

26 April 2002

Pedestrian-Bicycle-Motor Vehicle Commission
c/o David Dryer, City Traffic Engineering Division
P.O. Box 2986
Madison WI 53701-2986

RE: Suggestions for 2003 Pedestrian and Bicyclist Projects

The Pedestrian-Bicycle-Motor Vehicle Commission is looking for ideas on projects the City of Madison should undertake in 2003-2005 to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Schenk/Atwood/Starkweather/Yahara Neighborhood Association has solicited ideas from residents and offers the following for the committee's consideration:

Improved Landscaping along Bike Paths

Many of the bike paths located along developed areas have few trees and little vegetation. Examples include the Isthmus Bike Path along the east rail corridor and the path along John Nolen Drive. During the hot summer months, it becomes apparent that there are few trees to shade the paths, as well as the pedestrians, joggers, roller bladders and bicyclists using them. It is suggested that these areas be targeted for the planting of more trees and bushes.

For the Isthmus Bike Path along the east rail corridor, a canopy of trees along the Isthmus Bike Path would reward bicyclists and pedestrians with a shaded and more enjoyable, park-like route. With pending development of the east rail corridor, the additional trees would complement plans for Farwell Park, and anticipated residential and commercial growth in the immediate area.

The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District is completing its reconstruction of the sewer main. The MMSD Engineering Manager for the project, Bruce Borelli, acknowledged to one of our members that during the repaving and repair of Isthmus Bike Path, additional trees could be planted. MMSD would require a planting plan and funds. Perhaps the committee could work with MMSD to include improvements during bike path reconstruction this spring and summer.

Evaluate the Feasibility of a Lake Shore Path System

The recent debate over establishing a sailing center at Warner Park Beach was a reminder of the high value residents place on access to our beautiful lakes. It was also a reminder that while Madison counts the lakes as some of its greatest features, most of the lake shoreline is not accessible to the general public. Some cities like Minneapolis had the

foresight to set aside their shorelines for public use. Minneapolis also has a beautiful system of roads and bike paths around its Chain of Lakes as part of its Grand Rounds Scenic Byway. Lake Geneva in southeastern Wisconsin has a shoreline trail which follows the 25-mile route around its circumference. This path is not publicly owned but managed by lakeshore residents for use by the public.

It was an injustice to residents of Madison and other communities surrounding our lakes that the shorelines of our lakes were not set aside for public use. As the county population grows, public access to the lakeshore is being further reduced as small cottages along Lake Monona and Lake Mendota are replaced with large homes obscuring public view of the lakes.

We would like to suggest that the commission evaluate the feasibility of establishing additional paths along the shoreline of Madison's lakes. These paths would be gift to future residents and provide many benefits for generations to come. They would expand access to the lakes, provide more opportunities to enjoy of our lakes, and encourage appreciation for our natural resources. They would provide a quiet, beautiful and relaxing alternative to existing bike routes which often follow busy streets. If a system of shoreline paths were established, it would surely become another well known asset of Madison and provide a boost for tourism. If interconnected between Lake Monona and Lake Mendota, the system could allow residents to travel between the lakes unhindered by vehicle traffic. These paths would encourage bicycling, walking and other alternatives to cars since it would reward pedestrians with a quiet, beautiful and enjoyable route around the community.

As an example of a lakeshore path system, enclosed is a modified version of the city's existing bike path plan showing a sample bike route along Lake Monona between Law Park and Olbrich Park. Perhaps the commission could use this small section of lakeshore as a pilot study to determine the feasibility and hurdles to establishing lakeshore paths in Madison.

Questions the commission may wish to address to evaluate the feasibility of establishing lakeshore bike paths may be the following:

- Would city residents support establishing a system of shoreline paths?
- Since this project would expand access to outdoor resources to the general public, would it qualify for state grant programs for setting aside natural areas and establishing parks such as the Stewardship Fund, Aids for Acquisition and Development of Local Parks, or Urban Green Space Fund.
- What would be estimated project costs including the costs to obtain easements or property along the shoreline?
- What steps would be needed to obtain the support and participation of shoreline property owners?

Create Ped-Bike Paths along Starkweather Creek

The Schenk-Atwood-Starkweather-Worthington Park Neighborhood Plan, adopted March 7, 2000 by the Madison Common Council, identifies as one of the neighborhood's ongoing priority issues:

"Enhance Starkweather Creek as a recreational asset. The east and west branches of Starkweather Creek flow southerly through the neighborhood. The east and west branches, which merge south of Milwaukee Street near O.B. Sherry Park, enter Lake Monona at Olbrich Park. Land acquisition, natural landscaping,...and pedestrian and other trail development along the shores would provide greater recreational opportunities for neighborhood residents."

We would like to see a greenway - or green corridor - of paths or trails to form a walking or biking loop from Lake Monona at Olbrich Park to O.B. Sherry Park and beyond.

In addition to recreational use, bicyclists could use the path along the Starkweather Creek for commuting if it is linked into a network of eastside paths, including the path out past ShopKo to MATC.

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On behalf of the residents of our neighborhood, thank you for the opportunity to offer ideas to improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists in Madison. Should you have any questions concerning our comments, don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Mark McFadden, President
SASYNA

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cc: Alder Judy Olson
Mayor Sue Bauman

Figure 1 - Example Shoreline Bike Path

