

Pien, Janet

From: Jeff [spitznick@tds.net]
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2012 9:31 PM
To: Pien, Janet
Subject: Bike path lighting

Since I will not be able to make it to the November 28th public hearing on this issue, I wanted to write you about my views on lighting the Southwest bike path.

I have been a bike commuter in Madison for the over 27 years that I have lived here. During that period, I have watched Madison's bike commuting options grow, thereby increasing the numbers of bike commuters. Needless to say, this has improved the health of the bike commuters, but it has also improved the health of our entire community, through reduction of pollution and greenhouse emissions, caused by cars.

The only thing that remains a challenge for Madison's bike commuters is safety. Car/bike accidents remain too frequent, and bike/pedestrian accidents also occur too often. Accordingly, given the laudable rise in bike commuting, but continuing safety concerns the City Council's role should be to continue to encourage bike commuting, while increasing safety.

Lighting of the Southwest bike path makes sense in achieving these twin goals. If you have not yet ridden your bike on that path at night, I encourage you to do so before you vote on this important issue. It will become very apparent to you, that even with good bike lights, you will not be able to see pedestrians or any other obstacle (e.g. a fallen branch) which may be on the path until it is possibly too late. I recently had that experience of having a near miss with a pedestrian dressed in black while riding with my bike lights at night. I was forced to swerve, and only barely missed the pedestrian and avoided falling myself. Had there been a bike coming the other way, there would certainly have been an accident with likely injuries.

I know that you have heard from many who live on the bike path about the environmental problems caused by lighting. My response to those concerns, in addition to the safety concerns mentioned above, is that we live in a city with hundreds, if not thousands of street lights. Moreover, this path used to be a train track, making far more noise and creating far more light when trains travelled that path. So, the neighbors' concerns about too much light, quite frankly, is selfish, and not really speaking to the common good.

In sum, I encourage you to approve the lighting proposal for the Southwest bike pat.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions,

Sincerely,

Jeff Spitzer-Resnick
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