

March 15, 2011

Dear Members of the Menasha Common Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Menasha Sustainability Board in support of the City's efforts to create a connected network of walking and biking facilities. Research from many different organizations highlights the many benefits of these connected facilities. While housing values are still slow to rebound, reports have shown that in cities across the US, properties in walkable/bikable neighborhoods are worth more than similar homes in less-walkable neighborhoods. Rebecca Ryan, president of next Generation Consulting, Madison, WI has conducted preference surveys of young professionals in Wisconsin and throughout the US. With over 10,000 completed surveys, she has found that this economically important group is actively seeking communities where they can walk and bike. They are selectively purchasing homes in neighborhoods that support this lifestyle. AARP has also found in its survey work that retirees are looking for communities where they can access a variety of destinations on foot or by bike. By creating a walking/biking network in the City of Menasha, we are supporting future property values and making our community attractive to a broad segment of potential residents. This also encourages existing residents to stay in the city.

Concerns over public health have led to efforts on many fronts to get people to increase their physical activity. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the United States' largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and healthcare. The Foundation has committed over \$500 million dollars to address obesity in the U.S. with special emphasis on childhood obesity. Their research has shown that access to safe walking and biking facilities can play a major role in addressing this critical issue. Making Menasha a walkable/bikeable city will help our residents adopt a healthy lifestyle.

The City of Menasha offers its residents many valuable services including an award-winning library, beautiful parks, a public swimming pool and quality retail establishments. The Sustainability Board believes that all residents should have access to these places including those who are unable to drive a car, especially our youth. Not creating a walking/biking network throughout the city limits these people from fully utilizing public facilities and supporting local businesses. Being connected helps to create a sense of community and makes Menasha a great place to live and work. We encourage you to require all new development to be connected to this walking/biking network, that you enforce the construction of all designated routes in existing development and that when possible; you retrofit older areas so that they too are part of this network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Stoll".

Linda Stoll

Chair, Menasha Sustainability Board