



November , 2012

[Alder]

The proposed lighting for the Southwest Bike Path between Breese Terrace and the Beltline Highway, if built as presently designed, will create unsafe conditions for both bicyclists and other path users. City staff have attempted to resolve bike path user conflict and neighborhood concerns with a lighting design that will not satisfy either group, and can be expected to raise the level of hazard for nighttime users of the bike path.

My qualifications for providing an opinion on this situation include: serving as a member of the 2004 City committee to revise MGO10.085 (Outdoor Lighting); authoring section 4-13 (Lighting) of the WisDOT *Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Manual*; and since 1999 as Statewide Outreach Specialist on outdoor lighting for the UW-Cooperative Extension. My nationally recognized work has included conducting outdoor lighting demonstration projects; writing model outdoor lighting code and ordinance language; and facilitating the resolution of numerous conflicts around the state caused by outdoor lighting.

The present design for lighting the Southwest Bike Path aims to avoid spill light and glare to adjoining properties, but will result in pattern of abrupt transitions between lit and unlit sections of the path. This lack of lighting "uniformity" is more hazardous than if the path were left unlit, because the human eye has difficulty adjusting quickly to changes in illumination. Both bicyclists travelling at speed and pedestrians will be confronted by visual "dead zones", as they move from brightly lit to dark sections of the path, where objects, animals, intruders or other path users may not be seen.

Adequate bike path lighting uniformity can be achieved by either increasing pole height, decreasing pole spacing, using luminaires (light fixtures) that provide a wider photometric spread, or using alternatives to pole mounted luminaires (e.g. bollards or surface mount lighting). My understanding from City staff is that these alternatives are not being proposed due to project budget constraints.

I urge you to support reconsideration of the proposal to move the Southwest Bike Path lighting project forward. Instead, please support a lighting re-design that will create a safe nighttime biking environment, while minimizing the impact to the property owners adjoining the Southwest Bike Path.

Sincerely,

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