

Hello,

I am writing to express my concerns about the addition of a bike lane on Wabasha in Downtown St. Paul. My concerns are not regarding bike lanes or the expansion of them in our city. In fact, I am hugely in favor of these additions. My concerns are regarding location.

The proposed location of Wabasha will also have an outsized impact on local businesses. These businesses leverage the proposed bike lane area for loading, parking, hauling, and other essential functions. While increasing accessibility for non-motor vehicles is extremely important to me, I want my City Council to consider community and economic concerns. We do not solve problems or create cohesion by disrupting existing, functioning community systems and placing an undue burden on local businesses that have been through an extremely tumultuous period through the last 14+ months.

Beyond the economic impacts, cyclist safety is a deeply personal issue for me. I lost one of my closest friends, Alex Wolf, to a careless motorist who struck him on his bicycle in November 2019. Paving a bike lane on such a high-traffic street concerns me, as we do not live in a city or culture that prioritizes the safety of cyclists. I have personally - both as a motorist *and* pedestrian - experienced reckless drivers on this road. I want a Council that represents my interests and the wellbeing of St. Paulites to be careful and thoughtful in their deliberations, with the safety of cyclists in a vehicle-dominant culture at the forefront of all decision-making.

After a tumultuous year for our local businesses downtown, it feels off-base to place a bike lane in what is a major thoroughfare of downtown. Placing this lane on St. Peter is not only safer, but fosters a more cohesive integration into our city, and increases the overall comfort level of individuals using this lane. Please contact me if you have any questions, and thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns.

Best,
Hannah Lehman

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