

August 24, 2018  
Thomas J. Zaremba  
126 North Franklin Avenue  
Madison, WI 53705

RE: Statement of Opposition to Requirement for New Sidewalks on Van Hise Avenue  
in the Shepard Terrace Street Resurfacing Project

I am a 39 year resident in the Van Hise Avenue, Chamberlain Avenue, Mason Street and Shepard Terrace neighborhood, recognized by the City of Madison as the Vanchamasshe neighborhood. I and several of my neighbors oppose the City's plan to force us to install and pay for new sidewalk extensions to create sidewalks the full length of the south side of Van Hise Avenue as part of the Shepard Terrace area street resurfacing project proposed for construction in 2019. We are opposed to the sidewalks because they are not needed, they will not enhance our neighborhood safety, they will be expensive, they will increase surface water runoff into the street, they will burden our residents with additional snow shoveling in the winter, they will negatively affect the look, usage and value of our home properties, and will not enhance access by any other city residents to our neighborhood or to other areas of the City. We see the proposed forced additional sidewalks as being costly and unneeded and ask that they be removed from the proposed project.

Our neighborhood was largely created as part of the Shepard Replat, in 1940. A few of the homes on Franklin Avenue were constructed in 1920, and before, but most were constructed after the Shepard replat, in the late 40's and early 50's. The three blocks involved in the street project, the 2800 blocks of Mason Street, Van Hise Avenue, and Chamberlain Avenue, all dead end into Shepard Terrace, and there is no street outlet from Shepard Terrace. Behind the homes built on or into the hill on the west side of Shepard Terrace are Hoyt School and Hoyt Park, and there is no area of the City you can reach by car in that direction without driving back out onto Franklin Avenue. Our streets are clearly posted "No Outlet" and they function as a cul de sac for our residents. No one drives or walks into our neighborhood unless they live here or are visiting here, and (except for Franklin Avenue) there is no access from our neighborhood streets to any other part of the City. By contrast, Franklin Avenue is a busy connecting street, and you can drive or walk from University Avenue on the north to Speedway many blocks to the south.

When the homes were built in the 1940s, only a few short sections of sidewalk were built on Van Hise Avenue and Mason Street. As far as we are aware, no one from the neighborhood asked the City to build more sidewalks. When the streets in our neighborhood were last resurfaced, about 1990, the City told us then that its policy was to not force new sidewalks on a neighborhood unless the majority of residents on a block wanted the sidewalks to be completed. The majority of residents then opposed additional sidewalks, and sidewalks were not added then.

Many of the current residents have lived here for many decades, have raised their children from infants to adults, and never felt the need for more sidewalks. Traffic is slow and considerate because, except for the Postal Service and occasional deliveries, most drivers live here. The streets are only one block long. Even on the streets with short sections of sidewalk, most residents walk in the street which, if it is resurfaced, is more than wide enough to safely accommodate vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Our children learned to ride their bicycles in the street, played kickball in the street, and our neighborhood regularly has celebrations in the street, often at the wide junction of Van Hise and Shepard Terrace, without needing to block off street traffic. We have a May Day celebration with a Maypole, Labor Day celebration, and have the longest running local 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. We obviously could not use the

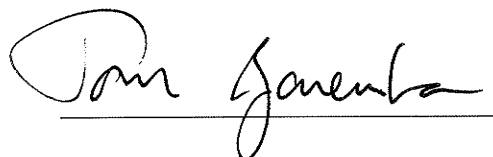
streets that way if they were through streets or busy streets, but since our streets are really cul de sacs, we can.

The proposed new sidewalks will require removal of a number of mature trees and pose a risk to other large trees not slated for removal but having roots likely to be affected when the sidewalk is installed immediately adjacent, like the huge oak at 2809 Van Hise. The sidewalks will disrupt areas currently grass or bushes that absorb rain and snow melt instead of having that run into the street. A conservative estimate of the area of additional sidewalk proposed for Van Hise Avenue is 200 square feet, equivalent to an area of 20 by 10, which would be hard surfaced concrete that will shed rain through the driveway aprons directly into the street. The new sidewalks will split existing green areas making the homes much closer to the public and reducing privacy. Several driveways, such as those for 126 N. Franklin Avenue and 2813 Van Hise, will become too short to park any vehicle off the street. Those homeowners will need to park in the street, which will make street snow removal more difficult in the winter.

The only persons likely to use the new sidewalks already live in our neighborhood, and don't want the new sidewalks. Unlike Franklin Avenue, there is no other part of the City reachable by walking into our neighborhood along the proposed new sidewalks. While there is a stairway on Shepard Terrace providing easement walking access to Hoyt Park, that concrete stairway has been deteriorating for decades, and the City has not proposed to improve it or even to repair it as part of this project. Children once used the stairway to access Hoyt School, but the Hoyt School building has not been used as a local public school since the 1970s, and it currently houses the MSCR administrative offices. School age children in our neighborhood have been bussed for decades to Midvale or Lincoln School as part of the Midvale Lincoln paired schools.

Forcing new sidewalks on Van Hise is not consistent with what the City is requiring on other street projects. The City recently announced its plans to withdraw the proposal to build a sidewalk along the south side of Chamberlain, but still plans to require additional sidewalk on Mason and Van Hise. We understand that Westmoreland Blvd area in Sunset Hills is being resurfaced, the City has not required new sidewalks to be installed or existing part sidewalks to be filled in, even though those streets in Sunset Hills actually connect to other areas in that neighborhood, and the sidewalks would be used by significant pedestrian traffic.

Since we will have to pay the costs for the new sidewalks, and there is no one else in the City that would benefit from their construction, we ask that the City not force them upon us over our objection.



Thomas J. Zaremba  
126 North Franklin Avenue, resident since 1979