

Summary of Public Comments

February 2, 2024 Planning Commission Public Hearing
Saint Paul Bicycle Plan Update

This document provides a brief staff summary of the major themes received from public comment as part of the February 2, 2024 public hearing on the Saint Paul Bicycle Plan update.

For a full inventory of all public comment, please see:

- Email and U.S. Mail Public Comment Received – Package 1
- Email and U.S. Mail Public Comment Received – Package 2
- Saint Paul Planning Commission Meeting Minutes – February 2, 2024

This summary was created on February 20, 2024 by:

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Public hearing advertisement and notice

The public hearing was duly noticed both online and in the Pioneer Press. The notices directed the public to comment via U.S. Mail and email, or in person at the February 2 public hearing at City Hall.

Local newspapers published articles about the Bicycle Plan update, which included notice of the February 2 public hearing and instructions to provide comment:

- Pioneer Press, *Friday hearing scheduled on St. Paul's plan for more off-street bike trails*, January 29, 2024
- Star Tribune, *What to know about St. Paul's plan to add 119 miles of bikeways*, January 31, 2024
- Highland Villager, *Saint Paul rolls out final draft of updated citywide bicycle plan*, January 9, 2024

Amount and timing of comment

Two hundred and fifteen (215) comments were received via email to bikes@stpaul.gov. One (1) comment was received via U.S. Mail, mailed to the office of Jimmy Shoemaker, Bicycle Plan Update project manager.

The first comment was received via email on January 9, 2024. The last comments were received on the day of public hearing closing on February 5, 2024.

This document also summarizes 35 comments received in-person at the Planning Commission meeting on February 2, 2024.

Summary of feedback received

Most comments received came from individual community members and households. However, there were several comments received on behalf of organizations:

- St Anthony Park Community Council (District 12)
- Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
- Sierra Club North Star Chapter
- Highland District Council (District 15)
- Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition
- Ramsey County
- W 7th/Fort Road Federation (District 9)
- Sustain Saint Paul

Staff read through all written and verbal comment received as part of the public hearing. The following represents themes that occurred frequently in the comments. It is not intended to be a complete detail and analysis of all comments. For a full transcript of comments, please contact the project manager listed on the cover page.

Each theme below is accompanied by a staff recommendation for the final version of the Bicycle Plan document (ie what action was taken – if any – to update the Bicycle Plan based on the comment themes).

Objections to the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan

No changes were made to the Bicycle Plan as a result of these comments. The Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan was approved by the Saint Paul City Council on May 24, 2023, and approved by the Metropolitan Council on October 25, 2023.

Concern about the impact to trees and greenspace as a result of the Bicycle Plan

No changes were made to the Bicycle Plan as a result of these comments. Trees and greenspace are discussed in the Plan as street elements that must be considered during future community engagement and design phases of all bicycle projects. Each project will be unique, and the Bicycle Plan cannot predict the impacts to other street elements before further design is undertaken.

Concern about the maintenance of the bicycle network, and how the Bicycle Plan affects maintenance

No changes were made to the Bicycle Plan as a result of these comments. The December 2023 version of the Plan includes language about the need to establish maintenance funding for the bike network, and the need to expand those as the network expands. See page 6 of the Plan document. Similar text can be found on page 78.

Concern about the cost of implementation of the bicycle network, and how the planned network affects city budgets and other priorities

No changes were made to the Bicycle Plan as a result of these comments. This Plan does not establish new bicycle-specific funding sources. The funding for construction of the updated planned bicycle network will largely be the same as it has been since the 2015 Bicycle Plan, with the exception of the 2023 voter-approved 1% Sales Tax for street reconstructions. Bikeways will continue being implemented as part of other street construction projects. Costs for any single project are not known and will not be known until future community engagement and design phases for all projects.

Concern about the impact to on street parking as a result of the Bicycle Plan

No changes were made to the Bicycle Plan as a result of these comments. The Bicycle Plan does not identify planned routes that will impact on-street parking. It does include language on page 46 that discusses impacts to other street uses, more generally. The 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan establishes a modal hierarchy that prioritizes pedestrians first, then bikes, then transit, then other vehicles. Future community engagement and the design of bikeway projects will consider tradeoffs between bikeway construction, on-street parking, and other uses of the street.

Concern the recommendations of the Plan are inflexible

No changes were made to the Bicycle Plan as a result of these comments. As the Plan discusses on page 34, the planned bicycle network recommends bikeway types based on national and state guidance, and that additional design and engagement is needed to understand the final design of any one street. Additional information is on page 44. Furthermore, the concept of “next best bikeway” is introduced several times in the Plan (see page 35). This allows for some flexibility given the scope and community support of any project. The recommendations in the Plan represent the starting point for further engagement and design.

Questions about how the City tracks progress towards accomplishing goals of the Bicycle Plan

No changes were made to the Bicycle Plan as a result of these comments. The Plan sets goals for the expansion of the bike network that are consistent with the Saint Paul Climate Action and Resilience Plan. See page 7. Each year, staff update the existing bicycle network map and existing bikeway network mileage with projects constructed in the previous year. The Plan also supports counting and monitoring bicycle traffic (see page 74).

Support for the vision and goals of the Bicycle Plan, generally

These comments spoke in general support of the Plan and its recommendations. Many people expressed excitement and appreciation for the Plan.

Support for the focus on expanding the network of separated bikeways and paths

These comments were specific to the City’s commitment to a planned network with more separated bikeways and paths. Specifically, the comments noted separated bikeways and paths effect on:

- safety benefits for people riding bikes
- health benefits for people riding bikes
- attracting new and less confident people riding bikes
- positive impacts to our climate
- financial and economic benefits to businesses
- personal financial and economic benefits

Specific changes to the December 2023 draft were requested in public comments. An accompanying document highlights the changes made.