

Please enter this e-mail message into the official record for Item #38 (RES PH 12-53) on the agenda for the 3/21/2012 City of St. Paul City Council Meeting. This is the public hearing concerning the Prior Avenue Bicycle Lane Project.

I wish to go on record to enthusiastically support this project. I am the party who originally submitted this project to the St. Paul Capital Improvement Budget process in 2009, and was excited to see the project selected for funding. In 1995, I set out to obtain funding and implementation for all of the bicycle infrastructure called for in the Comprehensive Plan that fell within Planning District 11. I was successful at obtaining funding for the Minnehaha Bike Lanes, the Pascal Street Bicycle Route, the Albert Street connection, signs for Pierce Butler Route, and now the last piece, which is to get the signs for Prior Avenue north of University. I look forward to celebrating the accomplishment of my mission once this project is completed.

The Prior Avenue route is important because provides a north/south connection between Summit Avenue and Pierce Butler Route. It crosses important bicycle routes at Marshall Avenue and Minnehaha Avenue, and also crosses University Avenue. If the Midtown Greenway is ever completed, the Prior route will also connect to it. While I do not have bicycle count data, I can assure you that this route is heavily used by bicyclists. My store, Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles, is located on Prior just 1/2 block south of University Avenue, so we regularly observe bicycles traveling past the store. Bicycles are frequently observed on Prior Avenue, even during the coldest parts of winter, and only a small number of them are traveling to or from the store. Most are headed elsewhere.

One issue that could arise is that some parking spaces will be removed from the west side of Prior between University and Marshall. This should not create serious hardship for most of the properties along that section of Prior, since most have off-street parking available, and the parking will remain on the entire east side of the street. No parking will be removed on Prior between Marshall and Summit, so there should not be any adverse impact for property owners and residents of that section of Prior.

This is a project that is good for St. Paul, as it provides an important accommodation for bicycle traffic at a reasonable cost. I urge the St. Paul City Council to give final approval for this project as designed.

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