

From: [Rita Hindin](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Comments on the West Area Plan
Date: Tuesday, September 10, 2024 6:04:48 PM
Attachments: [letter to city planners 9-10-24.docx](#)

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See attached.

Thank you.

Rita Hindin

I believe it was around 2013 that City Planning substantially consolidated and reduced the number of categories used to describe City streets/sub-neighborhoods. In creating the reduced number of categories City planners created the NMU category which they consistently refer to as the least heavily commercial of all the commercial designations. I reviewed what's in NMU/NMX. It includes "towing and wrecker service business." What?!!

I eventually clarified with one of the planners: There's a long-established towing and wrecking service business on Monroe St, just before Monroe meets Odana and Nakoma. The planners apparently didn't want that area to be designated anything higher than NMU. So, to balance existing, on-the-ground land use at the foot of Monroe St with the desire to have fewer categories, the planners included towing/wrecking in the NMX category.

I think that's an error in judgment. I certainly don't understand why towing/wrecking is categorized as P (permitted), not C (conditional) in NMU. Isn't any new "P" building that dots its i's and crosses its t's uncontested, whereas "C" invites additional input?

I'm sure it's the same in planning as in public health, the field I trained in: Once you have guidelines/rules, you try to minimize the number of exceptions. But there can be, harmful consequences to real live people, when the exception that truly does not fit the rule is squeezed in under the rule.

At this point, my best inference regarding how and why a portion of the northwest block of Whitney Way and Regent St is designated Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) in the West Plan is because of a similar misapplication of a principle/rule.

Three facts: 1) There are nine bus stops in the West Plan area. All except the Whitney-at-Regent stop are located at intersections that have long had commercial designation on at least one corner. 2) There's a solid rationale for Whitney Way being part of a North-South bus corridor. 3) Whitney Way near Regent goes through a fully developed, fully residential neighborhood with relatively modestly priced homes.

Is there some kind of planning rule, unwritten or written, that at least one corner of a bus stop has to have a commercial intersection? If that's the rule, then the Regent-Whitney intersection is the perfect example of why there are times when there ought to be an exception to the rule.

I assert that socioeconomic factors are probably impacting decisions about what to revise in Area Plans, notwithstanding the Planning Dept's substantial efforts to garner community input.

- Land use changes in the original West Area Plan included a proposed reduction in minimum lot size in the affluent Highlands sub-area. Those residents responded promptly, organized and, I believe, hired a lawyer. That proposed change was promptly deleted from the final version of the West Area Plan.

-The Regent- Whitney intersection includes corners that are part of three neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Association that includes the northwest block of the Regent-Whitney intersection went dormant in the past couple, few years. Both these factors probably made it harder for all of us residing nearby the proposed land use change to the northwest block of the Whitney-Regent intersection to raise a loud and clear voice. (And I also want to tacknowledge a positive outcome of this planning process: We will revitalize the Neighborhood Association that includes the northwest block of the Whitney-Regent intersection.)

A question: Has anyone reflected on how socioeconomic factors may have impacted input from persons residing in the area covered by the Northeast Plan?

Good luck going forward with this important and complicated work!

Rita Hindin
10 Merrill Crest Dr

From: [Madison](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: West Area Plan
Date: Thursday, September 12, 2024 8:04:22 AM

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To the Common Council,

As reflected in the phase 4 West Area Plan feedback, at least 37 residents requested retaining the Low Residential (LR) Land Use category at the northwest block of Whitney Way and Regent St. Only 3 people provided feedback that they would like to have Neighborhood Mixed Use at that location.

Many people have a misconception that LR means single family homes only, but it actually allows for 2-3 story multifamily buildings in locations such as this. The residents in this area aren't against more density in the location if the churches decided to add housing or sell to someone who wants to turn the lots into housing. LR is simply more consistent with what is presently in that area and will help maintain the aspects that make the area nice to live in. The houses in the area are small/modestly-sized houses that would be overshadowed by a 4-story building. LR allows for reasonable growth.

There is similarly a misconception that NMU means a coffee shop and market will be built. This is not the case, as is evidenced by mixed use buildings that have recently been built around the city. It is just as likely that commercial spaces would sit empty or would be office buildings. Commercial spaces aren't needed in this location due to existing proximity to commercial spaces at Old Middleton, Hilldale, and Odana.

This request to keep LR came from the people who would be directly impacted, the people who live in the specific community affected. One problem with the West Area Plan is that it is such a large area, and there were not concerted efforts by the city planners to work with the smaller communities (including the places of worship). In that way, the current plan likely does not reflect the needs and desires of the residents; it certainly doesn't with regard to the northwest block of Whitney Way and Regent St.

From: [Mark Shahan](#)
To: [All Alders](#)
Subject: Agenda item 17: Support West Area Plan & East-West Path through Sauk Creek Greenway
Date: Thursday, September 12, 2024 8:04:25 AM

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Dear Alders,

First a disclaimer. I am a board member of Madison Bikes and serve as the treasurer for the organizations. What I say next is in my official capacity for Madison Bikes.

At previous meetings, claims have been made that Madison Bikes is a part of Wisconsin Bike Fed or calling us the Bike Fed. Madison Bikes has never been nor is now a part of the Wisconsin Bike Fed. Nor is there any financial relationship between the two organizations to which I can attest as the treasurer of Madison Bikes. We are two independent organizations.

Madison Bikes is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization contrary to statements made at previous meetings that we are powerful organization and implying that we have paid staff. We have no paid staff and our board of directors is all volunteer.

What follows are my own thoughts based on my time serving on City of Madison transportation commissions and committees for 21 years. These thoughts are not the official position of Madison Bikes.

I urge you to maintain the East-West bike path in the Sauk Creek Greenway as part of the West Area Plan and to approve the West Area Plan.

The East-West path could be part of a low stress east-west corridor through the neighborhood that could link with a proposed overpass of the Beltline. The overpass of the Beltline has been on the Transportation Improvement Plan for ~25 years and is something for which I have advocated almost as long. Having the East-West corridor mapped could help the overpass of the Beltline score higher so that it can be built sooner rather than later.

A low stress East-West corridor between Old Sauk Road and Mineral Point Road is needed because Old Sauk and Mineral Point Roads are not low stress routes even taking into account when the widened sidewalk is completed on Mineral Point Road. I personally commuted to my job West of the Beltline on Old Sauk Road for two years. I am an avid cyclist who would be classified as a type A (assertive) cyclist, but even for me Old Sauk Road could be challenging. The interchange with the Beltline was particularly challenging with all of the ramps and a substandard width bike lane under the Beltline. A lower stress route with an overpass of the Beltline would have been heartily welcomed, especially, in inclement weather.

There have been many fantastical statements about the proposed paths in the Sauk Creek Greenway. They would cost millions of dollars; they will cause the removal of thousands of trees; they will increase crime; they will increase noise.

To my knowledge there has been no cost estimate for a proposed East-West connector path in the Sauk Creek Greenway so how can you say it is going to cost millions of dollars. My guess

is it would be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

It is also my understanding that the tree loss would not be driven by the any path if it were to be built. Most of the trees are being removed because they are in bad condition or are invasive species or would be removed for a maintenance path. So there is going to be a path through the greenway. The only question is whether the path will be paved as a multi-use path or left as a gravel road for maintenance work.

And don't think a gravel path will have more water infiltration than a paved path. Packed gravel paths are about as impervious as pavement but they require much more maintenance than paved paths. If you doubt, this ask the UW about the erosion problems with the Temin Path and the DNR about the erosion problems with the Military Ridge Trail. By contrast, I have never seen a washout of the SW Path.

As for crime, in studies that have been performed by the Rails to Trails Conservancy and others, paths/trails at a minimum don't increase crime and often decrease crime. While paths give more access to potential criminals they also increase access for police and more eyes of users to reduce anonymity that can foster crime.

As for noise, I haven't heard complaints about noise along the SW Path that gets considerably more use than an east-west path through the greenway will. This is despite the fact that the SW Path comes within 10 feet of peoples' property line in places.

In conclusion, keep the east-west path in the Plan. It might not be feasible but then again it might. Do the analysis to find out after the plan is completed

Sincerely,

Mark N. Shahan
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Madison, WI 53711-1338