

# • SAVE Jackson Park Drive Information Sheet •

*Prepared by Neighbors Against Closing Jackson Park Drive*

**MAINTAIN:**

## **Safety Access Value Equity**

The County is proposing a plan that would close a large portion of Jackson Park Drive (JPD) to **ALL vehicular traffic**, create cul-de-sacs, and replace the middle portion of JPD between the cul-de-sacs with an asphalt bike path.

If implemented, any such plan would significantly impact **SAFETY** by decreasing and eliminating **ACCESS** for emergency vehicles, such as fire, paramedics/ambulances, law enforcement, and the Jackson Park Neighborhood Patrol.

The proposed plan could decrease property **VALUE**, and will clearly decrease equity of **ACCESS** for residents and visitors. While the “plan” has been touted as saving money in place of simply repaving the road as promised several years ago, in the end, we believe this plan is not cost effective and maintenance/oversight will still be required — maybe even more. In times of dire budgetary constraints, shouldn't the county be focusing on current operational needs as well as deferred maintenance?

Based on the vague and incomplete information the County shared with some neighbors, many residents think that this is a “done deal” and that they have no say on whether the proposed project will move forward. The proposed project is already in the design phase, it has been in the works for years without resident input or involvement from the beginning. We have been told that there has been no County Board approval or funding for the construction portion at this point. However, the hardworking residents of Jackson Park Drive neighborhood need to take immediate action to prevent this from happening.

This same project was previously proposed for several stretches of West Allis parkway, and that community strongly and successfully rejected those projects after a one-year trial of restricting vehicles from those stretches. Some of the same officials working on the current project were part of the West Allis project.

Consider the negative and potentially life threatening consequences with a closure of Jackson Park Drive to vehicles. This would be a complete alteration of the unique design of this beautiful neighborhood. The proposed path is of limited use compared with the sacrifices the JPD neighborhood would make.

This is a stable and relatively problem-free neighborhood. Why fix what's not broken! We put **SAFETY** first!

Under the proposed changes, Safety, Access, Value and Equity are negatively impacted.



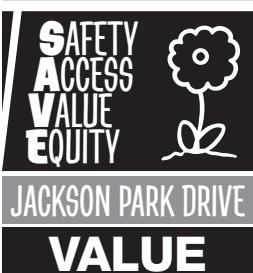
**JACKSON PARK DRIVE**



- ▶ Emergency vehicles will not be able patrol/travel Jackson Park Drive to maintain personal safety, provide emergency medical and firefighting services, especially for those with Jackson Park Drive addresses. In situations where seconds matter, any confusion or delay relative to access and addresses can result in lives being lost. Delays and rerouting can be devastating — quick response can mean the difference between life and death.
- ▶ Fire trucks will not be able to use the bike path in an emergency. While the planners have told us they could do so, this information is not consistent with MFD practice, or the professional experience of firefighters living in the neighborhood.
- ▶ There have been numerous safety concerns on Jackson Park Drive, which have required the Sheriff's Department, the MPD, and the MFD/Paramedics to access the often-dangerous river and woods.
- ▶ Police officers who have patrolled JPD tell us that the closed/un-patrollable area would become a haven for homeless camps in the woods along the river. This has been true in other parts of the city.
- ▶ Women and young girls in particular are fearful of the woods due to being chased or followed in the past by various individuals loitering or living there. How will neighbors, law enforcement, etc., monitor for, or intervene in such attacks? Police officers familiar with the project stated that foot patrols are highly unlikely.
- ▶ The proposed model will not allow maintaining safe distances while dog walking on a path. Owners know their dogs best as to when greater separation is necessary to avoid potential attacks — of other dogs or people. The current road allows for such separation. Additionally, walking on grass is not a physical option for some individuals.
- ▶ Homeowners will no longer be able to drive around the Jackson Park Drive side to investigate suspicious activity from the safety of their vehicle.
- ▶ Often people jog or ride bikes on JPD and have someone they know (family/friend) follow in a car for safety purposes. This happens often, especially with children. No longer will we be able to do that.



- ▶ ADA accessibility — It is not always possible to install wheelchair ramps/lifts at the “backyards” of our homes. The County would be removing homeowners’ ability to make ADA accommodations to the front and back of their homes. Where else in Milwaukee are homeowners unable to fully access the front of their homes? For many of us, Andover Road is our backyard, serving more like an alley. It would likely become a new thoroughfare.
- ▶ Has a thorough traffic impact study been conducted and when will it be shared? If not, will there be one and can neighbors be part of its development by sharing valuable insight and observations on neighborhood traffic patterns? Without JPD, traffic, reckless driving, and parking will increase on adjacent roads including Cleveland Avenue (especially during drop-off and pick-up at Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School), Andover Road, Jerelyn Place, 51st Street, and 53rd Street.
- ▶ Not only would many neighbors have to haul all leaves/yard waste to the backs of their homes, but there would be double the leaves on Andover Road, which is already a dangerous “slalom” course of moving cars, parked cars, walkers, dog walkers, runners, bikers, etc.



- ▶ Jackson Park Drive is integral to the unique charm of the entire Jackson Park neighborhood. It is a major reason people have always sought homes in the area. We feel that eliminating access — and potentially requiring address changes will decrease property values.
- ▶ When you buy a home, it is a reasonable expectation that the road in front of your home, will remain there. If the proposed plan goes through, it will no longer represent what the homeowners purchased.
- ▶ What about the many properties with long cement and paved walks up to their front doors that would be rendered useless with no aesthetic purpose. We have not heard the County address this issue. Who will repay us for our large investment in this landscaping? **We have recently been told by County project leader Tony Giron that the County could take away up to 20 feet of our properties along Jackson Park Drive for this project. This is area that property owners have maintained and landscaped for decades.**



- ▶ It is unfair that our neighborhood has been singled out for this supposed money-saving solution for not paving the street, which had been budgeted years ago. Is the repaving of JPD included the County's capital plan and are funds actually set aside for this purpose? Why is this short, random stretch of bike path necessary when it would connect to no other existing bike path?
- ▶ Some portions of Jackson Park Drive are getting a new road and not having access completely removed. Some portions of the Drive are not getting a new road and are having their front access completely removed and having it replaced with a bike path. Some portions of Jackson Park Drive are having cul-de-sacs forced on them, which they do not want. How did the County go about making these choices?
- ▶ The printed information that has been circulated by the County has not been available in languages other than English. It should be. It was also not mailed or delivered to all impacted residents including quite a few on Jackson Park Drive.

## COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The stakeholders have not been universally informed and what has been shared is vague and inconsistent.

- ▶ The information from the County has been vague and incomplete.
- ▶ Neighbors have not been asked to provide input. This should have occurred in advance of the design work phase funds being approved in the County budget over a year ago.
- ▶ So-called “letters” (fliers) in our doors (not mailed) to attend an “open house” is a haphazard way to communicate. Case in fact: some JPD residents have received NO notification.
- ▶ Some County employees have been rude to neighbors who do not agree with the project. They have also made derogatory comments to neighbors about other residents. That’s unprofessional, and disrespectful.

## MORE UNKNOWNNS

- ▶ Is there statutory authority for this project? If so, what is it? Does this set a precedent for taking roads away in front of peoples’ homes?
- ▶ Will there be a need for those with a Jackson Park Drive address to change addresses?
  - This will be a major inconvenience and significant cost to homeowners.
  - How will GPS services take visitors and delivery drivers to our homes?
- ▶ What are the costs to homeowners?

Residents have spent tens of thousands of dollars on landscaping, including long walkways to the road. How will they be reimbursed for changes that would again have to be made to their yards?
- ▶ Projects of this magnitude require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). This is a study that encompasses all issues “significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.” Such a study should be made available to residents for their comments and concerns, as per the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act., and given weight in any design process. Is there an EIS for this project, and if so, were any residents, law enforcement, emergency services, public entities, businesses and schools consulted? If not, will there be one?
- ▶ Will neighbors be required to give up easements?
  - **We have recently been told by County project leader Tony Giron that the County could take away up to 20 feet of our properties along Jackson Park Drive for this project. This is area that property owners have maintained and landscaped for decades.**
- ▶ What is the exact timeline for the proposed project?
- ▶ The proposed area for the stretch of the trail has always been and continues to be an environmentally fragile area. How will the proposed project impact this?
- ▶ What about storm sewer/water issues in connection with our basements?
- ▶ When trails run through neighborhoods, these are some of the issues that must be addressed, and yet, have not been.
  - Overall safety, especially for our children
  - Crime
  - Sexual assault/activity
  - Homeless camps
  - Public drinking
  - Illegal drug use/overdoses
  - Loitering
  - Littering
- ▶ The proposed path will be of limited use in the winter. Will snow removal on the path be a priority?
- ▶ How will the residents with homes on the “closed road” portion of JPD access the path from their homes — especially during winter months?
- ▶ Will there be lights added? We have never had or needed streetlights.
- ▶ Will the County Supervisor who owns property within the proposed boundaries of the proposed project be required to recuse himself on any upcoming County Board votes on this matter?
- ▶ Who is the decision maker? It appears to be a matter for the County Board, but who else will have to weigh in? County Executive? City of Milwaukee Fire and Police? Our Milwaukee Alderman? City Department of Public Works? MMSD? City Assessor? The State’s Department of Transportation? Have any of these entities been involved in the discussion?
- ▶ Lastly, how will neighbors be able to give input BEFORE any project moves forward? There must be a series of publicly noticed informational sessions that allows questions and answers. Currently we are not aware that any such session will be scheduled. There was only an “open house” scheduled, and repeated requests by neighbors for the exact format/agenda were not answered. It was clear at this “open house” that neighbors overwhelmingly disapproved of the proposed project.

In summation, there are far too many unknowns.

The County has not done appropriate, inclusive outreach. Information that has been shared is incomplete and at times, inconsistent. Residents have not been afforded a chance to ask questions and get answers as a group in a documented, public setting — not a “come and go” open house. And lastly, it’s all for a disconnected bike path, less than a mile long that connects to no other path.

The County representatives going door-to-door have told many neighbors that we should like the proposed plan because it achieves the County’s goal of reducing concrete spaces. Does this achieve our neighborhood goal of maintaining safety, access, value, and equity?

**PLEASE HELP US SAVE JACKSON PARK DRIVE!**

For more information, email [savejpd@gmail.com](mailto:savejpd@gmail.com).

