Summary of Engineering Recommendations

University Avenue Reconstruction: I-35E to Lafayette Road

City Project No. 25-P-1503

Report Prepared: 2024-10-25
Public Hearing: 2025-0X-XX

Program

This project entails the full reconstruction of University Ave from I-35E to Lafayette Rd. A multi-use trail will be constructed on the north side and the street will undergo a lane reduction. The intersection with Lafayette Rd is being investigated for conversion to a single-lane roundabout. This project is one of the first in the Common Cent program using the newly levied sales tax funds. Additional costs will be funded with MSA and Local funds.

Existing Conditions

Currently the roadway is two lanes in each direction with medians at either side of the Mississippi Street intersection. Sidewalks exist on both sides of the road, but the boulevards are paved with no trees.

The road was last reconstructed in 1994 during the sewer separation program and is heavily used by trucks accessing the business park to the north, and all vehicles attempting to access I-35E. The government complex on the south of the corridor includes the headquarters for the Saint Paul Police Department, the Ramsey County Jail, and the Emergency Operations Center for both the City and the County.

Proposed Improvements

Reconstruction is needed to repair and replace sidewalks, pavement, and utilities. Improvements include all new sidewalks, pavement, boulevards, trees, curb, and gutters. A new grade-separated multi-use trail will be constructed on the north side. Traffic improvements include new lane markings, traffic signals, lighting, and signage. Both public and private utilities will be improved. Buried streetcar tracks and any rubble in conflict with the project design will be removed.

Alternates

The intersection with Lafayette Road is being investigated for conversion to a roundabout. The needs of local stake holders, including those of the emergency services, traffic design, and a future bridge replacement to the north are being considered.

Positive Benefits

Aside from improving general ride quality with new pavement, the project will extend the University Ave bike trail all the way to Lafayette and improve walkability by adding trees and boulevard buffer-space for sidewalks. The layout of the Lafayette intersection will be modernized to create safer operation, including moving the location of the bus shelter in the northwest corner.

Adverse Effects
Construction brings the usual disturbances of dust, noise, and reduced access to the neighborhood while work is underway.

Effects on Trees
There are currently no publicly owned trees on this stretch of University Ave. This project will install new trees in the boulevards, significantly increasing the shade in the corridor.

Time Schedule
Design work has reached 30% in October of 2024 and will be completed in early 2025. Bidding will occur in Spring of 2025 with construction that summer.

Cost Estimate

Construction	$	5,645,000
Engineering & Inspection	$	1,411,250
Contingency	$	843,750
Total	$	7,900,000

Estimated Financing

General Fund	$	7,100,000
Assessments	$	800,000
Total	$	7,900,000

Source of Additional Information
For additional information, contact the project manager, Don Pflaum at 651-266-9147, or visit University Avenue Reconstruction | Saint Paul Minnesota (stpaul.gov)

Summary and Recommendation
The Department of Public Works feels that this is a worthwhile project, and the Engineering Recommendation is to approve the assessment.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald Pflaum, P.E.
Public Works Street Design and Construction