From: Peter Butler
To: CouncilHearing (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Written comments for May 24, 2023 hearing
Date: Thursday, May 18, 2023 10:56:52 PM
Attachments: Summit Bike Lane Comments 05-24-2023.pdf

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for what it's worth...

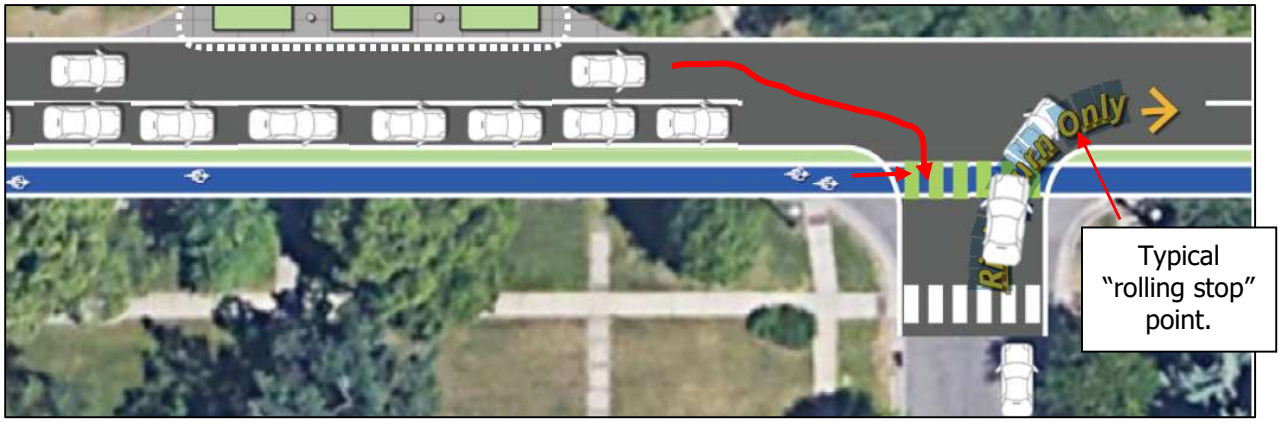
May 24, 2023, Public Hearing – Submitted Comments

The Regional Bike Plan for Summit Avenue does not discuss or acknowledge potential safety issues concerning the sight lines of its proposed design. This lack of self-critique is a disservice to decision makers, who may assume the plan is flawless regarding the same safety issues that the plan attempts to address.

I commuted by bike on Summit from Prior Avenue to John Ireland Boulevard for almost 15 years from March through October. These two examples are based on my experiences of driver behavior and Summit Avenue conditions.

Example 1

I modified this 90% bike plan image[1] to show more parked cars and a line of turning vehicles from cross streets. Drivers on Summit turning right may not see nor stop for bicycles. Both cars and bikes are moving and bikes can suddenly appear in front of a car and vice versa.

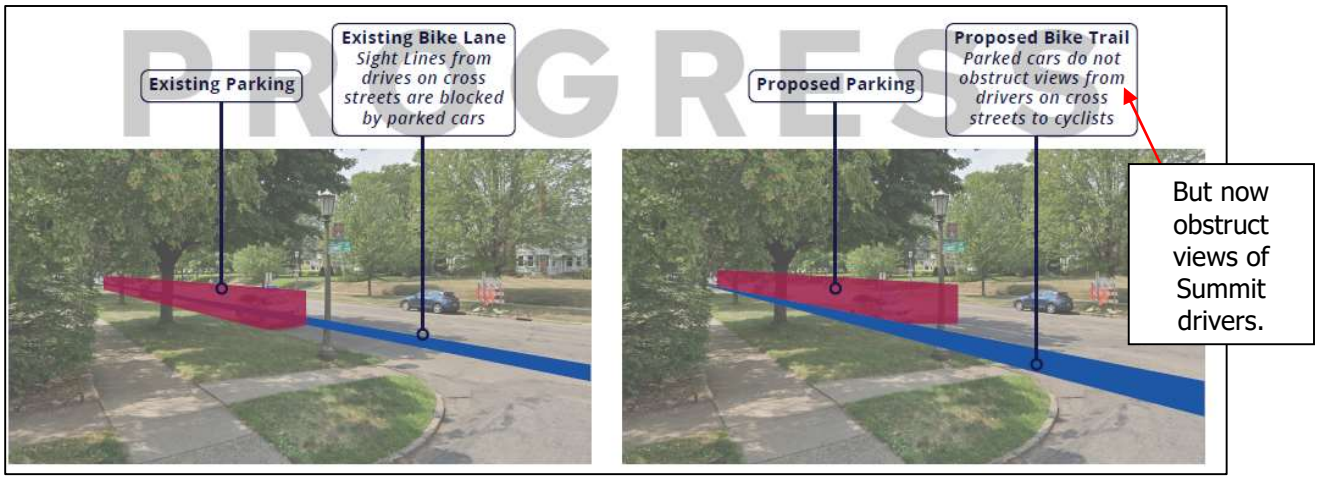


Many drivers do not stop behind the stop sign but pull well into Summit to see around parked cars. Other cars waiting to turn will encroach on the bike lane.

[1] Original image from page 144 | Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan | Regional Trail Plan.

Example 2

The proposed solution on the right worsens sight lines for drivers on Summit. Bicyclists are obscured behind parked cars. The bike path is closer to where cross-street traffic enters Summit, narrowing distance between bikers and the "rolling stop" point.



Thank you for considering all perspectives on this significant and potentially historic plan. I ask that you review the plan with a critical eye and understanding that the diagrams may not represent actual conditions now or in the future.

Peter Butler
401 Grand Avenue, #401
St. Paul, MN 55105

From: Polly Heintz
To: Greg Weiner
Subject: FW: Please VOTE NO on the Summit Avenue Regional Bike Trail plan
Date: Thursday, May 18, 2023 4:23:14 PM

-----Original Message-----
From: Guy Engler <guy.engler@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 4:16 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Jaime Tincher <Jaime.Tincher@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Kamal Baker <Kamal.Baker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Peter Leggett <Peter.Leggett@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Please VOTE NO on the Summit Avenue Regional Bike Trail plan

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Polly Heintz
To: Greg Weiner
Subject: FW: Summit Bike Plan
Date: Thursday, May 18, 2023 4:23:26 PM

From: Andy Flamm <andrew.flamm@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 4:07 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Summit Bike Plan

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Dear Councilmember Prince,

I recently submitted my comments concerning the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan to the general Council email address, but I include them again below for your convenience.

We have already discussed this issue, but I invite you to contact me should you wish to further discuss my reasons for voting against the plan at the Parks Commission and why I believe the City would be best served by delaying its approval for at least six months. Thank you!

Andy Flamm
1706 Eleanor Ave
Saint Paul MN 55116
612-251-3904
andrew.flamm@gmail.com

Why I Voted Against the Summit Bike Plan

I was one of three members of the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission to vote against recommending the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan to the City Council at our May 11 meeting (the vote was 4-3 in favor).

Why did I vote No? Here are several reasons.

I love biking, especially on separated bike trails such as the one being proposed for Summit. But this trail will not resemble those along the river or within our parks. The trail on Summit would cross major and minor streets every few hundred yards along its five mile length. Between those crossings there will be numerous driveways and other crossings. Cyclists will need to be on constant alert for cars, other bikes, scooters and pedestrians as they bike along, at least to the extent they are now. Parents who think the trail will be a safe place for their kids to ride should understand this.

Faster cyclists will still ride in the traffic lane on Summit, according to both pro- and anti-trail plan advocates and even the trail planners. But once the regional trail is built, there will be no bike lane or buffer from parked cars on the street, meaning cars and bikes will have to share the single traffic lane in each direction. I don't see how this is good for anyone, and what will happen when delivery trucks block the traffic lane, which seems likely (even if illegal)? Will traffic come to a standstill? And how will emergency vehicles get through with no room to pass cars and bikes?

Then there is the cost. The figure of $12 million has been mentioned for the bike trail, but it's hard to say for sure since the plan is to build the trail as Summit is rebuilt at a much higher cost. Whatever additional funding is required to add the bike trail, one has to wonder if this is the best use of that money. We already have a commuter bike path on Summit which is well used and could be improved at a much lower cost, and more quickly, by repaving and painting more visible lane markings. Maybe there are other routes and areas of Saint Paul that need improved recreational bike trails more than Summit Avenue.

There are other costs, too. While the extent of tree loss under this plan has been challenged, there's no question that at least one hundred beautiful, carbon-absorbing trees will be lost if the bike trail is built, and possibly many times that number. There will also be lost parking spaces east of Lexington, a major cost to homeowners, renters, businesses and non-profits on or near Summit. The damage this trail may cause to Summit's historic atmosphere is difficult to quantify, but homeowners and many others place a high value on the avenue's special qualities.

I am not saying we should never build bike trails because there are costs involved, but I do think we need to carefully consider what we are agreeing to pay for when we propose new amenities such as this.

Finally, I voted against the plan because I don't believe the public was given an adequate opportunity to weigh its benefits and costs or to view alternatives they might prefer. It seems the city skipped past that step and went right to the design effort, and now proponents are saying we have to proceed or we may lose out on funding opportunities. I think projects that have a major impact on our neighborhoods should receive buy-in from the public before proceeding, and this one clearly did not get that mandate, as evidenced by the mostly negative public comments received online and in person by our commission.

Do Saint Paul residents and other stakeholders support building a separated regional bike trail along Summit Avenue? The best way to find out would be to delay action on the current plan until after the City Council elections in November when more than half the council members will be new. We can debate the pros and cons of the plan, as well as consider alternatives, during election season, and those we elect can make the call (and accept responsibility for the consequences).

If Saint Paulites want this bike trail, then I'm all for scrutinizing the design and moving forward, but that is yet to be determined. Let's get this important step right before

moving on to the design approval stage.

Andy Flamm
1706 Eleanor Ave
Saint Paul MN 55116
612-251-3904

From: Polly Heintz
To: Greg Weiner
Subject: FW: Please VOTE NO on the Summit Avenue Regional Bike Trail plan
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 10:50:41 AM

From: Mytv Isavisa <mytvisavisa@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 8:45 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Jaime Tincher <Jaime.Tincher@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Kamal Baker <Kamal.Baker@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Peter Leggett <Peter.Leggett@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Please VOTE NO on the Summit Avenue Regional Bike Trail plan

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Not voting here. I just liked the walk and near the church area. Thanks, from the Boys.

From: grtodd@comcast.net
To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council
Subject: Questions about proposed Regional Bike Trail on Summit Ave
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 1:20:06 PM
Attachments: Questions about Proposed Regional Trail for Summit.pdf

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Attached are some questions and comments I have related to the proposed Regional Bike Trail on Summit Avenue. Please review and consider them before any vote is taken to approve this trail plan. The risks of damaging the treasure of Summit Avenue are too great to approve a plan with unknown impacts.

Thank you.
GRT

Gary R. Todd
682 Summit Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105
651-470-4720
grtodd@comcast.net

"I think that men and women, shoulder to shoulder, will work together to make this a better world. Just as I don't think that men are the superior sex, neither do I think women are. I think that it is great that we are beginning to use the talents of all of the people, in all walks of life …" Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Questions about Parks and Rec's proposed plan for Regional Trail on Summit Avenue

- The stated design goal is that the trail be built to link the Sam Morgan Trail to the Mississippi River Trail, for the 8 to 80 group of cyclists
    - The segment up from Sam Morgan to John Ireland Blvd is a 4.2% grade (rises 168 feet) through dense pedestrian and vehicle traffic at 7 Corners (Xcel Center) and across freeway entrances.
    - How will 8 or 80 year olds be able to navigate this steep, dangerous section for 0.75 miles?
    - How does this meet the requirements for a Met Council Linking Trail, if the riders for whom it is being built, cannot utilize it?
    - Sam Morgan already connects to the Mississippi River Blvd trail via Shepard Road in Highland
    - Extending the Mpls Greenway across the Short Line Bridge, to follow the railway bed that includes Ayd Mill and a trail along Grace Ave will all be at railroad grade, making it accessible to all.
- Why isn't public opinion being given equitable treatment in this decision?
    - The 90% plan states that 84% of the people want a separated, sidewalk level trail (page 42 – 90% plan). The detailed data behind that claim is shown on Page 237 of the 90% plan. It shows that there were only 82 participants surveyed. So, 69 of 82 people surveyed prefer sidewalk level trails.
    - SOS has over 3,000 signatures opposing the proposed design for the regional trail.
    - Which is more representative of the will of the citizens of St. Paul – 69 or 3,000?
- Supporters of the plan claim that this design will be safer.
    - The city says that there are 1000 cyclists per day riding on Summit.
    - There have been 36 accidents over the last 10 years.
    - This calculates into a 0.000986 per cent chance of accident.
    - In other words, 1 in every 101,389 trips is at risk of an accident.
    - There are still the same 46 intersections, which is where most accidents occur.
    - Is the planned trail really going to be safer than this?
    - Why risk damaging the city treasure of Summit Avenue when existing bike facilities have proved to be extremely safe?
- Plan calls for removal of 50% of the parking in Segments D, E & F (Lexington to the Cathedral)
    - City claims detailed needs will be reviewed at design and implementation time.
    - 84% of the residences between Lexington and the Cathedral are in multi-unit structures, many of whom rely heavily on street level parking
    - What will happen if parking is required, on both sides of a section of Summit, due to the need for parking by dense multi-family residences, businesses, disabled, schools or churches? What will get sacrificed to build this planned trial design? Trees & boulevard? Parking anyway? Resident safety who will be forced to walk blocks from their vehicles?
    - Approving this plan, with these (and other) unknown impacts, gives permission to proceed regardless of what future, more detailed, analysis may uncover, without any future chances to review the actual impacts and change the plan.

- The consulting firm hired by the city, Bolton & Menk, did a nationwide search for a comparable trail (pg. 221 – 90% plan) with a similar high number of conflict points in a historic district. They were unable to find any precedent for the trail design proposed by the city. Bolton & Menk went on to recommend that "additions to Summit Avenue should be as simple as possible and not change the existing curb lines" (pg. 226 – 90% plan). Parks & Rec has ignored the recommendation from the experts they hired and are proposing a trail design that moves all of the curb lines along Summit Avenue. Revelations from the Data Practices Act (DPA) requests show that their primary consultant was someone whose profession is listed as cartoonist. Why did the city reject the recommendations of the experts and adopted those of a cartoonist? How much confidence should the public have in a plan developed in this manner?
- Public Works has attempted to introduce a sense of urgency, to build this off-road trail, based on the claim that all of the infrastructure underneath Summit Avenue needs to be rebuilt, thus providing an opportunity to add the trail. Summit Avenue reconstruction has not appeared on the 5-year plan for road reconstruction. Public Works has not shown any evidence to demonstrate the urgent need. How many repair projects of the infrastructure under Summit have been required in the last 5 years? Other than deteriorating road surface, the only justification for full reconstruction of Summit being given is that it is old. How is it that full reconstruction of Summit has not appeared on any 5-year plan yet now suddenly needs to be urgently done?
- Supporters of the off-road trail design claim that it is the gold standard. It is in certain but not all contexts. The Insurance Institute of Highway Safety (IIHS) did a study that shows that off-road trails, when built in settings with a high number of conflict points, are more dangerous than on-street bike lanes in those settings. The proposed trail design does not change the number of intersections, where most collisions occur, and increases the risk of collisions due to less visibility with vehicles turning into driveways, of which there are 150 on Summit. In addition, all vehicles that are stopped, waiting to enter the drive lanes from driveways, will block the off-road bike lane. The off-road trail design is best suited for a greenway setting with few conflict points, such as along a river or on an old railroad bed. Why has Parks and Rec ignored the results of this professional study and attempts to shoehorn an off-road trail design onto Summit? This violates the need for a context sensitive design approach that factors in all relevant elements of the setting. Links to study:
    - https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/some-protected-bike-lanes-leave-cyclists-vulnerable-to-injury
    - https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2193
- On June 6, 2022, Parks and Rec held a Public Information Session. Slide #42 clearly states that one-way separated trails are NOT RECOMMENDED for Segment B (near Macalester College) and slide #47 clearly states that one-way separated trails with parking on one side are NOT RECOMMENDED, for Segments D, E & F (Lexington to the Cathedral) (Capitalization taken from slides). (https://engagestpaul.org/10770/widgets/37641/documents/31799) At this meeting Parks and Rec assured us that these designs would not be chosen due to the expected impact to the boulevards along historic Summit Avenue. Now, Parks and Rec has done an about face and their preferred designs are the very same ones they rejected last year. What happened to the concern for the impact to the boulevards? If their design review first showed that one-way separated trails should not be built and then they discovered that two-way separated trails were extremely dangerous in this setting, why didn't they conclude that separated trails, in this context, are not feasible? Instead, they have chosen to do an about face and, again, follow the

recommendation of an individual whose profession is listed as cartoonist. This tends to affirm the questions that many have been asking from the beginning. Was a design pre-selected prior to analyzing the context and before engaging with the community?

- An email (dated 8/12/2022) from Sean Kershaw, describes a meeting, during the week of August 7 – 13, 2022, he and Andy Rodriguez had with Andy Singer, co-chair of the St. Paul Bike Coalition (SPBC). Andy Singer gave them a document that Sean scanned and was circulating via this email. In the document Andy Singer:
    - Stated that SPBC was not in favor of two-way trails (after one-way trails were rejected at the June 6th Public Information Session as NOT RECOMMENDED)
    - Stated that SPBC would only support one-way trail designs
    - Went on to give design specs for one-way trails
    - Finally, claimed that he already had 4 city council votes in support of the trail

  How appropriate is it that a person, whose profession is listed as cartoonist, is given this level of influence on the decision about whether or not to build an off-street bike trail? Why did he believe, back in June 2022, that he already had 4 city council votes?

From: Kayla Thao
To: Greg Weiner
Subject: FW: Letters: St. Paul should showcase Summit Avenue's storied history for civic benefit – Twin Cities
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 2:54:24 PM

Hi Greg,

Please add to public comments.

Thanks,
Kayla

-----Original Message-----
From: Leo Varley <lpvarley@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 19, 2023 8:38 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Varley Leo <lpvarley@gmail.com>
Subject: Letters: St. Paul should showcase Summit Avenue's storied history for civic benefit – Twin Cities

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Hi Rebecca,
You may have already seen this Letter to the Editor, but the letter from Mae Sylvester and Susan Kimberly is certainly worth a read. Both of the authors have experience in City Government of St Paul and their point of view is practical and shows regard for the history of Summit Avenue.

Please vote no to the proposed Summit Bile Trail. Please advocate for paving all of Summit Avenue and striping the bike lanes as has been done between Snelling and Lexington.

As always, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely
Leo Varley

https://www.twincities.com/2023/05/17/letters-st-paul-should-showcase-the-civic-summit-avenues-storied-history-for-civic-benefit/

From: Sue Soule
To: *CI-StPaul_Contact-Council
Subject: Summit Avenue
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 3:16:50 PM

Over the decades, I have worked, worshipped, volunteered, dined, shopped and supported many cultural institutions in St. Paul.

I love the city and admire and appreciate how it has honored and protected its history, architecture and beauty, better than its twin to the west in many instances.
I also share this love of St. Paul with virtually every one of the many visitors we've had from around the country and the world. The highlight of every tour I've ever given to showcase our area has been the drive along Summit Avenue from the Mississippi River to Cathedral Hill and the Capitol beyond.

This drive has been universally admired. Every visitor has been so impressed, not just with the miles of lovely homes and parade of history and architectural styles, but also with the grace and beauty of the setting. The abundance of greenery, the mature canopy of trees are an important part of the whole.

Many of our visitors have been from the UK. There, they have a system that preserves natural vistas – not as parks or places to visit, just as a means of protecting and safeguarding a beautiful view or outlook that has been there, for centuries perhaps, for generations to come.

Please save the treasure that is in our own back yard. Don't degrade it with barriers and distractions, and please don't destroy any of the lovely backdrop provided by the trees and boulevards.

Thank you,
Susan Soule

From: Polly Heintz
To: Greg Weiner
Subject: FW: Questions about proposed Regional Bike Trail on Summit Ave
Date: Friday, May 19, 2023 3:52:37 PM
Attachments: Questions about Proposed Regional Trail for Summit.pdf

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From: grtodd@comcast.net <grtodd@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, May 19, 2023 1:02 PM
To: Countact-Council@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward1 <Ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward2 <Ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward3 <Ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward4 <Ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward6 <Ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; #CI-StPaul_Ward7 <Ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Questions about proposed Regional Bike Trail on Summit Ave

Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.

Attached are some questions and comments I have related to the proposed Regional Bike Trail on Summit Avenue. Please review and consider them before any vote is taken to approve this trail plan. The risks of damaging the treasure of Summit Avenue are too great to approve a plan with unknown impacts.

Thank you.
GRT

Gary R. Todd
682 Summit Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105
651-470-4720
grtodd@comcast.net

"I think that men and women, shoulder to shoulder, will work together to make this a better world. Just as I don't think that men are the superior sex, neither do I think women are. I think that it is great that we are beginning to use the talents of all of the people, in all walks of life …" Ruth Bader Ginsburg