

March 8, 2024

TO: Saint Paul Planning Commission

FROM: Jimmy Shoemaker, Transportation Planner, Department of Public Works

SUBJECT: Bicycle Plan Update | Transportation Committee resolution re: Maryland Avenue, Johnson Pkwy to Ruth St

Introduction

Since Fall 2021, Public Works staff have been working to update the Saint Paul Bicycle Plan (Plan). The planning process is nearing completion and staff presented a final version of the Plan to Transportation Committee on February 26, 2024. This meeting resulted in a resolution of support from Transportation Committee, with a requested change to the Plan.

This memo discusses the change to the Plan requested by the Transportation Committee, the staff recommendation, and how those changes would be reflected in a final version of the Plan adopted by City Council.

Background

The current Bicycle Plan (adopted in 2015) includes the planned bicycle network – where the city and partners plan to build bikeways in the future to connect destinations. Updating the planned bicycle network was a major focus of the overall Bicycle Plan update process. See Figure 1 below that shows the northeast corner of Saint Paul and the portion of Maryland Avenue discussed in this memo.

As recently as the December 2023 draft of the updated Bicycle Plan, a section of Maryland Avenue between Johnson Parkway and Ruth Street was identified for a planned separated bikeway (Figure 2). Based on feedback from the Public Hearing on February 2, and after discussions with Ramsey County and the Purple Line BRT design team, staff recommended prioritizing the limited space on Maryland for future transit. As a result, the February 2024 revision to the draft planned bicycle network *did not* recommend adding a separated bikeway on this segment of Maryland (Figure 3). Ultimately, the February 2024 planned bicycle network represents no change in recommendations from the current Bicycle Plan (adopted 2015).

Figure 1. Current planned bicycle network (adopted 2015) does not include a bikeway on Maryland

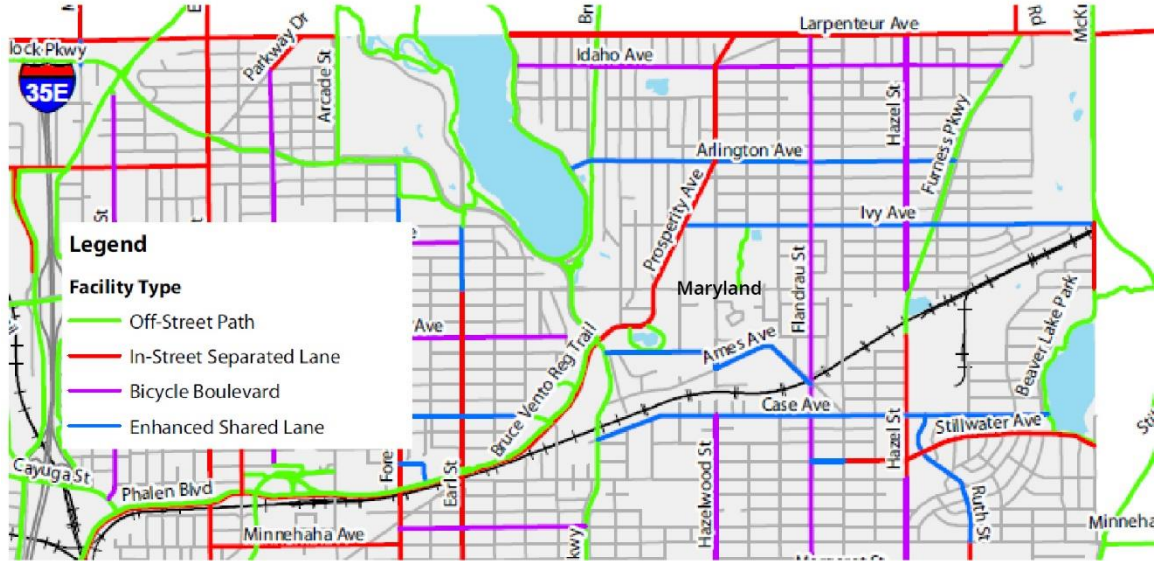


Figure 2. December 2023 draft planned network includes a separated bikeway on Maryland

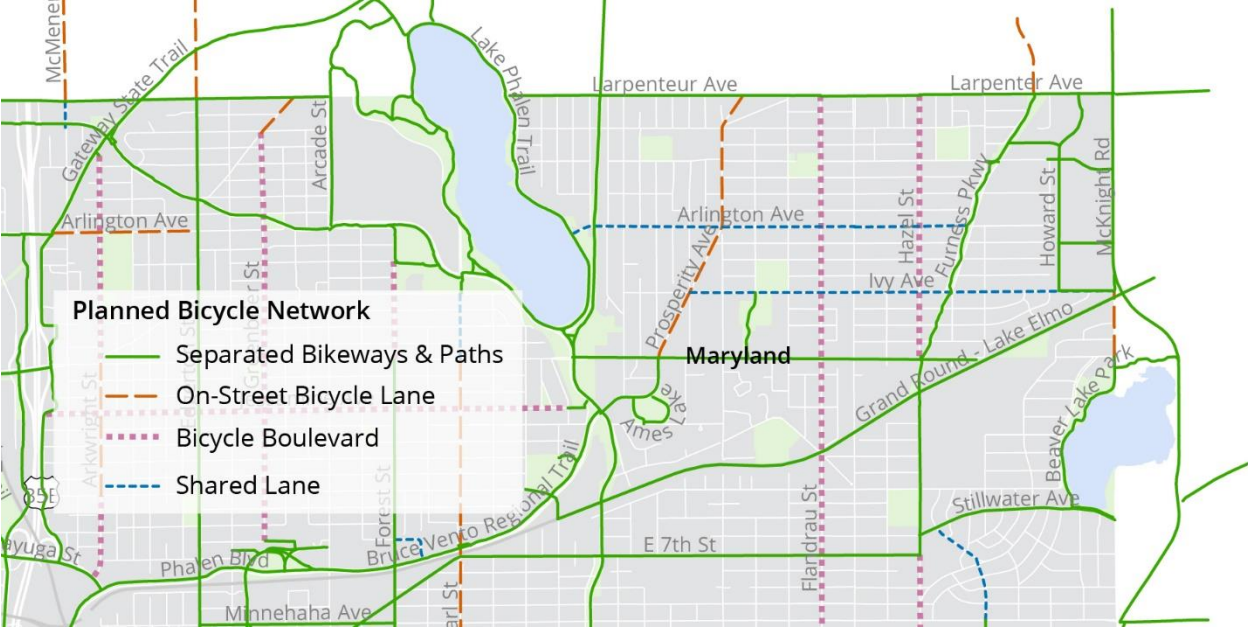
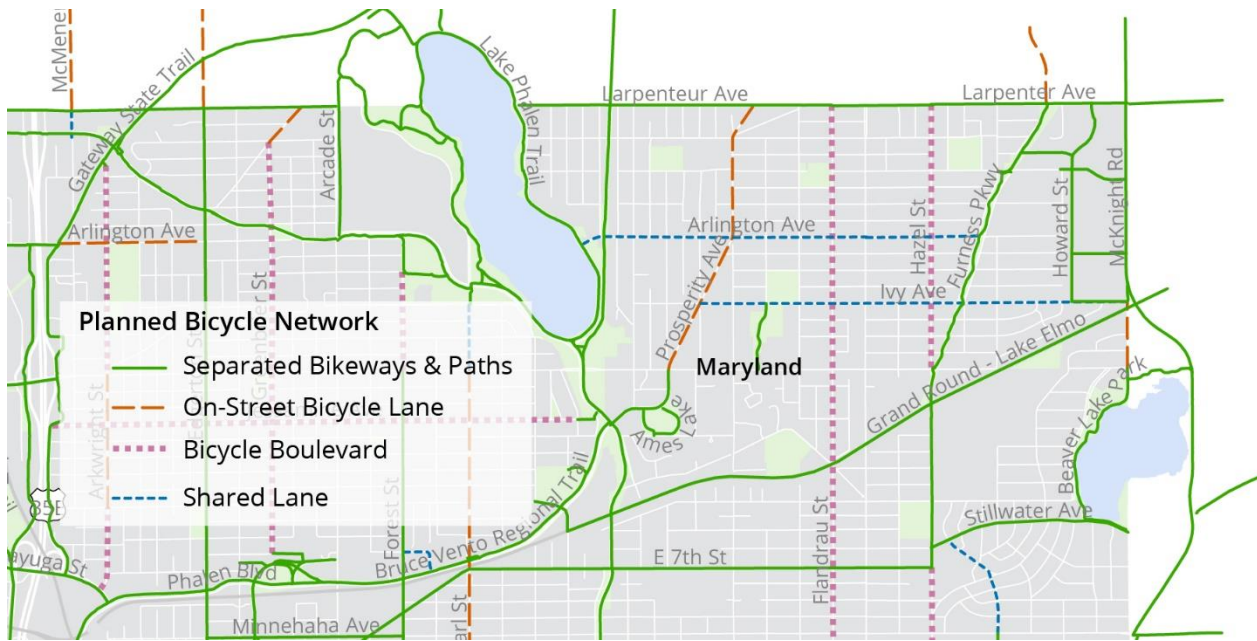
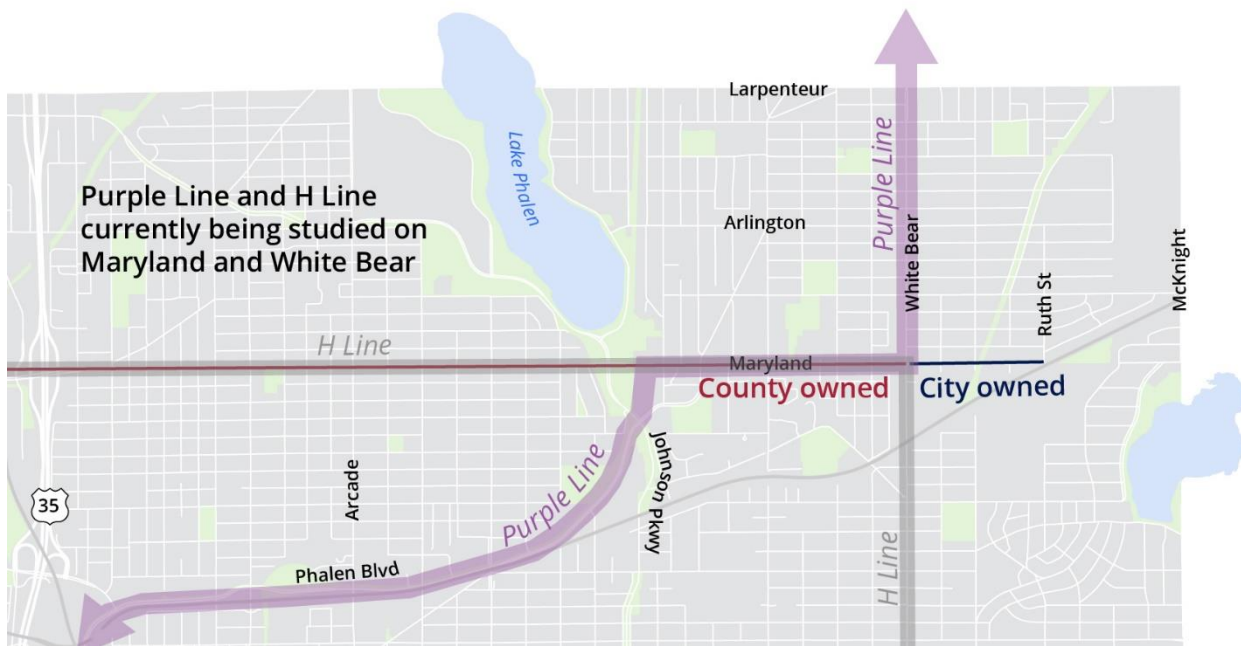


Figure 3. February 2024 planned network does not include a separated bikeway on Maryland



A portion of Maryland between Johnson Parkway and Ruth Street is currently being studied by Metro Transit for the future Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that runs between downtown Saint Paul and Maplewood. H Line Arterial BRT is also being studied to run between Sun Ray Center and Downtown Minneapolis. Maryland in this area of the city is partially owned by the City of Saint Paul and partially owned by Ramsey County. See Figure 4 below.

Figure 4. Planned transitways and road ownership



February 26 Transportation Committee

On February 26, 2024, staff presented changes to the final version of the Bicycle Plan to Transportation Committee, including the staff recommendation to not add this portion of Maryland to the planned bicycle network. After discussion, Committee members recommended updating the resolution to Planning Commission with the following language (in **bold** below).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul Planning Commission recommends to the Mayor and City Council adoption of the updated Saint Paul Bicycle Plan dated February 23, 2024, as an addendum to the Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan, with one additional change:

- 1. A new line be added to the Planned Bicycle Network map on Maryland Avenue east of Johnson Parkway to Ruth Street, in a manner that recognizes and prioritizes transit planning processes in that segment; and**

City of Saint Paul staff recommendation

Public Works staff have reviewed the updated resolution recommended by the Transportation Committee on February 26. After consideration, staff commits to the recommendation that the portion of Maryland Ave between Johnson Pkwy and Ruth St NOT include a planned bikeway of any kind. Right-of-way space along this portion of Maryland is highly constrained, and a high quality bikeway (one that meets best practices and includes separation) would be difficult to accommodate with other uses being considered on the corridor.

Updates to Bicycle Plan that consider the updated resolution

It is important to understand changes to the Bicycle Plan should the City Council formally adopt Transportation Committee's February 26 updated resolution. The Plan would include changes to text and maps as a result of this updated resolution.

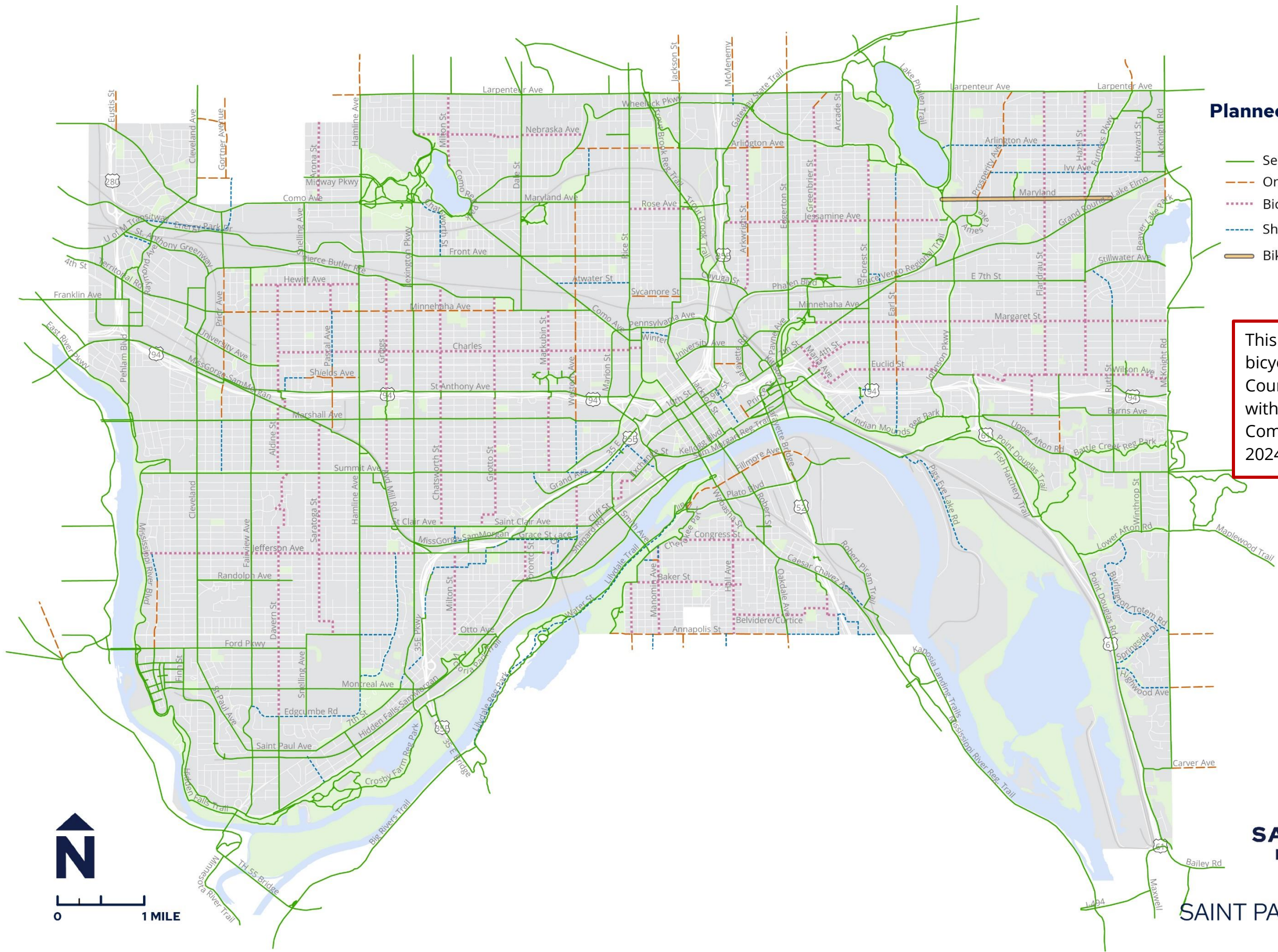
- On the Planned Bicycle Network map, a line on Maryland would be added between Johnson Pkwy and Ruth St. The corresponding line in the map legend would read "bikeway for further study". This would be the only such line on the planned network map. There are several additional maps in the Plan that show the planned bicycle network. This same section of Maryland would be included in all the maps featuring the planned network. Please see the map attached at the end of this document.
- In the Plan document, this section of Maryland would be acknowledged as unique and called out specifically. Language would be added on page 52 of the Plan dated February 23, 2024 that reads:

Maryland Avenue between Johnson Parkway and Ruth Street is shown in the planned bicycle network as "bikeway for further study". Currently, a portion of this section of Maryland between Johnson and White Bear Avenue is being considered for future high frequency transit service by the Purple Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and H Line Arterial BRT. At the time of adoption of this Bicycle Plan, it is not known what the future of design will look like for this portion of Maryland, if and how space for people biking can be accommodated, and the timing of implementation of any future designs. Future coordination is needed between the City, Metro Transit, and Ramsey County, the agency who owns and designs Maryland between Johnson and White Bear Avenue.

Next steps

The planning process is nearing completion. The following highlights significant final steps:

- March 15, 2024 Planning Commission meeting
 - Staff will present changes to the Bicycle Plan as a result of the February 2, 2024 Public Hearing
 - Staff will ask Planning Commission to provide a recommendation to City Council for adoption. The updated resolution from February 26 Transportation Committee regarding the addition of Maryland will be discussed
- March or April 2024 City Council meeting (date TBD)
 - Staff will present the Bicycle Plan for adoption, along with a summary of the planning process, engagement, and recommendations
 - A second public hearing is planned as part of the City Council adoption of the Bicycle Plan



Planned Bicycle Network

- Separated Bikeways & Paths
- - - On-Street Bicycle Lane
- . . . Bicycle Boulevard
- - - Shared Lane
- Bikeway for further study

This map shows the planned bicycle network, should City Council adopt the Bicycle Plan with Transportation Committee's February 26, 2024 updated resolution.



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