



April 23, 2018

To: Alder Rummel and Alder Verveer  
 From: The Marquette Neighborhood Association Board  
 RE: Blair-Nolen-Williamson-Wilson Proposal for Traffic Plan Improvements

Dear Alders:

On April 16th, the Marquette Neighborhood Association reviewed the work of our Traffic Committee on the Blair-Nolen-Williamson-Wilson Intersection upgrade. Our Board voted unanimously in support of their studied assessment of the revised plan.

This intersection is the gateway to our neighborhood's main street. We are an avid community of walkers, bikers and even unicyclists (!) who do our shopping, buy our goods and meet our neighbors on Williamson Street. While we appreciate that the Isthmus has traffic flow constraints, our Board must emphasize that traffic design must accommodate ALL modes of traffic, not just cars. The city's needs regarding automobile throughput does not trump city and neighborhood plans for sustainability, walkable density, neighborhood vibrancy and sustainability (Madison Sustainability Plan 2011 and Isthmus 2020, for example).

We are happy to have seen the design for this complicated intersection evolve. In our estimation, positive features of the current plan include:

- relocating vehicle access to Sardine and Machinery Row parking lot with a new left turn lane into Law Park from John Nolen westbound, east of Monona Terrace.
- separating bike lane from pedestrian sidewalk on Williamson Street in front of Machinery Row to Blount Street
- Adding a traffic light and signalized bike crossing at Williamson Street at Blount Street
- Increasing size of the waiting area for pedestrians and cyclists at southeast corner of intersection by Machinery Row
- Adding green space in front of Ruby Marie Hotel
- Narrowing Williamson Street Curbside lanes to 10 feet.

**However, we do not believe alterations to the plan have gone far enough to comply with the visions for the City of Madison and the Marquette Neighborhood in terms of safety, walkability and sustainability. Our neighborhood would like to the City adopt the following improvements:**

1. Based design on accurate data gathered for all modes (pedestrian, bike and motorized). Right now there is very little data on bicycles and pedestrians gathered and often peak counts for cars are the primary driver for design.
2. Prioritize "green streets" and green infrastructure principles in implementing this project.
3. Right-size the lanes on both John Nolen and Williamson by reducing number of lanes to two in each direction and each lane width to 10 feet.
  - a. Meets Madison Sustainability Plan goals and Isthmus 2020.
  - b. Increases space for Law Park east of Monona Terrace
  - c. Reduces costs of construction and maintenance by reducing pavement area
  - d. Simplifies any bike and pedestrian bridge construction by reducing its span.

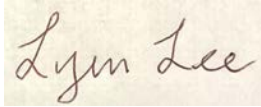
4. Eliminate the continuous outer east-bound lane on John Nolen.
  - a. Still allows for exit and merge lanes, but reduces weaving.
  - b. Space can be used to expand dock staging under Monona Terrace and widen Law Park east of Monona Terrace
  - c. Eliminates the feeder lane that pushes more traffic than necessary onto Williamson.
  - d. Reduces volume of through traffic turning onto Williamson, particularly during rush hour.
  
5. Replace the channelized east-bound right turn and “pork chop island” from John Nolen to Williamson with a DEDICATED right- angle turn lane.
  - a. Restores a true urban grid nature to the intersection of Blair and Williamson.
  - b. Increases safety and reduces crashes and conflicts for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle drivers by reducing speeds
  - c. Creates a “Main Street” setting for Williamson and East Wilson.
  - d. Shortens pedestrian and bicycle crossing distance.
  - e. Simplifies the intersection and provides the opportunity to save money in construction, maintenance and accidents.
  
6. Eliminate the east-bound left turn from South Blair to Williamson.
  - a. It’s so hazardous it’s a “once lifetime experience.”
  - b. Improves traffic flow of lanes from Nolen to Blair, and Blair to Nolen by removing obstructing left turners
  
7. Provide walk signals for each traffic signal cycle in place of current user-activated signal.
  - a. Conforms to standard urban-intersection design
  - b. Reduces conflict between pedestrians needing to push the button, and bikes who block them.
  
8. Narrow the median on Williamson to permit more uses on the south and north sides of the street.
  - a. Reduces crossing time for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle drivers.
  - b. Signals drivers that the Marquette neighborhood begins at Blair.
  - c. Creates space for “placemaking,” i.e. the separation of pedestrians walks and bike paths; space for trees and landscaping, space for sidewalk restaurants or outdoor seating on either side of the street, etc.
  
9. Narrow the east-bound lanes on East Wilson west of John Nolen.
  - a. Adds land to both sides of Wilson for sidewalk cafes, larger and healthier tree planting area, wider pedestrian sidewalks, more land for Wilson Green south of Wilson.
  - b. Reduces speed of vehicles and increases safety.

To quote one of the many resource guides (A Citizen's Guide to Better Streets, *Project for Public Spaces*) our able Traffic Committee references when reviewing city plans for our neighborhood:

*“If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.”*

We look forward to your assistance championing the Marquette Neighborhood’s point of view on this critical intersection as the plan is reviewed by the Common Council and other bodies in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn Lee". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Lynn Lee  
President  
Marquette Neighborhood Association

**Cc:** MNA Traffic Committee  
MNA Board Members  
SASY Board President – Brad Hinkfuss  
TLNA Board President – Patty Prime  
TLNA Traffic Committee Chair – Jonny Hunter