

I recently learned of the plan to turn Charles Avenue into a bike-friendly street. I have no issue with making it easier for bicyclists to use the neighborhood streets, but I object to the plan to extend the Snelling Avenue median and make it more difficult to get to our neighborhood businesses. I also dislike the traffic circle already in place at Charles and Albert, so I don't want to see more of them installed. I walk to and from the bus daily as I commute to work in downtown St. Paul. The traffic circle creates a dangerous situation for me as a pedestrian on many occasions. The lovely plantings in the circle look pretty, but they block the view for vehicles approaching. Since there are no stop signs, I have to enter the crosswalk carefully, knowing that a car might zoom into my path at any time. In the winter it is even worse, since the plows are unable to do a good job of clearing the road around the circle, and therefore it is always icy. Not only am I in danger of a car skidding into me, I also have to walk very carefully in order to reduce the risk of slipping and falling in the street.

I have tried to maintain a positive attitude, living through all the disruptions caused by the construction of the completely unnecessary light rail. My perfectly excellent bus service has become less efficient, more inconvenient, and will never be as good with the light rail. Local businesses have suffered greatly during the construction, and now it seems another plan is in place to hurt those businesses located near Snelling and Charles. The first I heard of it was an article in the Midway Monitor. Interesting that there were no other announcements.

I am not one who generally whines about neighborhood issues, and I participated as much as I could in the discussions leading up to the decision to put the light rail down the middle of University. From what I could see, the neighborhood concerns were not taken into consideration much at all. I personally have taken on the task of keeping the brick pavers along University between Albert and Hamline (part of my path to and from the bus) cleared of weeds, which I was assured would be a responsibility of the city. I also have replaced sod that has been shifted due to people sliding on it while walking from the parking lot to the bus stop, or by vandalism. I am only noting this so that you know I try to be proactive, not just a complainer.

So, to the original point, please do not go forward with the plan to install additional traffic circles or to extend the medians on Snelling and Lexington at Charles Avenue. The bike riders I know, and there are many, agree that it is not needed, and as a pedestrian, I know it will increase hazards. The funds could be much better spent on other neighborhood improvements or for maintenance of the public areas along University.

Sincerely,

Shelley J. Robshaw
1410 Lafond Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
37 year neighborhood resident