carry far more local foot traffic than thru-bicyclists.

3. Explain why it's better to put a path through a greenway than along a street. E.g., terrace modification, tree loss, homeowner disruption, loss of parking, etc.
4. Talk about why High Point isn't on the All Ages and Abilities network. It is, after all, already a bike N/S artery with great path connectivity. It seems perfect for a path -- at least south of the greenway.

Best regards,

-Craig

On Mon, Jan 8, 2024 at 9:36?PM OBrien, Joanna <jobrien@cityofmadison.com> wrote:

Hi Craig –

Thanks for reaching out.

1. The maintenance access path and multi-use path can be the same path.
2. Yes, the City could use switchbacks to keep the path ADA compliant on steep slopes.

I'll be posting a web update with similar info soon.

Thanks,

Jojo

Jojo O'Brien

(she/her/hers) (what's this?)

ATTACHMENT OF LETTER FROM PARKS EMPLOYEE ABOUT OLDER RESIDENTS

From: [Stellies, Corey](#)
To: ["Tim Halbakken"](#)
Cc: [Mike Renyak](#)
Subject: RE: Aldo and Walnut Grove
Date: Friday, May 6, 2022 11:46:58 AM

Hey Tim-

Sorry I didn't get back to you yesterday, it was a pretty crazy time. The revised plans were very helpful, thank you. This project has become very contentious and controversial. I'm asking you to stop any work on the project, we are unsure if it will proceed and in what form.

Parks received a lot of negative comments from the Tamarack Trails Condo community immediately to the south of the park. These are older folks and based on my comments received have some misconceptions about trails and users in general. They aren't great or willing internet users, have trouble reading plans or diagrams, dislike kids and bikes in general, and to make matters worse someone apparently distributed information saying the trail would be open to motocross/dirt bikes. These are a minority of the people in the neighborhood but are very loud. It's going to take some time to get the correct information out there in order to proceed, if we can at all.

There was also a lot of concern about the shared use path and intersections. We may need to explore other options.

I will keep you updated when we know more.

Please also be aware that I'm expecting to be out on paternity leave beginning May 23rd until approx. July 15th. I may be reachable during this time but please don't count on it for at least the first couple weeks. You can work with Ann Freiwald in my absence.

From: Andrea K <askreft@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 12:15 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: fosc.msn@gmail.com

Subject: Agenda Item 84383: Oppose Any Bike Path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

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Hello Park Commission Leaders,

I am writing to share my opposition to reducing the greenspace that will be required for the installation of the bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway. Though it may seem a cool idea to provide cyclists and pedestrians access under a green canopy, the 5 min ride/10 min. walk in this small strip of land is not worth the intrusion to those non-human species who share this space and the meaning of where this land came from.

As the former school principal of Muir Elementary School, I more recently dug into the history of when our school was built and how our westside community has changed since the 1950's. Urban

sprawl and development starting from Camp Randall led to multiple subdivisions, malls/businesses and the need for more schools. This information became very important, as our K-5 students dug into the history of this Ho-Chunk Nation land, which was forcibly taken from this region in 1837. The students found that our school was built on this soil 131 years later ([Land Acknowledgement Ceremony](#)).

I believe that the takeover of this authentic greenspace is just repeating the injustice of basically all that is left that represents Ho-Chunk land and the deeper meaning of all the life found in woods like these. It displaces plants and animals (I saw a fox on Brule circle this week!) who share a home in our neighborhood that cannot be replaced.

Please reconsider the mission of your leaders to bring human's that 5-10 minutes of enjoyment by cutting through this space. Madison has plenty of safe cycling areas as the biking capital of WI. It was not meant for them and continues the land-grab of people like us that started in 1829.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kreft

10 Brule Circle

Madison, WI 53717

From: Jenny Iskandar <jennyiskandar@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 11:43 AM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Oppose West Area Plan -- August 14 BPC Meeting

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August 14, 2024

Dear Board of Park Commissioners

Do not allow city staff to destroy the only unmanicured natural area in the 9th district for an unneeded bike path. Instruct city planners to remove the proposed Sauk Creek Greenway east-west path from the west area plan.

The City of Madison's **Nature Everywhere Campaign** announced in March 2024, is designed to increase **equitable access to nature everywhere children live, learn and play** (see announcement below). **The Sauk Creek Greenway is the only natural area in the 9th district.** The greenway should be preserved to provide children who live, learn, and play in the neighborhoods surrounding the greenway with access to an unmanicured natural area to explore.

*The City of Madison is proud to announce it is one of nineteen communities in the country selected to join the inaugural **Nature Everywhere** Communities initiative. The initiative is designed to increase equitable access to nature everywhere children live, learn, and play. "This partnership embodies our city's commitment to sustainability and equity, recognizing that access to nature is not only a fundamental human right but also a cornerstone of public health and well-being," said City of Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway.*

We have lived in Sauk Creek for 25 years. Our children have fond memories of winter hikes looking for animal tracks, "texture walks" looking for signs of spring, and scurrying across downed trees in the summer to get across the creek. These are valuable experiences for children that will be lost if the bike lobby gets its way.

We also taught our children to bike in the neighborhood – which I have long described as a model neighborhood for learning how to bike. They start on cul-de-sacs, then transition onto sidewalks and very calm side streets where they learn to watch for driveways and maneuver street crossings. Then they move onto wide comfortable streets with painted bike lanes where they learn to watch for cars backing out of driveways, cross larger streets (initially walking their bikes), and maneuver around parked cars.

It should be noted that current city maps show all streets surrounding the Sauk Creek Greenway as low-stress bike routes and the West Area Plan includes additional bike infrastructure for Highpoint, Westfield and Tree Lane. There are many safe bike options for children and other inexperienced bikers in this neighborhood **but what they can't do on the streets surrounding the greenway is play in an unmanicured natural forest.**

Please instruct city planners to remove the unneeded Sauk Creek Greenway east-west path from the west area plan.

Sincerely,

Jenny and Benny Iskandar

From: jhirsch@chorus.net <jhirsch@chorus.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 12:01 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: West Area Plan

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Park Commissioners:

This evening there are two items (#12-84377 & #13-84383) regarding the future of the West Area on your agenda. I request that you **OPPOSE** them as presented.

I live one block from the hustle and bustle of Mineral Point Road. In the opposite direction, I am 1/2 block from the calming and serene environment of the **Sauk Creek Greenway**. *You can guess where my neighbors and I like to spend time.*

Let's put **Nature as a Priority** and minimize any disruption to the current atmosphere that is already a draw to this location. **Do NOT authorize any bike facilities in the greenway.**

Thank you.

Janet Hirsch

From: Cindy Hyman <cindyh123@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 1:17 PM
To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>
Subject: Agenda Item 84383: Oppose Any Bike Path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

[You don't often get email from cindyh123@icloud.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Please consider NOT putting in the east west bike path in the Sauk creek woods or any bike path through these woods. I live on Westfield across from Walnut Grove park and walk the park daily. I also walk the woods occasionally and forage for mushrooms. Please do not disrupt this peaceful oasis. There is plenty of street access accommodations for bikes already in place in this area of the city. It's not necessary to create a short cut. Make my opposition count. Thank you, Cindy cindyh123@icloud.com

Cindy

cindyh123@icloud.com

From: Julianne Zweifel <jezweifel@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 1:50 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

Cc: Friends of Sauk Creek <fosc.msn@gmail.com>

Subject: Agenda Item 84383: Oppose Any Bike Path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

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I oppose any bike path through the Sauk Creek Greenway

While cyclists may desire a path through the Sauk Creek Greenway, their desire is by no means the most important consideration. What's more important is the preservation of the Green Space, including the preservation of the mature trees and the nature space for wildlife.

Decreasing the tree canopy goes against the city-wide goal of 40% tree canopy. It also goes against efforts at reducing global warming. Trees reduce global warming by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in the trees and soil. Trees absorb carbon dioxide through photosynthesis and release oxygen into the atmosphere. A **mature tree** can absorb half a metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent in a single year. So, while some may argue that new trees can be planted, this is not a solution because immature trees will not be as helpful as mature trees.

It is foolish, backwards thinking to make some cyclists happy at the expense of the health of our environment!!!!!!

Please make the smart decision to NOT INSTALL ANY BIKE PATH INTO THE SAUK CREEK GREENWAY.

With great appreciation,

Julianne Zweifel

7838 Brule Street

Madison WI 53717

608-577-3326

From: Jeannie Roberts <jeannier65@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 2:27 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Agenda item 84383 Oppose any bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

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Dear Park Comissioners,

I am writing to object to inclusion of the east-west bike path in Sauk Creek Greenway for the following reasons:

- 1 Too many healthy trees will be removed and we can't afford to lose more canopy
- 2 The cost share will require more \$ from Madison taxpayers for an unnecessary bike trail

Jean Roberts

1004 Yale rd Madison,WI 53705

From: Rick Shih <rshih32@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, August 14, 2024 2:35 PM

To: Park Commission <pacommission@cityofmadison.com>

Subject: Agenda Item 84383: Oppose Any Bike Path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

You don't often get email from rshih32@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To Park Commissioners,

I am writing to object to the inclusion of the east-west bike path, or any bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway

I use the greenway every day, twice a day as I commute between geneva street and walnut grove park. Ultimately, this area has been a home to natural wildlife, as well as much needed green space that can never go away once a bike path is added in.

I just do not understand the need for a bike path at all. There is no one asking for it in the first place. There are no deadzones for bike commuting; and this will just be adding something that people do not want.

Please consider a plan that addresses the needs of this community and does not remove trees from the greenway.

All the best,

Rick Shih