

Dear Council Representative Finney,

Congratulations on your appointment as the Ward 7 Council Representative.

I'm not sure of your current address, but we have been neighbors in the Ward. Julie and I live on Powers Avenue, just two blocks north of your home on Upper Afton Road.

I have been a bicycle advocate for some time, having been a Ward 7 representative to the Saint Paul Bicycle Advisory Board before the position was folded into the Transportation Committee of the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

I have continued with bicycle advocacy, becoming a League of American Cyclists "League Cycling Instructor," known as an LCI, the only national bicycling instruction accreditation program.

I advocated to Kathy Lantry and Ann Hunt for hiring a bicycling program director, and was pleased when Emily Erickson was appointed to a position which attempted to fulfill many of needs of bicyclists in Saint Paul. I assisted Emily and Nick Mason, who is now an executive with BikeMN, the statewide bicycling advocacy group, in preparing an application for Bicycle Friendly City with the League of American Cyclists. This resulted in Saint Paul being awarded the Bronze designation Bicycle Friendly City. This has helped put Saint Paul on the national bicycling map, and is partly responsible for Minnesota being designated the Number 2 bicycle friendly state in the nation.

This is a really significant accomplishment.

The 3M company now uses the Saint Paul Bicycle Friendly City designation to recruit new employees, who are looking for jobs in high-quality livability locations.

I currently support the Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition, which meets monthly to advance bicycle planning for Saint Paul, and many 3M employees are now a part of this group.

Emily's job was, I believe, much larger than one employee could accomplish. But the bicycling atmosphere has continued to improve. I was pleased that Emily's replacement, Reuben Collins, was hired, and directed to continue to build a Saint Paul Bikeways Plan, started by Emily's community involvement sessions.

This plan has been a long time in coming. It has been in gestation since Public Works Engineer Paul St. Martin sketched out a bicycle routes plan many years ago.

Reuben has masterfully crafted the current draft plan, which has grown with many improvements with the help and guidance of helpful Public Works Department personnel. Reuben has integrated suggestions of concerned and involved bicyclist participants and advocates and other citizens, from across Saint Paul and surrounding areas.

I urge you to strongly endorse this plan. The purpose of the plan should be to connect all of Saint Paul to downtown and to each other.

I urge you to acknowledge the the downtown loop portion is yet to be determined by a separate process that should not slow the adoption of the rest of the plan.

It is crucial that Ward 7 is connected to downtown by an East 7th Street spur of the bikeway at least to Margaret Street, which has recently been designated as a bicycle boulevard, and is the first East Side east-west bikeway in Saint Paul. That connection is necessary to provide an easily bicycle-able grade route that all bicyclists can manage. This connects the East Side to downtown, to the multi-million dollar Lafayette Bridge bicycle crossing lane, and Metro State and East Side businesses developing along East 7th Street.

This East 7th connection is a late change to the Draft Plan, endorsed by the Transportation Committee and the full Planning Commission. It is mirrored in the Met Council bicycle plan map presented as map 6

<http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View/75290> which shows the area as a “Tier 1 Alignment” study, but which can only be fulfilled by East 7th.

Another missing link for District 1 is a sleeper: On map

7 <http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/View/75290>

there is no bicycle or pedestrian trail access shown from Lower Afton Road to the Pig’s Eye Park as a consideration for a future regional trail search corridor. This map text cautions that “The city should seek an amendment to the Regional Parks Policy Plan for the designation of planned trails that are not within a regional trail search corridor,” as it is not a city originated map.

District 1 should have the greatest access to the Mississippi River of any district council, but instead has none.

But...

Thanks for serving as the Ward 7 City Council representative.

And please, help pass this great bike plan.

Sincerely,

Ed Lehr
Powers Ave.
Saint Paul, MN 55119