

Dear City Council,

We met this evening at Dunning with Melvin to discuss our concerns about the traffic circles and the audible traffic light aspects of the Griggs Bikeway plan. I estimate that 30 of us were present and I'd say 25 of us were there to voice opposition. Please be clear that we support the notion of a better biking system in St. Paul and yet adamantly reject the specific treatments of the circles and audible light.

My husband made a presentation to the group regarding the traffic circles. I've attached his key points here for you. In addition, there were many people who spoke and voiced a long list of concerns. I'm sure Melvin has a copy of those as they were written down on flip chart paper at the meeting.

Please amend the plan by **removing** the traffic circles (at least those in Lex Ham) and the audible light planned for Marshall and Griggs, then pass the rest of the bikeway plan.

Because the public notice process on this project was clearly ineffective and has been seriously criticized, we expect that our meeting tonight will carry significant weight in your decision.

Erin O'Neill
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Issues and Concerns

Proposed traffic circles at the intersections of Griggs with Dayton, Laurel and Portland

General information and observations:

- The great majority of traffic circles installed in the US have been requested by neighborhood groups.
- Municipalities require petitions signed by at least 60% of the households and businesses to take the request under consideration.
- Municipalities have qualifying criteria to guide the need of these requests. Two main metrics are car volume (minimum 600 cars/day) and accident rate (2 accidents/three consecutive years).
- Design standards and existing installations vary greatly. The FHWA and the Institute Of Transportation Engineers have published design standards and recommendations, but there is general lack of research and scientific studies on the subject.
- It is agreed that traffic circles reduce vehicular speeds effectively by 4-6 miles per hour in 30 mile per hour zones and are customarily accompanied by Yield signs.
- By design in traffic circles, vehicles have the right of way over pedestrians at crosswalks, unless the circle includes four way stop signs at crosswalks. Even then, a vehicle in the circle maintains its right of way over pedestrians.
- Various studies claim reduction of vehicle collisions in the intersection of 75% to 90% on average. Most of these studies are based on data collected mainly from Seattle, Washington where 75% of the intersections were previously uncontrolled. There doesn't seem to be reliable comparisons to other traffic management methods in terms of effectiveness.
- The traffic circle is not designed to affect traffic volumes, unless installed in sequence causing drivers to divert to other streets when possible.

PEDESTRIANS

- The vehicle has right of way
- Pedestrians cannot predict vehicle destination
- Vehicles may encroach on adjacent crosswalks
- Vision impaired individuals cannot perceive location of vehicle
- In the dark, a car cannot illuminate its exit point and cross walk
- Snow storage on the center island may obscure visibility

BICYCLES

- Bicycles can be squeezed or pushed by cars at intersection (there are lively conversations on bicycle blogs on the issue)

EMERGENCY VEHICLES AND SCHOOL BUSES

- The circle will affect the response time of an emergency vehicle by slowing it down
- Circle radius and center island will interfere with passage of large vehicles such as pumper and ladder fire engines as well as long school buses; turning left would not be possible for some
- At intersections with close by fire hydrants, the conflict will hinder rescue operations
- When school buses are in the circle, they point at the children waiting on the corner

STREET PARKING

- Parking will be reduced by 8 cars at each intersection.

SNOW PLOWING

- Will interfere with snow plowing
- Compressed passage width around circle will exacerbate most conditions mentioned above
- Narrowing of streets will impede simultaneous entry into and exit from circle

COST AND MAINTENANCE

- Depending on quality of circle design, cross walk reconfigure and landscaping: \$8K - \$18K
- Maintenance including special plowing and landscape irrigation: \$1,000 per year

CONCLUSION

- NO accidents at proposed intersections
- Traffic volumes well under 500 cars per day
- Not friendly to bicycles
- Not friendly to pedestrians
- Interference with emergency vehicles and school buses
- Reduction of street parking stalls