

From: **Elinor Auge**

Date: Thursday, May 26, 2016

Subject: Bike Lanes vs. On-Street Parking at Upper Afton Road, St. Paul

To: ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us, luke.hanson@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Cc: jim.mcdonough@co.ramsey.mn.us, kathy.jaschke@co.ramsey.mn.us,
victoria.reinhardt@co.ramsey.mn.us, ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Dear Jane Prince and Luke Hanson,

Below you will find the copy of a note which I just sent to KSTP News. I hope you will read the content and take notice, as there is a great deal of discontent in the neighborhood about bike lanes in the the proposed current configuration.

Thank you,
Elinor Auge
16xx Upper Afton Road
Saint Paul, MN 55106

Dear KSTP News;

I am writing to you at the 11th hour to tell you about a situation that is quite troubling to the neighbors who live on Upper Afton Road between Highway 61/Burns Avenue and McKnight Road in Saint Paul. It involves the Mayor's Bicycle Plan and the issue stems around a serious lack of communication to the homeowners and residents who will be affected by changes to be made just weeks from now on Upper Afton Road. We were fortunate enough to have an extension of the City Council vote on May 18 to June 1, less than a week from today.

I'm not sure who fell down on the job of communicating to the residents what was coming down the pike, whether it was our neighborhood council or the city council. Or both. In doing some research, I have found that the Bicycle Plan has been underway since 2011 and I have found evidence that District One City Council did give directions to follow through with bike lanes as being proposed at this time. However, at no time do I, nor any of my immediate neighbors, recall receiving notification of the plan for our street until some time in March, less than two months ago.

The city claimed to have given an initial notice for a meeting that very few people were aware of because they never received that notice. At the May 18 City Council meeting, we were told that the first notice went out in the neighborhood newspaper, an infrequent publication which unfortunately, too many neighbors don't actually read. The second notice was in April and that was sent as a mailed letter to all residents. I was unable to attend that meeting, but apparently it was fairly well attended, with at least 85% of attendees against the proposal as it had been presented.

The initial proposal for bike lanes on Upper Afton Road indicated that there would be absolutely no on-street parking from 61/Burns to White Bear Avenue and one-side parking from White

Bear to McKnight. There would be bike lanes on both sides of the street from 61/Burns all the way to McKnight. After the April meeting, the neighborhood concern was taken and a compromise was reached, with the decision to put one bike lane to the north and one parking lane to the south on Upper Afton between Burns and McKnight. A letter was sent to the affected community just days before the scheduled May 18 vote indicating that a vote would be taken on the proposal as having a north side bike lane and a south side parking lane from Burns to McKnight.

On May 17 (I didn't see mine till afternoon of May 18) Jane Prince, our City Council Representative, sent an e-mail to whomever had addresses registered with her, indicating that Public Works had made the decision that for bicycle safety, there must be two bike lanes all along the route, which would mean absolutely no on-street parking along the Burns to White Bear portion of the road, which becomes wider from White Bear to McKnight.

Having but two hours before the City Council meeting, my neighbor, Mike Conlin and I dashed around the neighborhood knocking on doors and asking people if they'd seen this last minute change and would they be willing go come to the city council meeting. Again, fortunately, Council President Russ Stark delayed the vote until next Wednesday, June 1, with specific instructions to mail a letter to the community prior to that meeting.

The proponents of this proposal are indicating that there are very few parked cars along this stretch of Upper Afton during various times of day. I will concede, it is not like other residential streets in parts of Saint Paul. This can be a busy street during rush hour and people often do drive faster than they should but I have never felt unsafe riding my bike in either direction along this road, other than at the intersection of Burns and Upper Afton. I also don't, believe that the way to calm traffic is to put moving human targets along the side of the road, which is essentially one of the arguments being used by proponents of the plan. Put in a stop sign instead, with a crosswalk.

The reason for this big last minute rush is because Upper Afton Road is being resurfaced, as we speak, and District One Community Council indicated in their response to the initial Bicycle Plan, that they would like implementation of the plan to take place during such resurfacing projects. Again, whether it is the district council, community council or both, communications to those of us affected by these changes has been incredibly poor from the get-go, meaning since the Bicycle Plan was initiated in 2011 or since it was adopted last year.

It almost feels like an intentional omission, in order to make it easier to pass and implement the plan as the city and county planners would like it to be. (Upper Afton Road is a Ramsey County Road).

There are other options but this one is being rammed down our throats. Those of us who live here, commute from here, enjoy walking and bicycling from our homes here, feel that this proposal will create much greater hardship for us than is being considered by the involved parties. They indicate a desire to help diverse and some lower income groups who live in the area to have access to greater commuting options without having to own or operate a vehicle. What they do not seem to be taking into account is that when it comes to garage sale season, harvest season -when large, extended families gather to put-up for winter; weddings, graduations and

other cultural celebrations -when elder parents and small children come to visit; no on-street parking will cause a hardship to these hardworking, taxpaying homeowners and renters. The section of Upper Afton affected has very long blocks, and to park on a side street would cause for some lengthy walks which would be fine for young and healthy individuals but that does not describe everyone in a neighborhood.

I own a bike and I love to ride. I am home all day long, with a big picture window looking over Upper Afton Road, where I see very few bicycles cruising by throughout the day, other than one year-round commuter. The proposal as it stands is unnecessary. What might better serve these few blocks would be crosswalks and stop signs. There are other alternatives, such as putting a single west bound bike lane on Upper Afton and an east bound lane on Burns Avenue.

I will include some links and additional information. Thank you for taking the time to look this over and determine whether or not you can help us with our effort to maintain at least one lane of parking on Upper Afton between Burns and White Bear Avenue.

Sincerely,

Elinor Auge
16xx Upper Afton Road
Saint Paul, MN 55106