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**To:** [Transportation Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Evers, Tag](#)  
**Subject:** Vilas Park Drive 4/21/21 Agenda Item #9  
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Dear Transportation Commission Members,

I am writing to support removing car traffic from Vilas Park Drive entirely--a strategy already proven by the Shared Streets program last year; During the Shared Streets Program, Vilas Park Drive transformed from a dangerous commuter cut-through to a vibrant multi-generational community gathering space for people with all abilities.

As a frequent visitor of Vilas Park, I saw a dramatic increase in its use during the Shared Streets program, including by some of the most marginalized and vulnerable members of our community such as people using canes, wheel chairs, walking sticks and walkers; little kids on bikes with training wheels, scooters, and skateboards; and people pushing babies or toddlers in strollers...all enjoying the Lake Wingra shoreline without the threat of a fast car or truck putting them off balance or simply creating a less enjoyable experience. Well into December, prior to it being opened up to motor-vehicle traffic again, it was still heavily used for respite and exercise.

Once the barriers were removed, it reverted back to a dangerous motor-vehicle cut-through, even with the new signs and lower speed limit. For example, the first week the barriers were removed, I saw a child-care center hurriedly turn around their red toddler pushcarts to get off the drive after a truck sped past them.

The Parks Department says they need to allow motor-vehicles on the drive for access to the shelter. However, I question this premise that motor-vehicle accessibility equates to people accessibility, as I witnessed Vilas Drive, motor-vehicle free, become more accessible. I suggest allowing motor-vehicle access to the shelter with a permit (such as for a group needing to set-up for a reservation or for handicap accessibility). There is parking within a walkable distance to the shelter area with the Shared Streets configuration, allowing easy access in all seasons from a car or truck.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Sally Lehner