

#29

Res PH 15-265

September 2, 2015

Office of the City Council
310 City Hall
15 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul MN 55102

Dear Council Chair Stark, and Council members,

I have had a bike most of my life. I am not anti-bike. However, I do believe that the 4% of bikers (stat from newspaper) do not have the right to abscond with 6 feet of our residential street, for the handful of bikers who go up and/or down our steep hill. (Maybe 3 a day???)

For me, a lack of accountability is a major issue for bikers on our roads.

I regularly see bikers run stop signs and stop lights, drive on the wrong side of the road, ride in the middle of the street, often **on the striped lines**, and refuse to move over for vehicles, even though they have room to. I have **never seen a biker get a ticket**, unlike vehicles in the same situation. In my estimation, bikers should have a license registered (like autos) and attached to their bikes (like autos), as currently, when a law is broken, no one knows who the biker is. Bikers should also have biker insurance. This is a huge liability issue. If they are using the roadway like an auto, it is totally unfair if they have an accident, that an auto owner, (if involved), would be on the hook in our no-fault state.

Dozens of times I have seen no lights on bikes at night, front and back. This should be mandatory for safety. The bikers also don't wear reflector vests, and often wear black or other dark colors, which is also a great safety concern. In these situations, it is difficult at best to see these bikers until you are almost on top of them. At dusk, this should be a city ordinance, immediately enforced.

Bike lanes may make this easier, but bikers often still ride on the auto part of the street, rather than on designated bike paths (like in Lilydale, which is notorious for biker's not using paths) or sidewalks. I also am sick of getting the finger when I honk for them to move over when they ride 3 or 4 across the road. They do not have priority, but rather a shared responsibility, which many don't seem to understand.

Bicycle accessibility of our roads should come with equal responsibility and accountability, similar to autos. It is unacceptable to run stop lights, not have headlights and taillights, or insurance and licenses for vehicles, so why is this not true for bikes? Any why are there no tickets given for bikers who break the law?

As far as the Oakdale Avenue bike lane proposal is concerned, I am a 39-year resident whose home is located on Oakdale Avenue. I understand that this issue is likely already decided, as we, as residents, are merely an afterthought, when it came to our needs and responsibilities. My husband and I have paid street maintenance fees, sewer costs, and home taxes all of these years to live on Oakdale Avenue. We moved into our home in 1976. In 1977, the City of St. Paul re-did our street, putting in new sewer, street and lighting. Since then, the only "improvement" has been pot-hole repair. This year we are finally slated for new mill and overlay work, and are thrilled to finally get attention to our street (after asking

for years). Now we are told we will be giving up six feet of parking space in front of our homes for a bike lane. There is nothing that is right about this. It is merely being shoved down our throats by the bike lobby who believes they should have the answer for us. We do not have driveways, and do not live in the suburbs. We choose to live in the inner city, and are now going to be penalized by parking elimination for our urban living choice.

Oakdale Avenue is the wrong street for a bike route. The avenue runs about ¾ of a mile up a steep hill from State Street to the St. Paul border, Annapolis Street. At that point, there is no designated bike path into West St. Paul, no park path, and no immediate plans by WSP for a continuation. Why not continue the Cesar Chavez (Concord Street) bike path along Cesar Chavez, a wide flat street, to SSP, which is where many bikers do currently ride? In South St. Paul, there are connecting paths along the river.

Oakdale Avenue has room for 10 parking spots on the east side of our block, according to Public Works. On our block between Morton and Page, we really have 9, due to the only driveway in the vicinity eliminating one spot. There are 7 owner-occupied homes on our side of the street, now with a proposal to zero parking spots. On the west side of Oakdale, where there are 12 parking spots, serving two rental duplexes, and five homes. So we have 12 spots for both sides of the street, now designated to park on the west side, where 16 are needed. Where are our guests to park? Where should we park during snow emergency? We are the people who pay for the street upkeep. And now (4%) bikers (or whatever) are absconding with Oakdale so they can go up a steep hill rather than a better planned option? Please don't try to tell me that bikes are going to be using our street in the winter. Our cars have a hard time getting up the hill, so plowed or not, that is not realistic either.

Am I for better paths? Yes. Is this a solution? Absolutely not.

In response to the bike lobby group, "Smart Trips", the most vulnerable community members, which is a large population including elder citizens, do not bike. There are many transportation options to "housing, jobs, goods and services", a rather oblique statement. **All transportation** does the very same thing, delivers people within their transportation potential, to their destination. Why don't they just say, "We don't want cars, and we know best"?

In regards to Smart Trips, operating by making decisions in a vacuum does not build community. When they start to include all of the community (not just bikers) into their plans, to me personally, they may have some credibility.

With Sincerity,

Carol M. Neumann

West Side St. Paul Resident