From:	Bernae VeraKruse
To:	*CI-StPaul_CityClerk; *TransitionTeam
Cc:	*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council; Assessments (CI-StPaul); #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_PublicWorks; Lynn Rolf; Jimmy Shoemaker; Jary Lee; Nick Peterson
Subject:	Formal Objection to Special Assessment – 309 Pelham Blvd (Project 19275)
Date:	Thursday, January 8, 2026 3:30:14 PM
Attachments:	Subject_ Formal Objection to Special Assessment – 309 Pelham Blvd (Project 19275).pdf dec-9-2025-virtual-meeting-questions.pdf

You don't often get email from bernae.verakruse@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Good afternoon,

I am the owner of 309 Pelham Blvd, Saint Paul, Minnesota, and I submit this letter as a formal objection to the proposed special assessment levied in connection with the Pelham Boulevard improvement project.

This objection is submitted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429 and the City of Saint Paul's Special Assessment Policies, and it is intended to be included in the official project record.

The attached pdf is my letter of formal objection to the Special Assessment levy.

Respectfully,

Bernae VeraKruse
309 Pelham Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55104
bernae.verakruse@gmail.com
(cell) 651-444-0689

Subject: Formal Objection to Special Assessment – 309 Pelham Blvd (Project 19275)

To: Saint Paul City Clerk, Saint Paul City Council, Department of Public Works, Office of Financial Services – Assessments

Re: Formal Objection to Proposed Special Assessment – 309 Pelham Blvd

I am the owner of 309 Pelham Blvd, Saint Paul, Minnesota, and I submit this letter as a formal objection to the proposed special assessment levied in connection with the Pelham Boulevard improvement project.

This objection is submitted pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429 and the City of Saint Paul's Special Assessment Policies, and it is intended to be included in the official project record.

1. No New Special Benefit to My Property

Under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 429 and the City of Saint Paul's Special Assessment Policies, a property may be assessed only to the extent that it receives a special benefit, defined as an increase in market value attributable to the improvement.

Parking adjacent to my property was previously removed to accommodate the bike path in 2017. The current project does not restore parking, improve access, or otherwise increase the market value of my property beyond existing conditions. Accordingly, the project does not confer a new special benefit to my parcel.

2. Boulevard Removal and Roadway Relocation Create a Net Decrease in Property Value

The proposed design removes the boulevard area adjacent to my property and relocates the roadway and pedestrian facilities closer to the residence. These changes impose measurable and permanent negative impacts that diminish, rather than enhance, property value.

Specifically, the redesigned project will:

- Reduce physical separation between the home and moving traffic
- Increase exposure to roadway noise and vehicle activity
- Eliminate green space that provides curb appeal
- Reduce the perceived privacy and residential character of the property
- Move the pedestrian walkway closer to vehicular traffic, increasing safety concerns and reducing pedestrian comfort

The boulevard currently functions as a critical buffer that mitigates noise, provides visual separation, supports landscaping, and contributes to the overall residential appeal of the property. Its removal, combined with roadway relocation closer to the structure, represents a net loss in livability and marketability.

These impacts are well-recognized factors in residential property valuation and buyer preference and cannot reasonably be characterized as a benefit. Rather, they constitute a decrease in property value, directly undermining the legal basis for any special assessment.

In addition, the current project plans do not adequately address or account for the removal of mature trees necessitated by the reduction or elimination of the boulevard. These trees presently provide

critical visual screening and coverage, preventing direct sightlines between the roadway and the residence and between the residence and passing traffic.
The removal or damage to these trees would:

- Eliminate established visual buffering between the home and the roadway
- Increase direct visual exposure of the residence to traffic and pedestrians
- Increase the visibility of the roadway from within the home
- Permanently alter the residential character and privacy of the property

The loss of mature tree cover is not a temporary or minor impact. Trees of this scale and maturity cannot be reasonably replaced within a relevant time horizon for property valuation purposes. The absence of adequate tree-preservation measures or mitigation analysis in the current design further underscores that these impacts have not been fully evaluated or offset.

Taken together, the removal of boulevard space, the relocation of the roadway closer to the residence, and the loss of mature tree cover result in a compounded and permanent reduction in privacy, curb appeal, and marketability. These factors are well recognized in residential valuation and buyer preference and constitute a net decrease in property value, not a special benefit.

Further, the current project plans do not include a legend, key, or explanatory notation that would allow a reasonable interpretation of how the proposed design addresses, protects, mitigates, or otherwise manages impacts to the identified legacy trees within the boulevard area.

Absent a clear legend or explanatory framework, it is not possible to determine from the plans:

- Which trees are proposed for removal versus preservation
- Whether root protection zones are recognized or respected
- Whether grading, curb relocation, or utility work encroaches into critical root areas
- What, if any, mitigation or avoidance measures are contemplated

Plans that depict proposed construction without a legend explaining tree symbols, protection limits, or impact classifications cannot be meaningfully evaluated by affected property owners, decision-makers, or reviewing bodies. This omission prevents informed review of the project's true impacts on mature trees and undermines any assertion that such impacts have been adequately considered or minimized.

Given the age, scale, and irreplaceable nature of the affected trees—including trees confirmed to be at least sixty-six (66) years old and likely significantly older—failure to clearly document tree impacts and preservation measures constitutes a material deficiency in the project plans. Proceeding without such clarity risks unintended and irreversible damage to legacy trees that contribute materially to property value and neighborhood character.

Prior to any Final Order Resolution, the City should correct this deficiency by:

- Providing a complete and accurate legend explaining all tree-related plan symbols
- Clearly identifying which trees are to be preserved, impacted, or removed
- Documenting protection measures for retained trees
- Evaluating design alternatives that avoid or minimize impacts to legacy canopy

Proceeding without these clarifications would be inconsistent with sound engineering practice and responsible public-improvement planning, particularly where irreversible environmental and property-value impacts are at stake.

3. Non-Uniform Treatment Within the Same Property Class

City policy requires that assessments be uniform by property class. My property is being subjected to boulevard removal and increased roadway proximity while nearby, similarly classified single-family residential properties within the project area are not.

Furthermore other examples of non uniformity assessment during this project have been validated and demonstrated by the below public comment and response during the public forum that I was not prior informed of occurring. The second home on Beverly is not included in any special assessment on the project while directly benefiting from the construction of a sidewalk in front of their home.

"2025-12-09 20:29:47: Will there be additional sidewalk footage on Beverly?

Project response: yes, a short segment of sidewalk will be added to the south side of Beverly west of Pelham. It will connect to the existing sidewalk on Beverly that ends about 230 feet west of Pelham. The Pelham project gives the city the opportunity to address this sidewalk gap."

"2025-12-09 20:32:21: Do Pelham residents pay for that Beverly sidewalk? 2 people:

Project response: Beverly sidewalk is included in the overall project cost. Properties on Pelham will be assessed for all elements of the project, including the 230 feet of sidewalk on Beverly."

Despite this unequal treatment, the assessment methodology does not reflect any adjustment, reduction, or exemption. This lack of uniformity imposes a disproportionate burden on my property and is inconsistent with City policy and Minnesota law.

4. Assessment Exceeds Any Reasonable Special Benefit

Even after application of the City's special benefit cap, the remaining assessment exceeds any demonstrable increase in market value. Given the cumulative negative impacts of prior parking removal, boulevard elimination, roadway encroachment, increased noise, and reduced buffering, the project results in no net special benefit to my property.

An assessment that exceeds special benefit is invalid under Minnesota law.

Requested Action

I respectfully request that the City Council take one or more of the following actions:

- Remove or substantially reduce the proposed special assessment for 309 Pelham Blvd, or
- Reassess the parcel to fully account for boulevard removal, roadway relocation, prior parking loss, increased noise exposure, reduced curb appeal, and non-uniform treatment

Please enter this objection into the official record.

Sincerely,

Bernae VeraKruse
Owner, 309 Pelham Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55104
bernae.verakruse@gmail.com / 651-444-0689

December 9, 2025 Virtual DPIA Meeting, Zoom chat and project responses

Pelham Boulevard Reconstruction Agenda Item

Department of Public Works, City of Saint Paul

December 24, 2025

On Tuesday December 9, 2025, Department of Public Works staff attended a virtual meeting hosted by Desnoyer Park improvement Association (DPIA). Staff presented updates to nearly 100 people about the 2026 Pelham Boulevard Reconstruction.

As part of the virtual meeting, a virtual chat was used by meeting participants to ask questions and share feedback in real time, as staff were presenting. This document shows the chat box submissions (**in bold text**), with names of the user removed, and staff responses written after the meeting (in regular text). Not all chat box comments/questions warranted a response from staff.

For more information on project engagement and feedback, please visit the project webpage at stpaul.gov/pelham.

Project contact:

Jimmy Shoemaker, Senior City Planner

Department of Public Works

jimmy.shoemaker@ci.stpaul.mn.us | 651-266-6204

2025-12-09 19:48:25:

Is there anyone on this call that wants to remove the 4 way stop at Doane and Pelham and put in the median?

2025-12-09 19:53:12:

Will the stop signs at Otis remain? I hope so. Otherwise crossing Pelham will be difficult.

Project response: The intersection of Pelham and Otis will remain as an all way stop.

2025-12-09 19:53:15:

Try stopping at the top of Pelham hill or bottom of Pelham bridge today. Unsafe to cross at Doane without stop signs.

1 person: 👏

Project response: staff have evaluated the grades/slopes of approaches to the intersections where stop signs are planned and have not found safety concerns.

2025-12-09 19:53:17:

Beverly 4way is ridulous - drive tonite in this snow

2 people: 👍

2025-12-09 19:54:30:

How will children cross at Doane without a stop sign?

1 person: 👍

Project response: With a median, people walking will cross Pelham at Doane in the same way as they do at any other two-way stop-controlled intersection. However, the proposed median refuge will allow the crossing to be made in two "stages". People walking will first cross one lane of traffic, pause in the median (planned to be a minimum of eight feet wide), then cross the other lane of traffic. The median will also change traffic patterns at the intersection – drivers will no longer be able to make left turns or drive across Pelham on Doane. This adds to the safety benefits of a median by simplifying the intersection and reducing potential conflict points (i.e. there will be fewer vehicle movements for someone walking to keep track of). As with all other intersections in the state of Minnesota, drivers are required to stop for a pedestrian at all marked (painted) and unmarked (unpainted) crossings, per Minnesota State Statute 169.21.

2025-12-09 19:55:13:

I still don't understand why we can't have a 4-way stop at ALL three intersections to truly slow traffic. I'm very concerned about no 4-way stop at the park/playground where lots of humans cross the street.

2 people: 👍

Project response: The decision to remove the all-way stop at Doane is based on a corridor wide review of the intersection traffic control on Pelham. This was due to requests received both prior to and during the project design process to add stop signs at Beverly and at St. Anthony. Based on a corridor wide review it was determined that Beverly and St. Anthony better met the criteria for stop sign installation than Doane and could be justified due to their traffic characteristics. It is noted that the installation of stop signs at Beverly and St. Anthony does result in stop sign spacing a little less than the minimum quarter mile spacing established for collector roads such as Pelham but was not deemed unreasonable given the resulting spacing and the characteristics of the cross streets. Adding an additional stop sign at Doane could not be justified due to the lower volumes on Doane and the significantly closer stop sign spacing that would result.

Stop sign compliance has been and continues to be a common safety issue and concern in the city. As a result, we are judicious in our use and placement of stop signs to limit disrespect for these signs. The proposed placement of stop signs on Pelham Is trying to strike the appropriate balance for the corridor and place stop signs where they best meet installation and spacing criteria.

In addition, a refuge median island is proposed at Doane as a safety treatment for pedestrian crossings.

2025-12-09 19:55:59:

Replying to "Is there anyone on this call that wants to remove ...":

Definitely not!

2025-12-09 19:58:35:

Yes, terrible visibility at the proposed four-way stops on Beverly and St. Anthony, and difficulty stopping/starting at those potential four-way stops in the winter with icy conditions on the hills.

2025-12-09 19:59:15:

What would be the pathway for people on bikes getting onto Pelham from Doane, or vice versa? Would it be a two-step movement pausing on the median?

2 people: 👍

Project response: the off-street bikeway is planned for the east side of Pelham. People biking from the east on Doane would simply ride onto the bikeway. Coming from the west, bikers would stop at the stop sign on Doane, cross the southbound travel lane, pause in the median if needed, then cross the northbound travel lane. Once across Pelham, people biking would continue east on Doane or enter the bikeway on the east side of Pelham.

There are not planned to be bicycle cut throughs of the median. People biking would use the pedestrian cut throughs of the median. The city typically only adds bike cut throughs of medians if the cross street is part of the planned or existing bicycle network, and Doane is not.

2025-12-09 19:59:25:

Great example! If drivers don't want to stop, they should not come down Pelham. We welcome St. Paul police to monitor our stop signs.

2025-12-09 19:59:50:

the hill on Pelham and Beverley will be insanely dangerous

2025-12-09 19:59:52:

More stop signs mean less compliance? Aren't you proposing more stop signs along Pelham?

Project response: The decision to remove the all-way stop at Doane is based on a corridor wide review of the intersection traffic control on Pelham. This was due to requests received both prior to and during the project design process to add stop signs at Beverly and at St. Anthony. Based on a corridor wide review it was determined that Beverly and St. Anthony better met the criteria for stop sign installation than Doane and could be justified due to their traffic characteristics. It is noted that the installation of stop signs at Beverly and St. Anthony does result in stop sign spacing a little less than the minimum quarter mile spacing established for collector roads such as Pelham but was not deemed unreasonable given the resulting spacing and the characteristics of the cross streets. Adding an additional stop sign at Doane could not be justified due to the lower volumes on Doane and the significantly closer stop sign spacing that would result.

Stop sign compliance has been and continues to be a common safety issue and concern in the city. As a result, we are judicious in our use and placement of stop signs to limit disrespect for these signs. The proposed placement of stop signs on Pelham Is trying to strike the appropriate balance for the corridor and place stop signs where they best meet installation and spacing criteria.

2025-12-09 20:00:02:

From a street standpoint, a stop sign at Beverly is pretty important with people coming from the highway, and i think less dangerous

2025-12-09 20:00:36:

Was a traffic circle considered ?

Project response: Neighborhood traffic circles are designed specifically for the intersection of two low-volume streets. A neighborhood traffic circle would not be an appropriate treatment on Pelham due to its function as a collector road and its corresponding traffic volumes.

A roundabout is a different type of circular intersection that can be utilized on collector or arterial streets as an alternative treatment to stop signs or traffic signals. Due to the specific design requirements of a roundabout, they typically have a larger intersection footprint than a standard 4-way intersection. A roundabout was analyzed at the intersection of Pelham and Otis, but was eliminated due to the space constraints.

2025-12-09 20:00:55:

From 7:30-9am and from 3:30-6:30 each day traffic moving in both directions is of a volume and moving at speeds that make backing out of our driveway dangerous. Traffic does not stop for us to leave our home. Drivers expect to move an optimal speed on Pelham to get wherever they are going. We have witnessed this and experienced this for some time and commented to the City in writing at at meetings. The reconstruction of this street needs to change remove this danger. Stop signs need to be added to slow these drivers.

Project response: traffic is not expected to stop at a private driveway. Instead, people leaving their private driveways or alleys are expected to wait for a gap in traffic, then safely enter the street. This is the same procedure citywide.

2025-12-09 20:01:35:

can you share the u of m contact that you mentioned? [mentioned verbally in the meeting by a neighbor]

2025-12-09 20:01:59:

I think that was one of the main reasons for the median, to force a slowing of traffic, which is why I voted for that option

2025-12-09 20:03:20:

Will this slide deck be available to us after this presentation?

1 person: 👍

Project response: the presentation shared on screen during the December 9 meeting was posted to the project webpage on December 12, 2025. Stpaul.gov/pelham.

2025-12-09 20:03:47:

I'm glad that there's serious consideration of safety improvements at Doane. A good friend of mine was hit biking at Pelham and Doane by someone who didn't respect the stop sign. People rolling through it is a real problem.

2025-12-09 20:04:59:

Replying to "Will this slide deck be available to us after this...":

It will be posted on the Pelham reconstruction city site with the other materials from the process. Jimmy thought by end of the week it would be posted.

1 person: 👍

Project response: the presentation shared on screen during the December 9 meeting was posted to the project webpage on December 12, 2025. Stpaul.gov/pelham.

2025-12-09 20:10:41:

Replying to "Will this slide deck be available to us after this...":

It appears that the city planners have taken the "known goals" and removed the goal of "reducing cut through traffic" on Pelham- that is is in conflict with the neighborhood

Project response: Project staff recognize and acknowledge reducing cut-through traffic is a goal for some people in the neighborhood. However, this is *not* a goal of the project, nor has it ever been. A response to the neighborhood goal of reducing cut-through traffic was offered in the document *Staff Responses to Feedback Received*, posted to the project webpage in December 2024. The relevant response is pasted below for reference:

Theme 1: Concern about "cut-through" or "non-neighborhood" traffic on Pelham.

While feedback from people showed an interest in limiting the amount of non-neighborhood cut through traffic, there are as many people who appreciate the convenient connectivity out of the neighborhood that Pelham provides. It is very difficult to design a street that both connects conveniently to destinations for neighborhood or "local" drivers while at the same time restricts and prohibits access

to people passing through the neighborhood (“non-neighbors”). In other words, the design that gives Desnoyer Park neighbors easy access to desired destinations is the same design that allows non-neighbors to reach their destinations outside Desnoyer Park. There is evidence through observation and neighborhood conversations that evening commuters southbound on Hwy 280 exit at University Avenue, drive south on Eustis Street, east on Wabash Avenue, then south through the neighborhood on Pelham to destinations to the south and into Minneapolis. This is likely due to the lack of connection between southbound Hwy 280 and Cretin Avenue via I-94. A similar pattern occurs in the morning, though not to the same level – a northbound traveler can access northbound Hwy 280 via Cretin Avenue and I-94. Pelham is designated as a “collector” street. It collects residential street and local traffic, then connects that traffic to other “arterial” streets like University Avenue and Marshall Avenue. The amount of traffic currently on Pelham, even with the southbound Hwy 280 connections, is consistent with other streets designated as collector streets in Saint Paul. In other words, Pelham is doing its job as intended. For context, traffic volumes on Cretin Avenue (an arterial street) during the evening commute are three times the amount of traffic on Pelham during that same time of day. The 2026 Pelham Blvd reconstruction will not limit vehicle access to Pelham. A goal instead is to calm and slow traffic that uses Pelham. Planning work is currently ongoing for future changes to I-94, known as Rethinking I-94, being led by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). City staff will share the concerns of cut-through traffic with MnDOT Rethinking I-94 staff.

2025-12-09 20:13:10:

Replying to "Will this slide deck be available to us after this...":

Agreed. Pelham is a known cut through route. The absence of stop signs encourages -even invites the volume and speed of traffic that has been normalized. Our neighborhood’s safety and livability is compromised by these conditions.

2025-12-09 20:14:54:

How does bending the bikeway at Doane still allow a median?

2 People: 👍

Project response: the intersection of Doane and Pelham can be designed to accommodate a median refuge, while still giving the necessary space to the tree on the southeast corner. This is done by bending the bikeway towards the street (westward) by a few feet. This reduces the boulevard space between the bikeway to something less than the ideal six feet. This bend of the bikeway reduces excavation within the tree’s critical root zone.

2025-12-09 20:20:23:

If there are sidewalks added on Beverly, for example, to complete the connection to Pelham, would that be billed to Pelham residents or the residents of Beverly?

Project response: Beverly sidewalk is included in overall project cost. That sidewalk infill crosses two properties of Beverly which one of them is part of the properties being assessed.

2025-12-09 20:20:42:

Why did the city planners decide to take out the 4 way stop at Doane?

Project response: The decision to remove the all-way stop at Doane is based on a corridor wide review of the intersection traffic control on Pelham. This was due to requests received both prior to and during the project design process to add stop signs at Beverly and at St. Anthony. Based on a corridor wide review it was determined that Beverly and St. Anthony better met the criteria for stop sign installation than Doane and could be justified due to their traffic characteristics. It is noted that the installation of stop signs at Beverly and St. Anthony does result in stop sign spacing a little less than the minimum quarter mile spacing established for collector roads such as Pelham but was not deemed unreasonable given the resulting spacing and the characteristics of the cross streets. Adding an additional stop sign at Doane could not be justified due to the lower volumes on Doane and the significantly closer stop sign spacing that would result.

Stop sign compliance has been and continues to be a common safety issue and concern in the city. As a result, we are judicious in our use and placement of stop signs to limit disrespect for these signs. The proposed placement of stop signs on Pelham Is trying to strike the appropriate balance for the corridor and place stop signs where they best meet installation and spacing criteria.

2025-12-09 20:21:23:

Can you provide Randy's phone number?

Randy Newton

651 266-6209

randy.newton@ci.stpaul.mn.us

2025-12-09 20:21:53:

Actually, can you provide emails and phone numbers for all the city staff on this call?

Randy Newton, City Traffic Engineer, 651 266-6209, randy.newton@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Jary Lee, Project manager, Pelham Blvd Reconstruction, 651-266-1107, jary.lee@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Nick Peterson, City Engineer, 651-266-6155, nick.peterson@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Jimmy Shoemaker, Planner, 651-266-6204, jimmy.shoemaker@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Lynn Rolff, Assessment Supervisor, 651-266-8851, lynn.rolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Richard Ekobena, Sewer Division Manager, 651-266-6253, richard.ekobena@ci.stpaul.mn.us

2025-12-09 20:22:51:

It sounds like you all have been very thoughtful about analyzing many different angles for this project, sought feedback and that your intentions consider safety and the environment. I appreciate all of your efforts and time!

3 People: 👍

2025-12-09 20:23:51:

As homeowners with frontage on Pelham, we would appreciate an in-person meeting to discuss these details in the near future.

5 people: 👍

2025-12-09 20:24:35:

I see only one person on this call showing support for taking out the 4 way stop sign at Doane- do you see more?

2025-12-09 20:25:56:

With the median, will there be a "crosswalk" sign that drivers are obligated to stop if there is a pedestrian attempting to cross?

Project response: Per Minnesota State Statute 169.21, drivers are required to stop for a pedestrian at all intersections – whether a crossing has signage and pavement markings or not.

In the past, city staff marked (painted) crosswalks much more liberally. As a result, the city has a difficult time keeping up with the ongoing cost to remark (repaint) them. In the last ten years, the city has created a policy to prioritize marked crosswalks where they are most needed, based on number of people crossing. The current policy says that crosswalk signage and pavement markings are installed at unsignalized crossings in Saint Paul where a minimum of 20 people cross in any single hour. Ongoing evaluation will determine if this crossing at Doane will be marked (painted).

2025-12-09 20:26:16:

I completely agree with 3 young kids and I live on Beverly. There needs to be a 4 way stop at Doane and Pelham

2 people: 👍

2025-12-09 20:27:52:

The queuing of cars at rush hour without a stop sign at Doane to let kids cross to the park is dangerous.

2 People: 👍

2025-12-09 20:28:11:

Jimmy, is there a reason why you took off the goal of "reducing cut through traffic"?

Project response: Project staff recognize and acknowledge reducing cut-through traffic is a goal for some people in the neighborhood. However, this is *not* a goal of the project, nor has it ever been. A response to the neighborhood goal of reducing cut-through traffic was offered in the document *Staff Responses to Feedback Received*, posted to the project webpage in December 2024. The relevant response is pasted below for reference:

Theme 1: Concern about "cut-through" or "non-neighborhood" traffic on Pelham.

While feedback from people showed an interest in limiting the amount of non-neighborhood cutthrough traffic, there are as many people who appreciate the convenient connectivity out of the neighborhood that Pelham provides. It is very difficult to design a street that both connects conveniently to destinations for neighborhood or "local" drivers while at the same time restricts and prohibits access to people passing through the neighborhood ("non-neighbors"). In other words, the design that gives Desnoyer Park neighbors easy access to desired destinations is the same design that allows non-neighbors to reach their destinations outside Desnoyer Park. There is evidence through observation and neighborhood conversations that evening commuters southbound on Hwy 280 exit at University Avenue, drive south on Eustis Street, east on Wabash Avenue, then south through the neighborhood on Pelham to destinations to the south and into Minneapolis. This is likely due to the lack of connection between southbound Hwy 280 and Cretin Avenue via I-94. A similar pattern occurs in the morning, though not to the same level – a northbound traveler can access northbound Hwy 280 via Cretin Avenue and I-94. Pelham is designated as a "collector" street. It collects residential street and local traffic, then connects that traffic to other "arterial" streets like University Avenue and Marshall Avenue. The amount of traffic currently on Pelham, even with the southbound Hwy 280 connections, is consistent with other streets designated as collector streets in Saint Paul. In other words, Pelham is doing its job as intended. For context, traffic volumes on Cretin Avenue (an arterial street) during the evening commute are three

times the amount of traffic on Pelham during that same time of day. The 2026 Pelham Blvd reconstruction will not limit vehicle access to Pelham. A goal instead is to calm and slow traffic that uses Pelham. Planning work is currently ongoing for future changes to I-94, known as Rethinking I-94, being led by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). City staff will share the concerns of cut-through traffic with MnDOT Rethinking I-94 staff.

2025-12-09 20:28:14:

I agree with comments that more stop signs are safer, especially at Doane

1 Person: 👍

2025-12-09 20:29:26:

I'm not taking a position on Doane and I respect the concerns being raised. When I bike with my kids on Pelham, the insanely dangerous spot right now is St Anthony. I have to bike ahead of them and wait in the middle of the street and wave like crazy to get drivers' attention.

2025-12-09 20:29:47:

Will there be additional sidewalk footage on Beverly?

Project response: yes, a short segment of sidewalk will be added to the south side of Beverly west of Pelham. It will connect to the existing sidewalk on Beverly that ends about 230 feet west of Pelham. The Pelham project gives the city the opportunity to address this sidewalk gap.

2025-12-09 20:30:05:

If not tonight, when will we have this conversation? We've been requesting this conversation for many months.

1 person: ❤️

Project response: staff are working with DPIA and neighbors to schedule a meeting in January, after the holiday season.

2025-12-09 20:30:11:

yes

2025-12-09 20:30:16:

What is the status of the "art" project?

Project response: staff released a request for propels (RFP) in the fall of 2025. A group of city staff and Desnoyer Park neighbors reviewed the responses and were unsatisfied with the quality. The plan is to re-release the RFP, with slight modifications, sometime in January 2026. The same panel of staff and neighbors will meet again and review responses. Once an artist is selected, they will work with the broader neighborhood to create public art that is consistent with the values and vision heard from engagement with residents.

2025-12-09 20:30:22:

Will they pay for that?

1 person: 👍

2025-12-09 20:31:03:

I hope that the City applies what they know about getting people to respect stop signs to the design for Pelham. Stop signs that commuters ignore and roll through won't help us.

2025-12-09 20:31:41:

Artistic stop signs like south of Macalester?

2025-12-09 20:32:21:

Do Pelham residents pay for that Beverly sidewalk?

2 people: 👍

Project response: Beverly sidewalk is included in the overall project cost. Properties on Pelham will be assessed for all elements of the project, including the 230 feet of sidewalk on Beverly.

2025-12-09 20:33:07:

Jimmy tonight, can you provide emails and phone numbers for all the city staff on this call?

Randy Newton, City Traffic Engineer, 651 266-6209, randy.newton@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Jary Lee, Project manager, Pelham Blvd Reconstruction, 651-266-1107, jary.lee@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Nick Peterson, City Engineer, 651-266-6155, nick.peterson@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Jimmy Shoemaker, Planner, 651-266-6204, jimmy.shoemaker@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Lynn Rolff, Assessment Supervisor, 651-266-8851, lynn.rolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Richard Ekobena, Sewer Division Manager, 651-266-6253, richard.ekobena@ci.stpaul.mn.us

2025-12-09 20:33:15:

Do you know when the RFP process for the art project will be re-opened?

Project staff: unsure of exact date, though likely in the second half of January 2026. Please contact Jimmy Shoemaker for more information.

Jimmy Shoemaker, Planner, 651-266-6204, jimmy.shoemaker@ci.stpaul.mn.us

2025-12-09 20:33:20:

Thanks, Dave.

2025-12-09 20:33:23:

Desnoyer Park is a neighborhood in which cut through traffic has and continues to define conditions in our neighborhood. We have to back into traffic that does not stop. This comment needs to be taken seriously by the City.

2025-12-09 20:34:01:

Phone numbers would be best

2025-12-09 20:34:02 From Jary Lee to Everyone:

Replying to "Will they pay for that?":

Project response: Beverly sidewalk is included in overall project cost. That sidewalk infill crosses two properties of Beverly which one of them is part of the properties being assessed.

2025-12-09 20:34:05:

I'll second the comments on the Bike Lane risks at Beverly and St Anthony as with no stop signs my girls have had cars tear across Pelham near them just because there were not stop signs and traffic on Pelham was thick. We can't have cars tearing across Pelham because traffic is too thick to

traverse it. It's a real risk for bikers and children so thanks for installing extra stop signs, but broader traffic needs to be addressed.

2025-12-09 20:34:22:

I'm hearing concern from the City as well as expertise! Thank you for being open to feedback

2025-12-09 20:34:38:

Replying to "Will they pay for that?":

Why not the other?

2025-12-09 20:34:53 From Randy Newton to Everyone:

Randy Newton

651 266-6209

randy.newton@ci.stpaul.mn.us

1 person: 👍

2025-12-09 20:36:00:

Nick. Thank you and I look forward to meeting with you

2025-12-09 20:36:22:

We have had cars pass our vehicle on the inside when we slow down to turn into our driveway or onto Desnoyer Ave. There is a pattern of dangerous driving invited by the absence of stop signs.

2025-12-09 20:36:35:

Thank you for being here to present this information to Desnoyer residents.

2025-12-09 20:36:37:

Thank you all for your time

2025-12-09 20:36:44:

Thank you.

2025-12-09 20:36:48:

Thank you everyone!

2025-12-09 20:36:58:

Good discussion, thank you. We look forward to more discussion.

2025-12-09 20:37:38:

My understanding is that the Pelham Triangle will not be addressed/changed during this project. Please confirm.

Project response: the majority of funding for this project is coming from Common Cent (1% sales tax approved by voters in 2023). That funding source is limited and does not include expenditures outside street improvements in the public right of way. As of now, Pelham Triangle is not being considered for changes with this project. As design progresses and there becomes more clarity on project cost, project staff will update the neighborhood if funds become available for changes to Pelham Triangle.

2025-12-09 20:40:21 From David Tierney to Everyone:

tierney.david@gmail.com

From:	Bernae VeraKruse
To:	*CI-StPaul_CityClerk; *TransitionTeam
Cc:	*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council; #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_PublicWorks; Jimmy Shoemaker; Jary Lee; Nick Peterson; Richard Ekobena
Subject:	ATTN: FORMAL DESIGN OBJECTION / GRAND ROUND / PELHAM PROJECT
Date:	Thursday, January 8, 2026 5:11:38 PM
Attachments:	309 PELHAM FORMAL DESIGN OBJECTION.pdf

You don't often get email from bernae.verakruse@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Good afternoon,

I am the owner of 309 Pelham Blvd, Saint Paul, Minnesota, and I submit this letter as a formal objection to the proposed design of the Pelham Boulevard Public Improvement Project. This objection is submitted prior to any Final Order Resolution and is intended to be included in the official project record.

Respectfully,

Bernae VeraKruse
309 Pelham Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55104
bernae.verakruse@gmail.com
(cell) 651-444-0689

FORMAL DESIGN OBJECTION, NOTICE OBJECTION, AND REQUEST FOR REPAIR-BASED ALTERNATIVE

Subject: Formal Design Objection, Notice Objection, and Request for Repair-Based Alternative
Project: Pelham Boulevard Public Improvement Project
Property: 309 Pelham Blvd, Saint Paul, Minnesota
To: Saint Paul Department of Public Works, City of Saint Paul – Engineering Division, City Council, Ward 4

I am the owner of 309 Pelham Blvd, Saint Paul, Minnesota, and I submit this letter as a formal objection to the proposed design of the Pelham Boulevard Public Improvement Project. This objection is submitted prior to any Final Order Resolution and is intended to be included in the official project record.

This objection addresses (1) design necessity, (2) cumulative negative property impacts, and (3) deficiencies in notice and property-owner engagement.

1. Failure to Demonstrate Necessity of Full Reconstruction

The City's policies and standard engineering practice require that public improvements be reasonably tailored to the demonstrated condition and needs of existing infrastructure. To date, the City has not demonstrated why repair, rehabilitation, or mill-and-overlay of the existing roadway and bike path would be insufficient to address current conditions.

The roadway and bike path currently exist and function. In the absence of documented structural failure or conditions that cannot be remedied through repair-based alternatives, full reconstruction constitutes a discretionary redesign rather than an engineering necessity. The City has not produced documentation showing that less invasive alternatives were meaningfully evaluated and rejected based on objective engineering criteria.

2. Boulevard Removal Is a Discretionary Design Choice, Not an Engineering Requirement

The proposed removal of the boulevard at my frontage is not required to accomplish pavement repair or bike path maintenance. Boulevard removal is a policy-driven design choice, not an engineering necessity, and it imposes direct negative impacts on my property.

The boulevard currently provides:

- Physical separation between the residence and vehicular traffic
- Noise and visual buffering
- Drainage and snow-storage capacity
- Aesthetic value contributing to curb appeal and marketability
- Removal of this space will:
- Bring traffic closer to the residence
- Increase noise, splash, and winter maintenance impacts
- Eliminate green space integral to neighborhood character
- Reduce perceived and actual property value

These impacts are negative in nature and cannot reasonably be characterized as a benefit to the property.

3. Cumulative Negative Impacts Following Prior Bike Lane Reconstruction (2017)

In 2017, bike lane reconstruction along Pelham Boulevard resulted in the removal of on-street parking adjacent to 309 Pelham Blvd. That action permanently reduced access and functional use of the property and constituted a prior negative impact.

The current project does not restore parking or improve access. Instead, it compounds the prior loss by proposing the removal of the boulevard, thereby further reducing buffering, usability, and curb appeal. This represents a cumulative pattern of property-specific harm over time, not the creation of new benefits.

Successive public projects that incrementally reduce property value cannot later rely on generalized public objectives to justify additional burdens imposed on the same parcel.

4. Disproportionate and Non-Uniform Impact

My property is subject to boulevard removal while nearby, similarly classified single-family residential properties within the same project area retain their boulevards. This results in non-uniform treatment and imposes a disproportionate burden on a subset of properties, including 309 Pelham Blvd and any other parcels losing boulevard space.

Where project impacts are unequal, the City must either avoid the unequal treatment or mitigate it through design modification or parcel-level exception. Proceeding without such mitigation raises serious concerns regarding fairness, proportionality, and policy compliance.

5. Deficient Property Owner Notification and Engagement

In addition to the substantive design concerns, there have been procedural deficiencies in notice and property-owner engagement related to this project.

I have been informed by the project representative, Jimmy Schumacher, that no property owner notification occurred after 2024, until receiving updated information on January 3, 2026, and dated December 15, 2025.

Further, there were subsequent discussions and communications regarding the project that occurred without notification to me as the affected property owner, until January 3, 2026, when I received a letter from the City. Prior to that date, I was not provided notice of ongoing discussions or developments affecting my property.

Additionally, I have since learned that email communications and discussions regarding the project and my property have occurred without my inclusion, despite requests that I be included in such communications.

Meaningful notice and opportunity for property-owner engagement are essential components of fair public-improvement processes. The lack of timely notification and exclusion from ongoing project discussions further underscores the need for careful reconsideration of both the project design and its impacts on affected parcels.

6. Inaccurate Representation of Existing Conditions at the Pelham Blvd and Otis Ave Intersection and Resulting Impacts to Mature Trees

The current project plans for the Pelham Boulevard and Otis Avenue intersection do not accurately represent existing curb geometry or site conditions, and, as a result, materially understate the impacts of the proposed design on long-established mature trees adjacent to the roadway.

The curb configuration at this intersection differs from what is depicted in the project drawings, and the proposed alignment and curb work would encroach into areas currently occupied by mature boulevard trees that have been present on or adjacent to the property for a confirmed period of at least sixty-six (66) years, based on available historical records and documentation. Given their size and species characteristics, these trees are likely closer to one hundred (100) years old.

Mature trees of this age and scale constitute a significant existing site feature that materially contributes to:

- Neighborhood character and visual continuity
- Environmental and stormwater mitigation benefits
- Property value and marketability
- Established root systems that are sensitive to curb relocation and grade changes

Design plans that fail to accurately depict existing curb conditions and tree locations cannot reliably evaluate impacts, mitigation needs, or alternatives. Removal or damage to these trees would represent an irreversible loss and a substantial negative impact to the affected properties, including 309 Pelham Blvd.

Prior to any Final Order Resolution, the City should:

- Correct project drawings to accurately reflect existing curb geometry
- Identify and map all mature trees affected by the proposed intersection design
- Evaluate design alternatives that preserve these trees, including curb retention, alignment adjustments, or parcel-level design exceptions

Proceeding without accurate representation of existing conditions and without evaluating preservation alternatives would be inconsistent with sound engineering practice and responsible public-improvement planning.

7. Requested Relief

In light of the above, I respectfully request that the City take one or more of the following actions prior to any Final Order Resolution:

- Evaluate and document repair-based alternatives, including mill-and-overlay or rehabilitation of the existing roadway and bike path
- Preserve the existing boulevard at 309 Pelham Blvd
- Grant a parcel-level design exception to mitigate property-specific and cumulative harm
- Address deficiencies in notice and engagement by ensuring full inclusion of affected property owners in project communications

This objection is submitted to ensure that project decisions are supported by engineering necessity, applied uniformly, and implemented through a fair and transparent process. Please include this objection in the official project record.

Sincerely,

Bernae VeraKruse
Owner, 309 Pelham Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55104
bernae.verakruse@gmail.com / 651-444-0689