



Re: May 12, 2021 Meeting, Agenda Item 3

Dear Transportation Commission Members:

For May 12's agenda item 3, we ask that you add a repurposed bike lane along Monroe Street, between Woodrow and the Wingra Park entrance (highlighted in orange, Figure 1), to the list for 2021's Shared Streets Program as initially proposed in the 2020 City of Madison Department of Transportation Annual Report. If you choose not to, we ask you to make a motion to have City Transportation staff evaluate alternative methods to enhance this particular section of the "Lake Wingra Loop" and report back with interim and long-term options.

Current Conditions

The Friends of Lake Wingra supports safe and enjoyable pedestrian and bicycle recreational access around Lake Wingra. It enhances visitors' ability to appreciate its natural beauty and unique landscape. This section between Woodrow and Wingra Park is a problematic gap, and unfortunately, Monroe Street reconstruction did not resolve this issue.

In current conditions, bicyclists and pedestrians share the narrow sidewalk with a narrow terrace or they use Monroe St. The 4-lane street does not have a designated bike lane and allows for on-street parking. See Figure 2 for a visual.

As Figure 3 shows, crossing traffic to go southbound on Monroe Street to access Wingra Park also does not have an enhanced pedestrian crossing experience. This decreases its safety and ease of use for a heavily trafficked street. Then again, if a user chose to bike southbound along Monroe Street (toward Wingra Park), they would have to cross four lanes of traffic to access Wingra Park as shown in Figure 4. No enhanced crossing or crosswalk exists. It does not provide users with safe or easy crossing access. You would have to continue biking to cross at Commonwealth, turn around, return



Figure 1: Plan View of Monroe St Gap



Figure 2: Monroe St Gap Cross Section



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northbound to the Wingra Park entrance or continue further down Monroe Street through a commercial center with more parking and traffic to enter on Knickerbocker. As a parent, can you imagine the comfort level of navigating this with your children?

Discussion & Next Steps

We understand that it's a balance to juggle multi-modal transportation flow and that the City commits resources to continue improving on existing conditions. We acknowledge and appreciate that. We also acknowledge that this current set up does not prioritize pedestrian or bicyclist experience and caters to vehicular traffic. This conflicts with the City of Madison's Comprehensive Plan Strategy 8 under Land Use and Transportation: Expand and improve the city's pedestrian and bicycle networks to enable safe and convenient active transportation.

This portion of the lake loop gets a lot of pedestrian and bicycle use, especially from Dudgeon Monroe and Vilas residents, and children and families on the south side of Monroe Street. They are generally trying to access Lake Wingra either to get to Vilas where the zoo, park, and playgrounds are, or to Wingra Park, its playground or boathouse for camps and other summer activities. This use also includes general pedestrians and bicyclists looping around Lake Wingra.

From strategic planning surveys, we know that some of the most treasured activities at this unique nature-retreat lake are enjoying its natural scenery and running, biking and walking around the lake. Filling this current transportation gap by providing a repurposed bike lane along Monroe Street between Woodrow and Wingra Park will provide innumerable benefits to our community and encourage the low impact culture of the lake.

If this cannot be added to a 2021 Shared Streets Program, we ask the Transportation Commission to make a motion to have City Transportation staff evaluate alternative methods to enhance this particular section of the "Lake Wingra Loop" and report back with interim and long-term options.

We appreciate your attention and thank you for your service on the Transportation Commission.

Sincerely,



Casey Hanson
Executive Director of Friends of Lake Wingra



Figure 3: Woodrow Crossing



Figure 4: Wingra Park Crossing