

Dear Samantha,

Here's my statement for the record. I will not be attending the hearing tonight:

I am strongly opposed to the medians as they are currently designed. They make conditions for cyclists on Marshall worse. To fit in an 8 foot planted median requires having just 5 foot bike lanes instead of the standard 6 feet, and substandard 7 foot parking lanes instead of the standard 8 feet. This requires that cyclists ride on the edge of the bike lane to avoid parked car "door zones". Where medians exist, these substandard lane widths don't allow motorists enough space to pass cyclists with the requisite 3 feet of passing space. It is even worse with large trucks, buses or wider vehicles. If someone opens a car-door and a cyclist swerves to avoid it, there is very little margin of error. Sooner or later, a cyclist is going to get hit by a passing car.

In the winter, the medians render the street unbikeable. This is because ice and snow build up in the gutters and edges of the roadway, forcing parked cars to move inward towards the center of the road, where they all but block the bike lane. A cyclist is then forced to ride in the middle of the vehicle travel lane. Where medians exist, there is no way for cars to pass and this leads to angry and dangerous confrontations between cyclists and motorists. As co-chair of the Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition, it is the number one complaint I get about cycling conditions in Saint Paul. Four years of "pilot snow plowing" on Marshall has accomplished nothing. Because even a light inch of snow will quickly freeze in the gutters and under parked cars, the city would have to plow or brush the street after every single snow fall, which would require constant parking restrictions and towing cars. In a typical winter, this is simply impossible, both economically and politically. I attach a photo of typical winter cycling conditions on Marshall.

The proposed 8-foot medians might improve conditions for pedestrians but they will make them worse for cyclists. Given that Marshall has one of the only bikeable bridges to Minneapolis and is a major connector to the Midtown Greenway, I believe the city should make more of an effort to improve cycling conditions on it and use different design tools to calm traffic and enhance pedestrian safety. These could include (but aren't limited to) raised "speed table" intersection crosswalks, protected traffic islands (both at intersections and mid-block), HAWK signals and rapid-flash pedestrian activated crossing aids, or narrower 4-foot medians.

Thank you for your consideration.

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