

Pien, Janet

From: Matt LoConte [matt_loconte@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2012 4:39 PM
To: Pien, Janet; Tolley, Sabrina; ALL ALDERS
Subject: Re: SW Path Proposal

To whom it may concern.

I am a nearby resident and SW path user. I wish to express my sincere opposition to the lighting proposal. I concur with much of the criticisms already made by many others. However, I wish to emphasize the following issues. The reasoning in the letter announcing the upcoming hearing itself is incoherent. The letter mentions that the goals of the project are to increase use of the path and increase the "perception" of safety. Later in the letter it states the SW path is one of the most heavily traveled paths in Madison. Given much of the concern for the need for lighting is due to overcrowding why would a stated goal be to increase this overcrowding? Further, a goal of increasing the "perception" safety without actually demonstrating a need for, or the actual ability to increase safety is frankly pathetic.

I have seen the latest proposed fixture and it has little chance of actually increasing safety. The LED lights create tremendous glare, similar to HID headlamps on some vehicles, that is blinding and dangerous. This is the case as one is forced to look as far away from the light as possible and therefore one's eyes cannot be trained forward on the path itself. Secondly, as many have already mentioned, the spacing of the poles will mean large areas of darkness/shadowing impeding one's night vision and ability to see obstacles.

In response to some supporters of lighting (few of whom appear to have seen the lights themselves) who use anecdotal stories of nearly avoided accidents, I don't believe lighting will be as helpful as one would think. My most recent misses on the path occurred once at night, with my headlamp on and 3 oncoming bikers riding abreast of the path, who only moved to side once I was very close to them. This lack of courtesy would not be addressed by lights. The other episode occurred during daylight hours and was due to many joggers on the path leaving no room for a bike to pass and forcing me to slow and weave between them while other bikers approached me head on. Again, another issue that would not be addressed by lighting, but hopefully has been addressed by the creation of shoulders along the path.

In summary, the lighting project's stated goals don't make common sense. Goals that do make sense, ie increased safety, will not be accomplished. This is an unneeded extravagant expense in desperate fiscal times especially given there are so many other pressing needs that are not controversial where this money would be better spent. Economics alone should be enough to quit wasting energy and money on this project at this time. Waiting until better alternatives are available, the larger community is more supportive, and demonstrating that a lighting project would actually increase safety could all be accomplished by allowing the current project to die and taking the next couple of years to work through the issues. Given the only impetus appears to be some people think they would feel safer on the path with lighting there is no need to rush through this proposal prior to the end of the year.

I plan on attending the upcoming meeting, in order to voice my opinions as well.

Sincerely,
Matt LoConte
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