

Minutes

Metropolitan Council



Meeting date: October 11, 2023

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: 390 Robert Street

Members present:

- Chair, Charlie Zelle
- Judy Johnson, District 1
- Reva Chamblis, District 2
- Tyronne Carter, District 3
- Deb Barber, District 4
- John Pacheco Jr., District 5

- Robert Lilligren, District 6
- Yassin Osman, District 7
- Anjuli Cameron, District 8
- Diego Morales, District 9
- Peter Lindstrom, District 10
- Gail Cederberg, District 11

- Susan Vento, District 12
- Chai Lee, District 13
- Toni Carter, District 14
- Tenzin Dolkar, District 15
- Wendy Wulff, District 16
- = present

Call to order

A quorum being present, Council Chair Zelle called the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council to order at 4:00 p.m.

Agenda approved

Council Members did not have any comments or changes to the agenda.

Approval of minutes

It was moved by W.T. Carter, seconded by Vento to approve the minutes of the September 27, 2023, regular meeting of the Metropolitan Council. **Motion carried.**

Public invitation

The following individuals provided public comment regarding the Summit Avenue Regional Trail: Andrew Singer, Tony Desnick, Brian Martinson, Hugo Bruggeman, Faith Krogstad, Espen Krogstad, Marilyn Bach, Gary Todd.

The Council also accepted written public comments regarding the Summit Avenue Regional Trail. The written comments are attached as Attachment 1.

Consent business

Consent business adopted (Items 1-2)

1. **2023-218:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute contracts 22P328A-D, which will provide the Council with General Banking, Custody, and Purchasing Card services, in an amount not to exceed \$770,000.
2. **2023-237:** That the Metropolitan Council:
 1. Approve the 2024 Annual Public Housing Agency (PHA) Plan, including changes to the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan as described in this report and attachments.
 2. Authorize the Metropolitan Council Chair to execute the required certifications.

3. Direct staff to submit the final PHA Plan to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

It was moved by Lilligren, seconded by Johnson.

Motion carried.

Non-consent business – Reports of standing committees

Community Development

1. Reports on consent agenda.

Environment

1. **2023-220:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute a contract 22P076A with Corval Constructors, Inc., to provide construction services at the Metropolitan Wastewater Treatment Plant (MWWTP) in an amount not to exceed \$39,877,080.

It was moved by Lindstrom, seconded by Osman.

Motion carried.

2. **2023-221:** That the Metropolitan Council adopt Resolution 2023-20 authorizing the acquisition and condemnation of real estate property for the Interceptor Rehab Project 6-MO-650, MCES Project No. 819022.

It was moved by Lindstrom, seconded by T. Carter.

Motion carried.

Management

1. Reports on consent agenda.

Transportation

1. **2023-195:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute Amendment 1 to contract 22I046, Joint Powers and Cooperative Construction Agreement with Hennepin County, to receive approximately \$27,000,000 in additional funds for construction of County-requested improvements along the METRO B Line corridor.

It was moved by Barber, seconded by Chamblis.

Motion carried.

2. **2023-196:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to execute Amendment 2 to contract 20P322 with Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. for engineering and construction administration services for the METRO B Line BRT project, to increase the contract value by \$2,399,269, for a revised contract not to exceed amount of \$13,834,168.

It was moved by Barber, seconded by Johnson.

Motion carried.

3. **2023-209:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize an increase of Metro Transit micro pilot fare from local to express fares.

It was moved by Barber, seconded by Johnson.

Motion carried.

4. **2023-224:** That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute final operating grants agreements for the METRO Orange Line for the period of December 1, 2021 to September 30, 2023 with the Funding Transitway Counties of Hennepin

County and Dakota County.

It was moved by Barber, seconded by Chamblis.

Motion carried.

Joint reports

5. **2023-225 JT:** To comply with the Legislature's directives in the Transit Rider Investment Program (TRIP), that the Metropolitan Council:
 1. Adopt Resolution 2023-19; and
 2. Adopt the Transit Rider Investment Program Policy

It was moved by Barber, seconded by Chamblis.

Council Member Barber and Johnson shared their support for this program. Council Member Johnson asked that staff explore options for contract staff to advance the program as quickly as possible. Council Member Wulff shared that this is about fare enforcement, and the ability to enforce citations. Council Members Lee and Toni Carter echoed the comments regarding urgency.

Motion carried.

Information

1. Public Comment Budget Update and 2024-2029 Capital Program

Marie Henderson, Deputy Chief Financial Officer, introduced the presentation and gave an overview of Council budget development. The Council's overall operating budget is \$1.42B. The 2024 Capital Program \$11.7B. The 2024 Capital Program future spending budget is \$6.95B. Ned Smith, Director of Finance and Pretreatment, Environmental Services (ES), gave an update on the ES capital program budget, which is \$2.43B. He also shared information about the ES future spending budget, which is \$2.05B. Capital program objectives are to preserve assets, meet capacity needs, and improve quality of service. Smith also shared information about upcoming programs and projects.

Ed Petrie, Finance Director, Metro Transit; and Heather Giesel, Director, Community Development and Metropolitan Transportation Services Finance, shared information about the Transit capital program budget. The Transit capital program budget is \$8.7B, and the Transit future spending budget is \$4.4B. Petrie also shared an overview of the Metro Area Transportation Sales Tax. Council members had questions regarding bus lifespan, and what happens beyond the 2029 Capital Program.

Giesel also gave an overview of the Community Development capital program budget. The Community Development capital program budget is \$451M; the future spending budget is \$508M. Council members did not have any other questions or comments.

Reports

Interim Regional Administrator Phil Walljasper reminded Council Members of the Employee Recognition Event on Monday, October 16, 2023. Chair Zelle, Council Members, and the General Counsel did not have any reports.

Adjournment

Business completed; the meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 11, 2023.

Approved this 25th day of October 2023.

Council contact:

Bridget Toskey, Recording Secretary
Bridget.Toskey@metc.state.mn.us
651-602-1806



My name is Iain Dove McAfee, and I am writing as both a St. Paul resident and homeowner, and a teacher who has working in St. Paul for many years, and a longtime bike commuter in St. Paul (since 2009). There are many things St. Paul is already doing well with bike safety - the fact that we have Summit Avenue at all as a relatively bike friendly street is better than what many cities have. That said, we have a long way to go before St. Paul is a city that is truly safe for bikes, and Summit Avenue, in my personal experience, is one place we need to improve. Of all the close calls I've ever had biking in this city, by far the scariest was on Summit, where a car started to turn left off of Summit onto a cross street, and stopped just short of hitting me on my bike. Fortunately I emerged uninjured, the driver profusely apologized, and we both went on our way.

Human beings don't generally leave the house intending to hit someone with their car. Nor are they generally apathetic about this. People make mistakes like that because of infrastructure. If bikes are not protected by that infrastructure (which currently they aren't), and if steps aren't taken to make us easily visible to cars, we get hit, and some of us die. I have far too many friends who didn't just have a close call, but were struck and injured. Some of them took months to heal, while some never healed fully at all or were even paralyzed. I don't doubt the sincerity of the objections people have to improving bike safety on Summit Avenue, but the question I have is this: are these things worth as much as our lives and our well-being? Nobody is saying that protecting our trees or having adequate parking isn't important, but are these things worth the literal lives of cyclists? I would argue that the only moral answer is no. Please keep the Safer Summit project moving forward without delay.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this.

Iain Dove McAfee

When I learned of the plan to put a raised separated bike trail down the length of Summit Avenue 18 months ago, I first approached the city to ask who wanted this. A simple question, I thought. The city's response was that the Met Council wanted the trail, having identified Summit Ave as a regional corridor. When I met with Charlie Zelle in July 2022, he said that the City of St. Paul wanted the trail. Each side pointing fingers at the other, and my surprise/ confusion continues to fester. If one of us were to have shepherded and been invested in a project that has never been done before in any similar context in the US, wouldn't whoever was behind that project be taking responsibility for it? Be lauding it? Encouraging and enthusiastic about placing a bike trail through a national historic designated urban residential area for the first time ever?

There remain many open questions about the choice of Summit, the undemonstrated need to undermine thousands of people opposed to this plan in clear opposition to the Met Council's promotion of their Growing Shade and Metro Mobility programs. Simply put, this trail makes no sense. It will destroy the tree canopy, destroy a historic district, create safety issues via hundreds of conflict points, create neighborhood parking and traffic issues due to parking loss and street closures. It denies accessibility to churches, residences, event spaces, schools and colleges. It is the wrong trail in the wrong place.

Please vote against the Summit Avenue Regional Trail proposal.

Sincerely,

Roddie Turner
452 Laurel Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55102

To Board Members:

The Summit Avenue Regional Trail community engagement process is and has been a disgraceful lie. Other than a few minor tweaks, Saint Paul Public Works and Parks and Rec predetermined the trail outcome and then cherry picked public comments from a few ardent anti-car proponents to claim broad community support, while ignoring over three thousand highly organized and vocal petitioners who oppose the trail the City's trail as designed.

Public Works claims that the trail will rectify historic racial inequalities and harms due to red-lining and I-94 construction in Saint Paul's Rondo and Frog Town neighborhoods, but then promotes a \$115 million trail through unconnected neighborhoods where the trail will almost exclusively be used by their upper class white residents.

If the trail were to run through the middle of Frog Town or Rondo and 3,000 of their community members opposed loss of 1,500 trees and loss of half their on-street parking, Mayor Carter would be leading a protest along with Mitra Jalali and her fellow city councilors.

After the SW Light Rail and similar major transportation infrastructure debacles, do we need one more that will destroy Summit Avenue, the finest fully-preserved historic streets in America?

Please don't let this happen on your watch. Please vote to stop this nightmare.

Thank you.

Patrick Contardo
1845 Summit Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105
218.390.0322
contardo@d.umn.edu

My name is Espen Krogstad, and I am ten years old. I live in a spot where biking is difficult, because our house is flanked by two busy streets where if I was biking, it would be really uncomfortable. So I would like it if Summit Avenue was a better, comfortable place to play and bike as opposed to an unwelcome, busy bike lane. So I say vote yes to the Summit Avenue Bike trail because it would be a safer, over the curb place for the next generation. Thank you.

My name is Faith Krogstad, and I live in Saint Paul with my spouse and two school-aged children. I'm here today with my son. I urge you to vote yes next month on the Summit Avenue Regional Trail plan,

because it would create a much safer Summit Avenue and create more equitable access to this unique amenity.

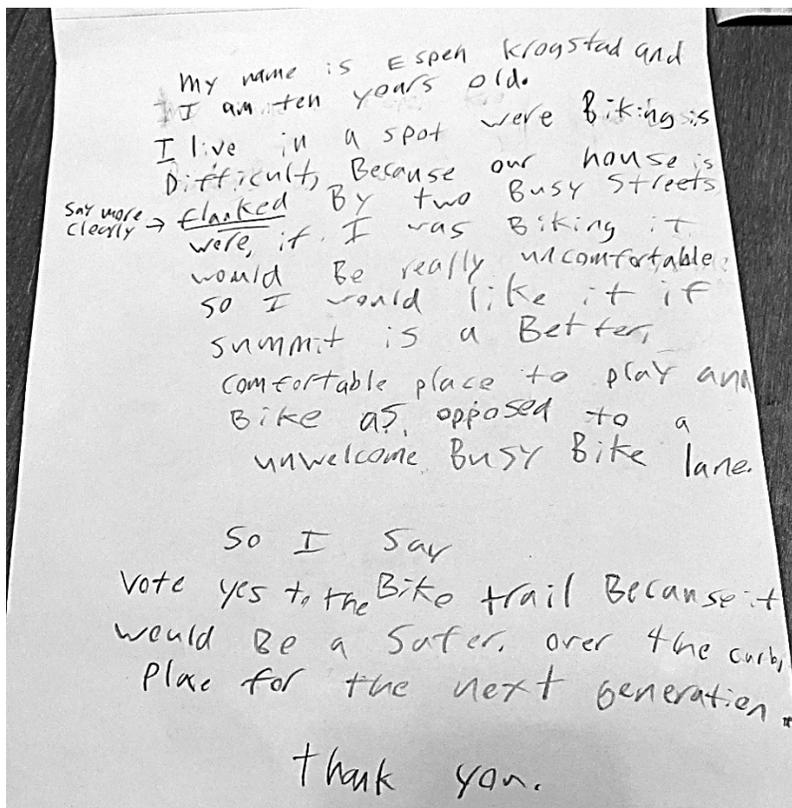
I used to work for Saint Paul Parks and Recreation funded by Met Council dollars, and I worked to address disparities in regional park use across age, race, ethnicity, and ability. Several photos in Met Council documents are of parks programs I led doing this work.

This is also personal for me. My husband was broadsided by a driver while biking on Summit Avenue. Twice, I was nearly broadsided there, too. Painted bike lanes in the street were not enough to protect us. It is also not enough for Summit Avenue to be used by only a small sliver of the population willing to bike between traffic and parked cars. It is already a regional destination. We can choose to make it safe and accessible to all.

By moving bikes up on the curb and away from traffic, this plan would enable many more people to bike along Summit, including families with young children, young adults, older adults, and people with disabilities. This would also benefit the nearly 8% of households within a mile of Summit Avenue that do not own a car.

Please help advance safety and equity in regional parks and trails by voting yes on the Summit Avenue Regional Trail plan next month. Thank you.

Thank you for sharing our comments with the Council,
Faith and Espen Krogstad
1387 Van Buren Ave
St Paul, MN 55104



Councilors:

My household of four has four active cyclists and we oppose this trail plan, in favor of improving the existing on-street lanes. Opposition to the trail is widespread. It is not just “homeowners on Summit.” Yes, we are a family of cyclists and we do not live on Summit and we are adamantly opposed to this myopic SART.

Met Council should vote NO on the SART because:

- SART has failed to meet minimum public participation standards(1). Feedback was funneled and falsely limited to arrive at a predetermined outcome. SART wasn't presented as an alternative. It was an edict. I participated in the Design Advisory Committee (DAC), and from the very onset we were told we could not discuss parallel routes, nor could we discuss alternative facility types. The “trail” had to be on Summit, and it had to be the same “raised and separated” type of bike facility; and it had to be the same for the entire length Summit. Simply put, the public participation clearly falls under “one-way to inform” level of public engagement.
- There is no demand forecast. Planners admitted in the public meeting held at House of Hope that they had no forecasts for any increase in ridership or forecasted decrease in vehicle miles travelled.
- SART will have negative impact on the natural resources base, including both the majestic and defining tree canopy as well as on the significant historic resources along Summit Avenue (two heritage districts registered locally, federally, and at the state level).

Any one of the above is sufficient reason to vote no.

Sincerely,

Sonja Mason
St Albans St S
St Paul MN

(1) International Association for Public Participation’s Public Participation Spectrum
<https://organizingengagement.org/models/spectrum-of-public-participation/>

I support the separated bike paths on Summit Avenue. For the sake of the climate we need to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled and by providing safe, off-road bicycling infrastructure more people will be able to bike for transportation as well as for exercise and recreation. While I feel reasonably safe biking on Summit Avenue in the on-street bike lanes I have very rarely, if ever, seen children or elderly people biking there. A lot of people do not feel comfortable or safe biking along side vehicular traffic.

I understand that there will be tree loss due to this project, but I believe the vast majority of the loss will be due to the street reconstruction and a much smaller number will be caused by putting in the bike lanes. I agree that trees are very important. As a bicyclist I certainly enjoy the beauty of them, as well as the shade they provide, and I know they also capture carbon from the air which is an important thing for

the environment. However, if we can work toward getting more people to use active transportation instead of driving their own personal vehicles everywhere I believe that would be more important than losing a few trees.

I also understand that some parking will be eliminated. I don't have a suggestion for how to deal with this, but is the city really responsible for providing free parking for everyone? I think not.

Thank you for considering these thoughts when making the very important decision about Summit Avenue.

Nita Hanson
2057 Magoffin Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116

Commissioners

Thank you for your commitment to public participation and your volunteer service to St Paul. Please assert yourselves now to demand a more authentic and transparent process on Summit Avenue and vote NO on the 90% Plan.

I sent public comment earlier and I understand that the the full Planning Commission will be taking a vote, after public comment was delivered to the Parks & Rec committee only. I want to encourage the Planning Commission to ask that this process be slowed down in order to allow alternatives, and to look for solutions with less harms. There is plenty of room for a "middle ground" approach: for example: Andy Singer with the SPBC just before COVID was publicly advocating of on-street lanes on Summit. Additionally, the Plan ignores that Summit's bike lanes were just majorly updated: the driving lanes were shrunk in order to provide wider, buffered bike lanes in 2020 (Lexington to the river).

There is no need to rush this process, and the blistering speed it's being forced through is unconscionable. As I'm sure you're aware, this process is highly volatile, toxic even, and litigation is presently underway. Let's step back and start over. We can get this right.

Page 234 of the plan states that alternative routes were dismissed "at a high level" (when? by whom?) for reasons that could equally disqualify Summit. (Marshall is more direct and has a bridge to Minneapolis; Ayd Mill/Shortline spur is naturally protected from crossings and intersection and therefore much better suited for the type fo trail the designers want.) And alternative bike facility designs were never even allowed on the table. They were apparently dismissed at a low level.

In a personal level, I live in apartment on Grand. Grand has limited overnight parking and timed parking during the day. I, all my neighbors, as well as the rents on the side streets and Summit itself need the parking on Summit. So do Grand employees. There are better ways to make a bike facility that will improve biking, but without harming the renters, the trees, or the historic district. Please, give city planners a strong message that they need to look more holistically at the full context of Summit and the neighborhoods around it.

For you consideration, I am including an article below just published in MyVillager. The authors say they are not "taking a position," but nonetheless raise considerable and real concerns with the Summit

process. The most important question they pose: Why is the city spending millions to replace bikeways on Summit while other areas of the city with limited transportation alternatives have no bikeways at all?

Please take a position and VOTE NO

Alex Johnson
Renter Resident on Grand Avenue

<https://myvillager.com/2023/04/26/city-needs-to-slow-its-review-of-summit-bike-trails-plan/>

Thank you for the gift of your valuable time reading my public comment. I hope you have reviewed directly the many public comments from the Parks & Commission hearing and the City Council hearing.

If you have, you will have noticed a pattern.

Immediate neighbors, a wide variety of them -- walkers, business owners, cyclists, renters, men, women, elders--all came out to present their opposition. Summit Avenue enthusiasts from across the city and the region are concerned about the damage to one of St Paul's one of leading tourist attractions.

Much of the opposing statements were based on research and professional testimony. Historians reported that historic designation would be imperiled. A traffic expert stated that the new trail will be less safe. Architects decried the potential damage to a national treasure. Entire Neighborhood Associations (Ramsey Hill Association and Lex Hamline) passed resolutions against the 90% Plan. Many decried the unnecessary destruction of trees and historic resources. A professional arborist was hired to make an independent assessment of trees, and their estimate was far in excess of the City's estimates. Second generation businesses were concerned about their continued viability due to lack of access. A tour guide expressed concern for lack of tourist draw, due ot damage to the historic streetscape and yes, limiting of access (aka parking). Women renters were concerned about distant parking from their doorsteps, and the risk to self from long walks in the dark. Multiple commuter cyclists includings a bike store owner have come out against the loss of the on-street lanes. A woman with a walker spoke against the 90% trail. Taxpayers called out for better use of scarce tax dollars. An anti-equity argument was made, why so much money to rebuild an existing bike route when other parts of the city lack any bike infrastructure? The pattern: multiple and real criticism from all walks of life, all types of stakeholders.

Every single person in opposition to the plan supported increased safety on Summit for all "modes,"especially via lowered traffic speeds, and a continued bike route with improved safety for cyclists. But they opposed this 90% Plan. It's the wrong plan.

And then, on the other side, a few able-bodied cyclists who were somehow able to get to the event riding their bikes despite the lack of universal sidewalk-level bike paths also stood up to demand that their needs trumped everyone else's. They will not compromise one iota from the proposed sidewalk-level bike paths on Summit.

After reviewing the actual public records, you will have to admit that the City'd summary is incomplete and frankly biased.

I hope you have seen this editorial in the Villager from November after the release of 60% Plan, a critique which still holds 100% true: <https://myvillager.com/2022/11/22/summit-ave-trail-plan-overlooks-needs-of-serious-cyclists/>

I want safe bike facilities within a multimodal structure. I agree 100% with the opinion piece by Contrado and Roslak. It was well reasoned, rational, and represents a balanced position. Further, it provides supporting evidence. Their conclusion is spot on:

"Safe bicycling ... can be achieved on Summit by less intrusive means, such as paving and striping the avenue, installing traffic-calming devices at each intersection and strictly enforcing current speed limits. If the city implemented these simple measures, Summit would provide an expedient and safe experience for all bicyclists at a fraction of the cost."

Please vote NO.

Paige P Olson
St Paul

Dear Esteemed Members of the Met Council:

Thank you for your public service. I am writing to ask you to be the voice of reason on the Summit Avenue Regional Trail.

This project has become unnecessarily divisive and simply cannot be passed in its current state.

Please, hit pause. As proposed, the SART is not a good fit for the community.

Met Council should create a committee to look at all options for connecting new bike trails in Saint Paul. Please set up a commission or task force with a neutral mediator to find the best and safest solution for both off-road trails, on-road trails, and overall connectivity for a bike network in St. Paul.

Kind Regards

J Baxter

Commissioners,

My name is Zack Farrell, I live at 600 Summit Ave #2 and I am strongly in favor of the Summit Avenue Regional Trail.

It has been well established through engineering analysis that Summit Avenue and the infrastructure beneath it must be fully reconstructed in the next decade. Most streets have an expected lifespan of 60 years, the foundations of Summit Avenue are nearing double that age. This is the root cause of the poor condition of the street which is further exacerbated by the freeze/thaw cycle each spring and the increasing weight of vehicles. When a section is simply repaved that smooths over the surface conditions

but does not repair the weak spots which develop in the roadbed itself. As these weak spots grow, they cause each repaving to wear out faster and faster until it is more cost effective to simply rebuild the road. We are well past that point on Summit today.

The Sewage and water infrastructure beneath the street is equally as old and at risk of failure. We have seen numerous examples of pipe failures under streets in nearby cities in the last year alone ([e.g.1](#)) ([e.g. 2](#)). These led to huge sinkholes and were caused by 120 year old infrastructure, similar in age to Summit. If Summit is not reconstructed it is only a matter of time before that happens here.

Any intensive reconstruction has risks to trees whose roots have grown underneath the roadbed, however for the reasons outlined above, not completing that reconstruction is no longer an option. We will be digging up the street several feet below ground both to set a new foundation and to reconnect new water lines to each property as part of the city wide effort to remove lead pipes from the city's drinking water lines. This is the primary driver of risk to trees, and the additional risk added by the change to the street configuration proposed in this plan is minimal, as the new location of the bike trail would be no more than 1.5ft from where the curb lines are today. The staff report which includes tree root analysis of each boulevard tree in the corridor suggests that around 90 additional trees may be lost. That's about 2 trees per block, a very marginal change that will not have a significant impact on the character of Summit Avenue while their replacements regrow.

With the need for a full reconstruction established, the question now becomes what should Summit look like when we put it back together again?

Improvements

The layout of the road today has many opportunities for improvement even before we look at the bicycle lanes. In many places where Summit was paved for 4 lanes of vehicle traffic the paved area remains extremely wide. This makes the street feel more akin to a highway than a local road, and communicates to drivers that they should go much faster than is appropriate. Many street corners are rounded, leading to very wide crossing areas for pedestrians and the perception for drivers that they should be able to move around corners without slowing. Access to the central boulevards park space is not accessible, which despite having had a dirt trail run down it since its inception (visible in photos from the Minnesota Historical Society) have no curb cuts at any point.

This proposal remedies many (though not all) of these points of concern. The separation of the bike lanes narrows the street between the curbs, this will slow drivers to closer to the posted speed limit. The tabled pedestrian crossings at intersections will as well, they act as speed bumps and signal to drivers that they are crossing a pedestrian space.

Safety

The bike lanes on Summit today are not safe. In order to use them one must be comfortable biking with traffic moving at 30 miles per hour feet to the left and parked cars with doors that may or may not swing open unexpectedly feet to the right. In comparison to other bike lanes in the city the ones east of Lexington are particularly narrow, exacerbating the problem of being squeezed. The paint of the inner line marking the separation from vehicle lanes is extremely worn down from cars driving over it as they park or pass left turning traffic, further reducing their effectiveness as a means of separation. By moving the bike lanes outside of the area designated for cars the opportunities for many of these collisions are entirely eliminated.

A research review by the BMJ concluded that the risk of cycling on protected bike lanes was 30% lower as compared to mixed traffic streets, summarizing with the statement that "These data suggest that the injury risk of bicycling on cycle tracks is less than bicycling in streets. The construction of cycle tracks should not be discouraged." - [Risk of injury for bicycling on cycle tracks versus in the street](#). This study also highlights that separation from traffic is disproportionately desired by women, children, and seniors, who are underrepresented in commuter cycling in the US in part due to the lack of protected bike lanes. In The Netherlands where there is an extensive network of protected bike lanes, 55% of bicycle riders are women.

This finding is also backed up by the Transportation Association of Canada's report [Safety Performance of Bicycle Infrastructure in Canada](#), which noted that off-road bike facilities and one-way protected bicycle lanes have "well supported positive safety outcomes" for both the overall risk of collisions and the perception of safety, and recommended protected bike lanes for any street with a high volume of traffic.

Comfort and preference

Protected bike lanes are critical to making more people comfortable using cycling as a regular method of transportation to get around Saint Paul

It's well proven that protected bike lanes are generally preferred by the public and that the construction of protected bike lanes leads to a large increase in ridership on a corridor

1. [Estimating the effect of protected bike lanes on bike-share ridership in Boston](#)
2. [Lessons from the Green Lanes: Evaluating Protected Bike Lanes in the U.S.](#)
3. [Safety Performance of Bicycle Infrastructure in Canada](#)

This preference is shown as well in the city's own survey conducted as part of the updated Saint Paul Bike Plan, which shows that a majority of people are not comfortable biking in mixed traffic or in painted bicycle lanes, but that a majority of people would be comfortable biking on protected bicycle paths. Expanding our network of separated paths is a necessary prerequisite for many people to consider cycling as a mode of transportation, and studies have shown that creating a protected bicycle lane increases the number of cyclists using that facility by 21% to 171% [Lessons from the Green Lanes: Evaluating Protected Bike Lanes in the U.S.](#)

Winter Use

It is nearly impossible to bike on Summit in the winter with the current layout. I would love to bike more in the winter instead of having to drive but after the first snowfall the bike lanes quickly disappear under frozen slush criss-crossed with car tire ruts and gradually are completely consumed by parking. This pushes cyclists into the main traffic lane, a bad outcome for everybody. It is impossible to keep on-street bike lanes fully cleared in the winter, but the city has proven on Como avenue and Wheelock parkway that fully separated bike paths can be maintained and used throughout the snowy season. Making such an improvement on Summit would go a long way towards enabling cycling as a year round transportation option.

Public Health - Active Transport

Active transportation modes such as walking and cycling can have a huge impact in public health. As the detrimental health impacts of sedentary lifestyles become more well known it's more important than ever that we enable modes of transportation that allow people to build exercise into their regular day to day lives just by going about their day without requiring that they dedicate additional time to it.

Climate Change and Reducing VMT

A critical part of addressing our climate goals as a city is making it easier for people to travel from place

to place without requiring that they drive. This will also decrease the traffic demands on our street, making life easier for people who do still choose to drive by decreasing the number of other drivers in their way, and will decrease the rate of wear and tear on our streets by decreasing vehicle miles travelled.

Thank you for your consideration,
Zack Farrell
600 Summit Ave #2

Hello Met Council Members:

I've been a member of the TAB for four years where I've learned a lot about how regional planning decision are made in our cities. Before that, I served nine years on the St. Paul Planning Commission where I chaired the city's Transportation Committee. In these roles, I've gained a lot of experience around transportation planning processes, how community conversations proceed, how timelines and intergovernmental relationships work to create our built environment, and how public engagement can work to support (or oppose) equity goals.

This is to say that I believe the Met Council should strongly support the city's request for a regional trail on Summit Avenue. Regional planning in the Twin Cities relies on a certain amount of faith in the decision-making processes of individual municipalities. This is a great example of why this is important: the city of St. Paul has done a tremendous amount of work studying plans and weighing options for this key, historic regional street, gathering a lot of public input and making careful decisions about how to move forward.

Elected officials overwhelmingly support this project for wide list of reasons, and it's important that city and staff recommendations for the SART project be taken seriously and given weight by the Met Council. The city and the region need your full support, and in my view anything less would reflect a tremendous fissure in the relationship between our regional planning process and local government.

Thanks for your time,
Bill Lindeke
Area G TAB Citizen Member

--

956 Charles Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
413.9 CO2 ppm he/him/his

*Given the time restrictions planned for this afternoon's meeting, I am submitting my comments in print.
Members of the Metropolitan Council:*

I am Karen Sprattler, live at 139 Nina Street in St. Paul and am a national Subject Matter Expert in behavioral highway safety. I chose to become involved in efforts to oppose the proposed Summit Avenue Regional Trail when I saw the very misleading crash analysis in the City plan and the still-unexplained

discard of its paid consultants' recommendation to leave curb lines of Summit Avenue undisturbed. As a social scientist, I could not understand how the City could plausibly cite concerns about "perceived safety" based upon responses to a biased survey using a very small sample of residents in defense of a "safety-driven" project on a facility where NO serious injury or fatal crashes OF ANY KIND (not just bikes/peds) have occurred on Summit Avenue in the last 3 years.

However, if the proposed trail comes to fruition, it is likely to be far more confusing and dangerous for all users than the safe and existing on-street bike lanes. The proposed plan does nothing to improve intersection safety – the real threat to ped and bike users, when motorists will have to watch for other vehicles and vulnerable road users around parked vehicles, sidewalks, buffers AND new bike trails during all weather conditions.

There is also no mention of how the proposed design will manage growing micromobility trends of e-bike and scooter use that merit significant concern now and into the future. Several recent articles in the New York Times focus on growing e-bike safety issues and highlight the need to plan for them. With no clear idea of how to manage the safety of interactions between new transportation modes and traditional users of Summit Avenue (much less the young riders the trail is supposed to make Summit Avenue safer for), this is an important reason to take a step back to examine how these emerging modes would operate alongside current users and the built environment. Add the commercial (UPS, Amazon, etc.) and first responder/public safety traffic on this primarily residential facility to the 160 driveways, 359 carriage walks, and 46 cross streets that exist on Summit Avenue, and there will be real safety concerns if this proposed plan moves forward.

According to FHWA, the philosophy of Context Sensitive Design requires planners to "...ask questions first about the need and purpose of the transportation project, and then equally address safety, mobility, and the preservation of scenic, aesthetic, historic, environmental, and other community values. Context sensitive design involves a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach in which citizens are part of the design team."

The proponents of the proposed trail treat the varying segments of Summit Avenue with a one-size-fits-all treatment that is anything but sensitive to its environmental, historic and residential context. Other options must be considered, and I ask you to pause this project and send it back to the City of St. Paul to find an appropriate alternative.

Thank you.

Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council:

I would urge you to approve the Plan" for a Bicycle Trail on Summit Avenue of this "Plan" if its claims for community support, for improvements in safety, for climate change relief, equity, historical sensitivity, and cost effectiveness were truthful and accurate.
They are not.

When I designed and wrote the Metropolitan Council's Online Local Planner's Handbook years ago (for which, incidentally, we won a national award), I was asked by city planners which consulting firm was most respected. I readily recommended Bolton & Menk. It is not surprising that this most respected firm was hired by Saint Paul staff to design the "Plan." Nor is it surprising that they advised against pursuing a

bicycle trail on Summit Avenue. City staff then hired a woman whose stated profession is Cartoonist, and she readily executed an execrable design, as follows.

Community Support

The "Plan" bases its claim to community support on the responses of 82 citizens while a citizens' group opposing the "Plan" has signatures from thousands. Comments opposing the plan were deleted from the extremely opaque "Plan" site. People speaking against at the City Council meeting outnumbered supporters two to one.

Climate Destabilization

I would urge you to support a plan that resulted in a net positive for the environment. Unfortunately, the destruction of 900 trees (not 200 as the "Plan" claims), the construction cost to the environment, the cost of concrete itself, and energy costs in air conditioning once the tree canopy is traded for burning sidewalks, is a net negative.

Safety

With over 100 driveways and multiple streets along the 4.5 mile Summit street targeted for destruction, we create multiple opportunities for auto and bicycle impacts. If one claims that the current structure is dangerous to bicyclists, one must account for the reality that in the last annual accounting, only three impacts on Summit resulted in an injury to a bicyclist, and another three to a pedestrian.

Equity

If the "Plan" were ADA compliant, if it attended to the needs of disabled people and elders, I would support it, as would you. It is not. Disable people and elders would need to cross lanes of auto and bicycle traffic once fifty-percent of the parking is gone. Women walking further to their car would provide ample opportunity for criminals as that walk is statistically the most dangerous, especially for older women. Another disenfranchised group is bicyclists who fly down the street at high speeds to commute to work. They oppose the plan because they will need to swerve for the recreational bicyclists on the trail and will not be able to use the single lane allowed for automobiles.

2040 St Paul Comprehensive Plan Compliance

The "Plan" is not compliant with Land Use Policy 6 LU21, section 69.509; Parks and Recreation Goal 3, Policy PR-19; Water Policy WR-3 and WR-6; Historic Preservation Goal 2, Policy HP-6 and HP-9, and also Goal 4, Policy HP-16.

Historic Preservation

Summit Avenue's nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture, and its symmetrical, wide street design, draw visitors and dollars to our city. The "Plan" destroys the symmetry of the design and replaces it with a broad expanses of concrete and cars swerving left and right within blocks, with concomitant signage polluting the view. The "Plan" desecrates a national treasure.

St. Paul City Staff and Council will explain that the specifics of the "Plan" will be worked out once it is accepted, and that construction is cost effective. There is no support for these statements, and there is every reason to expect multiple cost overruns in construction and maintenance.

Metropolitan Council cannot afford to suffer approving a project that promises to be another cost overrun embarrassment. Please do not approve the Saint Paul Summit Avenue Bicycle Trail Plan.

Yours sincerely,
Tess Galati, Ph.D.
Retired President of Practical Communications, Inc.
482 Holly Ave.
651-210-6799

To the Met Council from Alice Gebura, Ward 1, 487 Portland Avenue, Saint Paul, MN

I am joining thousands of others to protest the ill-conceived SART that will kill almost 1000 trees on Summit Avenue. The reasons for opposing this trail have been stated by the majority over and over again in letters, online, in hearings, and in the media:

- Tree loss – the loss of so many trees is a greater detriment to the environment and climate health than the benefit for a handful of bicyclists.
- It isn't safer. There has been professional testimony presented on this. Yet Mitra Jalali, the queen of not listening, continues to harp on it and uses the death of bicyclist Alan Grande as her proof that the trail is needed. This unfortunate accident happened because of an error made by Grande at an intersection. The proposed trail does not eliminate this, or any other, intersection, nor does it eliminate the ever-present probability of user errors at intersections no matter what type trail they are riding on. The safety claim is false.
- Sean Kershaw says the entire length of Summit Ave needs a rebuild and trees will be lost anyway. In fact, parts of Summit have already been rebuilt since the 1990s. In fact, there are modern techniques that can be used to preserve trees during construction – techniques clearly unimportant to the city of Saint Paul given the massive loss of trees recently on Cleveland, Whelan, and elsewhere. Kershaw has cooked up this red herring because apparently he, who knows nothing about bituminous concrete or the engineering of a street, is convinced this trail serves some ideology of social justice. The logic of this cannot be found anywhere unless one believes revenge politics are at work. Let's hope Saint Paul has not stooped so low.
- The historic vista on Summit is held dear by thousands of citizens in Saint Paul and beyond. Comments made by Mitra Jalali that "it all needs to be burned down" are ignorant and reprehensible. I point out that the travesty on Cleveland happened in her ward under her watch. The destruction of the historic vista hurts all of Minnesota, not just the "toxic white" residents on Summit (her words, <https://streets.mn/2023/09/18/presenting-car-free-midwest-a-conversation-with-councilor-mitra-jalali/>). Authoritarian bigots like Jalai don't belong in government.

This trail plan is a horrible, destructive idea that thousands and thousands of citizens have written, posted, and shown up to protest. City committees and council members have turned a deaf ear to us. This is supposed to be a democracy. This is supposed to be a government that represents the people.

Thus, Sean Kershaw and his cronies have cooked up a false narrative of community engagement that is dissected and analyzed below.

I expect the Met Council will ignore the people and vote for this heinous trail. We look forward to seeing you in court because the people will not rest until it and deaf politicians are long gone.

“Community Engagement” that Suppresses and Misinforms

(reference docs: 02 - Community Engagement.pdf and 06 – Appendix.pdf)

Capturing and documenting public opinion for the proposed Summit Regional Trail is required as government funders want to see general public support as part of the approval process. So Park & Rec uses the Community Engagement section of the Plan to explain how they reached out to Saint Paul residents to inform them of the Plan and gather feedback.

A closer look at their outreach reveals more subterfuge and double speak as Park & Rec attempts to disguise an irrefutable fact: the majority of voters do not want this raised trail on Summit Ave.

The claim that the Plan is supported by the community is based on flawed data that was produced by vague survey questions, the limitation of options available to responders, and inadequate sample size.

Data is further compromised through visual presentations and conscious misplacement of “unfavorable” positions. The conclusion that is meticulously obfuscated through these inadequacies is clear: planners were determined to use “Community Engagement” to support a predetermined position that the community does not like.

Public Outreach August, 2021 to October, 2022

According to previous drafts of the Plan, Park & Rec conducted public outreach from August, 2021-October, 2022 with various activities and the *Engage Saint Paul* web site. The final plan however lops off August and Sept. 2021 and covers only Oct. 2021-Oct. 2022.

Here’s a breakdown of the Community Engagement section of the Plan.

Page Numbers	Content
35-43 (9 pages)	Description of outreach practices, cut and paste demographics, cut and paste equity analysis
44-45 (2 pages)	Invitation-only focus group (82 participants)
46-50 (5 pages)	Description of outreach practices, cut and paste demographics, cut and paste equity analysis
51-52 (2 pages)	Mapping activity (174 participants)
53	More demographics
54-55 (2 pages)	Online survey (1,341 participants) - later hidden from view when planners didn't get the results they wanted
56-63 (8 pages)	Describes advisory committees formed by invitation-only city staff
64-65 (2 pages)	Public information session (6/6/22): lists discussion themes chosen by Park & Rec
66 (1 page)	photos

The only outreach activity that “reached” a large number of participants was the **survey on the web site**. Yet out of 32 pages on community engagement, only 2 pages describe that survey and its results. People who might want more information are directed to the Appendix where page 255 adds almost nothing.

The survey is the only outreach activity that did not control who could participate. All the other data collection activities were for invited (controlled) participants.

If community outreach and engagement are important to the process, why does the only actual community response warrant less than 3 pages out of 32?

The Survey

The survey consists of four questions. People could rank the given options. The available options matter. For example, the integrity of the historic district was NOT among the options

for question 1: **Within the Summit Avenue corridor, which elements are most important to you?** (To confuse readers, questions are numbered differently in the Appendix, page 255.)

963 respondents (71.8%) ranked “trees and shade” as the most important element. This top response does not support a massive trail construction project.

849 respondents (63.3%) ranked “separation” as an important element. Yet, the second-place ranking is ambiguous. “Separation of uses for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists” describes the current situation. Due to ambiguity of the question, this response cannot logically be construed as supportive of any change.

The high number of ‘other’ responses (higher than 10% on both Q1 and Q2) indicates frustration with the limited options. Since full responses are not in the Appendix, we do not know what ‘other’ options surveyed citizens might have ranked.

Chart: Question 1 or 2 (depending what page you’re on): Within the Summit Avenue corridor, which elements are most important to you?

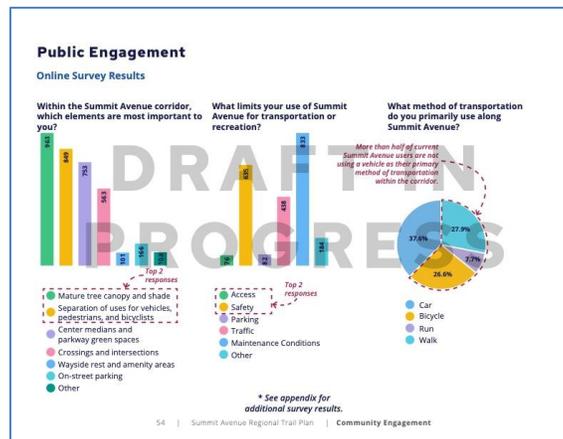
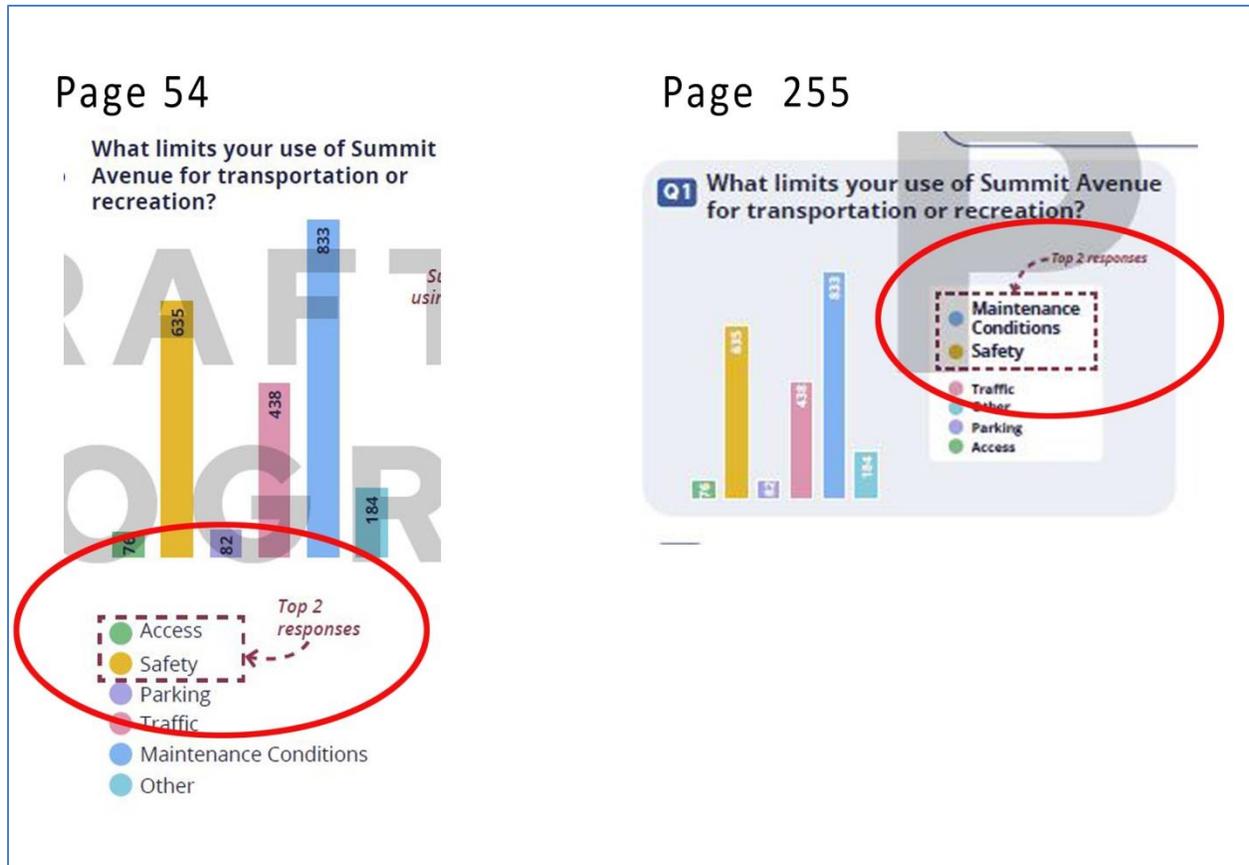


Chart: Question 1 or 2 (depending what page you're on): What limits your use of Summit Avenue for transportation or recreation?

The responses to this question are different depending on whether you are on page 54 or page 255. Compare them for yourself:



Page 54 falsely states that “Access” and “Safety” were the top 2 responses. Oddly, page 237 in the Appendix—presented in small print—is accurate. Why is it presented correctly in the small print, but falsely on page 54?

Looking at the bar chart, it’s obvious that 833 respondents (62.1%)—a definitive majority— simply want better maintenance conditions: a smooth road surface and level sidewalks.

The second-place response is “safety,” a summation so vague it can be interpreted in any manner – is it better crosswalks for pedestrians, lower speed limits, or high visibility on-street bike lanes? Of course, the planners wish to interpret it as support for their raised trail.

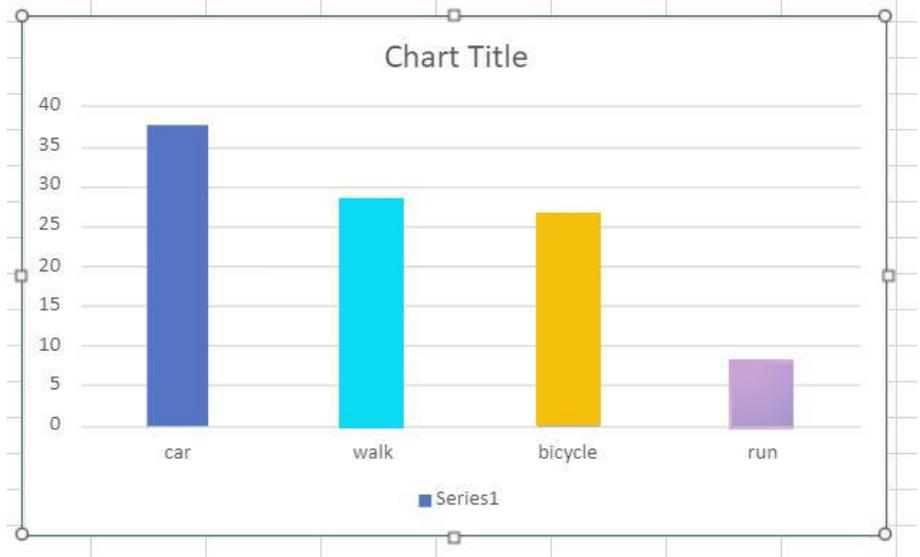
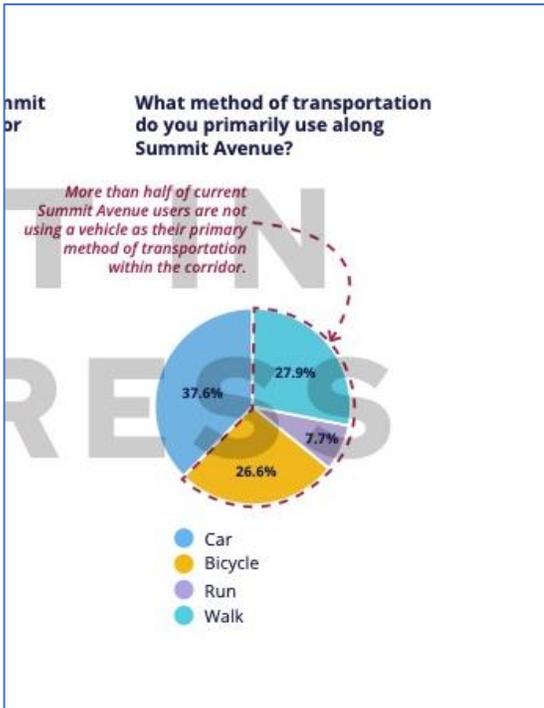
Question 3: What method of transportation do you primarily use along Summit Avenue?

The planners make an astonishing claim: “More than half of current Summit Avenue users are not using a vehicle as their primary method of transportation in the corridor.”

Combining walkers, bikers and runners means 62% of people transporting themselves on Summit are not in cars (or busses, etc.).

Seriously?

Pie Chart and Bar Chart:



According to data published in FastCompany magazine (<https://www.fastcompany.com/3057321/the-top-10-us-cities-where-the-most-people-bike-and-walk-to-work>), the top 10 U.S. cities by percentage of active commuters who walk or bike are:

- 1: Boston: 16.7%
- 2: Washington, D.C.: 16.7%
- 3: San Francisco: 13.9%
- 4: Seattle: 12.9%
- 5: Portland, Ore.: 12.1%
- 6: New York: 11.2%
- 7: Philadelphia: 10.6%
- 8: Minneapolis: 10.4%
- 9: Chicago: 8.1%
- 10: Baltimore: 7.7%

The city with the highest percentage of bikers is Boston at 16.7%. Yet, Summit Avenue in Saint Paul, a city that is frozen solid 4 months out of the year, boasts a whopping 62%. How amazing.

Is this a grievous mistake or the falsification of data to support a biased position?

Because Summit Ave. is a State Aid roadway, MNDOT publishes estimated traffic volumes. These range between 3,400 – 11,300 AADT for different segments of Summit. On a given day, with little seasonal variation, thousands of motorized vehicles carry an unknown number of users along Summit Avenue: school buses, taxis and Ubers, delivery vehicles, carpools, and passenger vehicles. While the exact number of people in those vehicles is unknown, we know that it is some number higher than the number of vehicles. We also know from the [Met Council 2020 Transportation Performance Evaluation](#) report that 89% of “mode share” is motorized vehicles; in other words, 74.4% of trips taken in the core cities are by vehicle (pg.137).

There is a permanent bicycle counter installed at Fairview and Snelling that provides [annual data](#) on the mode share of bicycles. That counter shows an average of 218 eastbound and 271 westbound (daily and across all seasons) for a combined daily average of **489**. The AADT for vehicles for Summit at Fairview is 7,200 total. For an apples-to-apples comparison, that is 3,600 for each one-way section.

The data shows that Summit at Fairview has a higher than average cyclist mode share of 13.6%. While this is an impressive amount of bicycle traffic – far above the average cyclist mode share of 2.1%, per [Met Council p. 137](#)—it is half the 26.6% indicated in the survey responses and way less than the 62% claimed by trail planners.

Walking and Bicycling for Transportation

Regional Mode Share

The 2019 Travel Behavior Inventory (TBI) conducted by the Metropolitan Council is the eighth in a series of studies done every five to ten years to discover where, when, why and how people travel in the region. According to the 2019 TBI, 8.5% of all trips made within the seven-county region are done by walking, and 0.9% of all trips are made by bicycle. Between 2010 and 2019, the share of walking trips within the region increased 2.4 percentage points and the share of bicycling trips decreased by 0.7 of a percentage point.

The 2019 TBI data also show that residents in the central cities make more of their trips by walking and bicycling when compared to the seven-county region overall. Walking rates are nearly double in the central cities, where 14.1% of all trips are made on foot. Bicycling trips in the central cities also occur at more than twice the rate compared to the region as a whole: 2.1% of trips in the central cities are made by bicycle, compared to less than 1% regionally. [Table 6-3](#) compares **mode share** for all trips in Minneapolis/St. Paul, outside the core cities, and for the region as a whole.

Table 6-3: Regional and Core Cities Mode Share – All Trips

Trip Mode	Minneapolis & St. Paul Only	Outside Core Cities	Region
Bicycle	2.1%	0.6%	0.9%
Walk	14.1%	6.9%	8.5%
Transit	7.6%	1.9%	3.2%
Drive	74.4%	88.6%	85.4%

Source: 2019 Travel Behavior Inventory, Met Council

The pedestrian numbers display a bias as well. Dividing pedestrians into two groups, walkers (27.9%) and runners (7.7%), only serves to decrease the visual “share” of pedestrians on the pie chart, which at 35.6% should be the second largest wedge.

Pedestrian numbers are not available, unfortunately. There are no permanent pedestrian counters and MNDOT does not provide pedestrian data. Nonetheless, the two-hour [counts](#) available show that pedestrian use on Summit is high. Over ten years of data show that pedestrian counts have been consistently higher than bike counts at the majority of locations on Summit. Pedestrians have a higher “mode share” than cyclists on Summit.

Based on data, it is conclusive that the large majority of transportation trips on Summit are by vehicle, followed by pedestrian, and lastly by bicycle, despite Summit’s higher rate of cycling relative to other locations in the core cities. None of this is to imply that Summit’s role as a park-like corridor for pedestrians and cyclists is unimportant. On the contrary, it is the park-like qualities that support Summit’s appeal to all. The point is that by denying that motor vehicles are the dominant form of transportation, the Plan seems to falsify data. Summit must be treated as a multi-modal corridor.

Question 4: If you could improve ONE thing along Summit Avenue, what would it be and why?

Instead of quantifying the results for question 4, as was done for the other questions, Park & Rec cherry picked from the 1,341 responses with no indication of how many people might have had similar responses. It begs the question, why conduct a survey at all, if you’re not going to count the answers?

Q 4 If you could change one thing, what would it be?

<i>Nothing in particular - it's a very nice street</i>	<i>Bike lanes. Summit is one of the most used bike corridor through the city and to downtown. It should have better bike lanes. Ideal would be lanes that are protected and separated from cars, lie the new lanes on Como or Johnson Parkway.</i>	<i>Don't destroy mature trees</i>
<i>More art / history public spaces</i>		<i>Accessibility; make Summit Avenue safer for walking pedestrians, especially for disabled people</i>
<i>Protected bike lanes!</i>		
<i>Fix the holes!</i>	<i>Eliminate the risk of being "doored"</i>	<i>Slower traffic speeds</i>

Given the results of questions 1 and 2 – preserve trees (71%) and better maintenance conditions (62%), we should see related remarks dominate. They probably do, so Park & Rec decided not to quantify the responses, as was done for the other three questions.

Focus Group, Equity Analysis

Page 45 lists questions and charts the responses from a focus group selected to prevent bias toward white residents. We don’t find out until the Appendix, however, that the focus group had only 82 people, too small a sample to provide statistical significance. This equity analysis is based on a too-small data sample—just 82 people. The small sample is [statistically insignificant](#). Too small sample size results

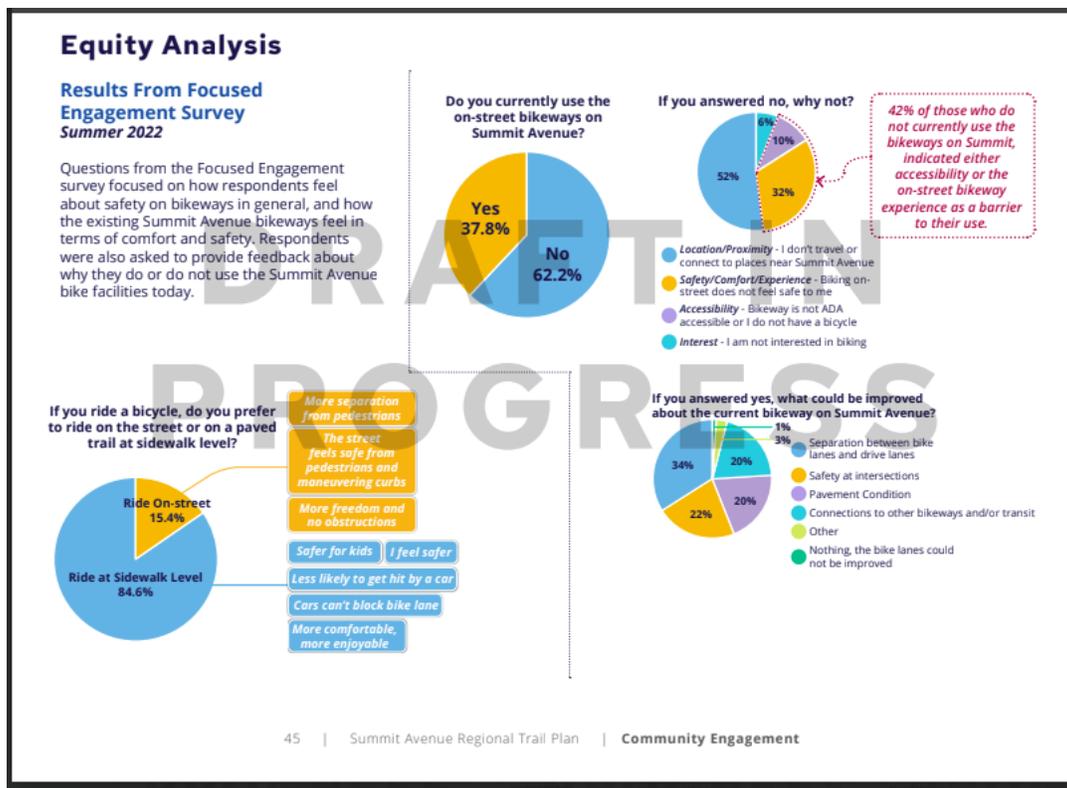
have a high margin of error, and [render data unreliable](#). Too small samples size leads to [bias](#). For a city of 300,000, a sample size closer to 400 people would be required to have a [confidence level of 95%](#).

Also, the data from such a small sample should not be presented on equal ground with the year-long, heavily participated survey. Yet the Plan presents the data without revealing the small sample size until page 255 of the Appendix.

The fact that there were only 82 participants is hidden in the Appendix where the reader has to look to discover that the sample size is too small to be meaningful.

The results from the 82-person survey suffer from both [sampling and non-sampling errors](#).

- The **sampling error** is that the sample size was too small to be statistically relevant.
- The **non-sampling error** is a poorly phrased question with a [forced selection](#) between just two limited options. Respondents could not respond ‘no preference,’ or apply context—for example they might prefer a trail though a park, but a bike lane on a road. The choices were “in the street” (implying no bike facility at all) or “on a paved trail at sidewalk level” (implying a trail through a park.)



The 82-person survey was conducted AFTER the lengthier one, yet it is presented FIRST in the plan (page 45). One might conclude from so much obfuscation that this small survey was conducted in an attempt to produce different results.

There are further problems with the data set. Of the small sample, 51 people (62.2%) responded that they do not currently use the on-street bikeway; and of those the 27-person majority (52%) said this was due to its location/proximity. Another 8 persons (16%) indicated that they are not interested in cycling, do not own a bicycle, or require disability access. In summary, 68% of the responses in this survey are from individuals who will never use a bike facility on Summit, whether or not it is on or off the roadway. These are uninterested and unconcerned users.

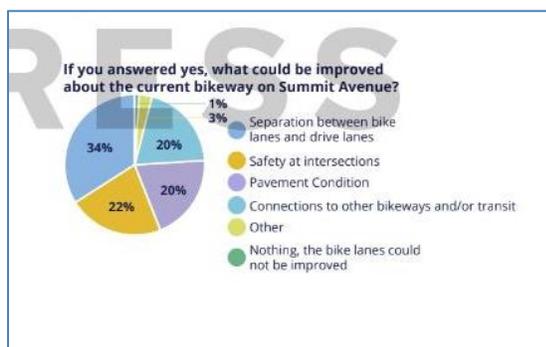
Converting the percentages in the pie charts to real numbers reveals the depth of the absurdity of presenting this data set at all. Let's dive in.

Do you currently use the on-street bikeways on Summit?

Yes	31 persons	37.8%
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If you answered yes, what could be improved about the current bikeway on Summit?

Separation of bike and drive lanes	11 persons	34%
Safer intersections	7 persons	22%
Better pavement conditions	6 persons	20%
Connections to other bikeways	6 persons	20%
Other	1 person	3%
Nothing	1 person	1%
Total Responses	32 persons	103%



The pie chart shows the impossibility of the small sample size and the margin of error. A 1% response in a sample size below 50 persons is not mathematically possible. It is not possible to have a response rate of less than one person, as humans are not fractional. The percentages presented simply do not add up; either the City has misrepresented the data or is not disclosing a convoluted methodology.

The survey then further limits the sample size by asking follow up questions to a limited subset of the already small sample size.

Do you currently use the on-street bikeways on Summit?

No	51 persons	62.2%
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If you answered no, why not?

Location/proximity	27 persons	52%
Safety/comfort/experience	16 persons	32%
Disability access or no bicycles	5 persons	10%
Lack of interest in biking	3 persons	6%
Total Responses	51 persons	100%

The City has stated a goal of increasing cycling in the City, and the justification for this trail is to increase biking on Summit. Based on the above numbers, only **16 persons** who do not currently bike on Summit are limited from doing so by safety/comfort/experience. The remaining **35** won't bike on Summit no matter what.

How can this justify the \$12 million dollar expense of raised lanes?

Out of 82 participants, 74 persons total ride a bike (47 on Summit and 27 elsewhere).

If you ride a bicycle, do you prefer to ride on a street or on a paved trail at sidewalk level?

Prefer to ride on-street	11.4 persons	15.4%
Prefer to ride at sidewalk level	62.6 persons	84.6%
Total Responses	74 persons	100%

Again, the percentages presented simply do not make sense; either the City has misrepresented the data or is not disclosing a convoluted methodology. Further, this forced choice between 2 ambiguous answers does not provide context. The choices were "in the street" (implying no bike facility at all) or

“on a paved trail at sidewalk level” (implying a trail through a park.) For example, they might prefer a trail through a park, but a bike lane on a road— but were not given these options.

Summary: Community Engagement is a Sham

The Plan presents the focus group survey that uses an inadequate sample size and the larger public survey as if they are equal, in effect conflating the results of the large survey with the small one.

The Plan suppresses the results of the large survey, and makes a summarization that defies known facts.

The Plan recontextualizes the data to support the raised separated trail, despite the fact that the data supports better maintenance of the existing infrastructure above all other options.

Met Council on ADA Parking in the Summit/Grand Avenue Area

Kenn Rockler
454 Ashland Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Tuesday 10/10/2023 1:10 AM

Charlie Zelle Chairman Metropolitan Council
Members of The Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Chairman Zelle et al,

I regret that I can't appear before you personally, but my concerns and background are outlined in this letter. I was in the restaurant business for three decades and prior to that my cousin who lived next door was born with Cerebral Palsy and from the time I was eleven years old, I was used to not only assisting her in her wheelchair, but having to get her up and down stairs that were sometimes so narrow only one person could hold the wheelchair.

Later in life, (from 1976 going forward) The MN Rolling Gophers frequented our Minnetonka restaurant (T Wright's Saloon & Supper Club) and the owner of Tonka Bottle Shop next door to T Wright's became one of my closest friends. We then (circa 1985) purchased the site in Long Lake that became Billy's Lighthouse. I was deeply concerned that the facility we had purchased had zero accessibility for anyone that required a wheelchair and would have been difficult for anyone with mobility issues. We were grandfathered in as a nonconforming structure but elected to build an indoor ADA compliant ramp to our upstairs, and in the spring, we added an outdoor deck with a long expensive ADA compliant ramp. These two additions alone added over 15% to our construction costs, money that we knew we would never recapture, but we felt it was the right thing to do.

In June of 2007 my right leg had to be amputated, and along with other changes to life, I became more aware of how vital parking in general and handicap parking in particular are for someone with limited or no mobility. I had moved to Saint Paul in 1999 and became a frequent patron of restaurants and other businesses in Saint Paul, often along Grand Avenue. Once I had lost my leg it became more difficult to go to those businesses due to my limited mobility. Even if there is a parking place that is reasonably close to the entrance, if there isn't an aisle next to me (either by pulling forward or backing in), I can't park there. My prosthetic doesn't allow me to get into the driver's seat if the door can't swing open fully. Sometimes I take that chance and park in a non-handicap parking place. If someone then parks too close to the driver side door, I am unable to climb over from the passenger side. This happened to me on several occasions to the point where I rarely risk it happening.

Sometimes I can compensate by waiting in the car until a handicap parking place opens up (that doesn't always pan out) or in the case of Chipotle (for example) I simply ignore the location on Grand Avenue and drive the extra miles to the Highland Park Location. Most often, when possible, I choose to schedule meetings and get together at Suburban locations where parking is easier. Of course, this results in the loss of business to Saint Paul businesses, and extra miles of driving.

My concern over this led me to join St Paul's Mayor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities (**this letter is not endorsed or representing the views or wishes of the MACPD**) where I have learned there are many ADA problems (including sidewalks that sometimes cannot be used by wheelchairs and electric carts) that need attention. If there was adequate parking in the Summit Avenue/Grand Avenue corridor, the proposed changes to Summit Avenue wouldn't alarm me, but that isn't the case. This area is **already severely short of parking** and my understanding is that in some areas over 50% of the parking along Summit Avenue will be eliminated. Parking along Summit is vital to both customers and employees of Grand Avenue businesses. Residents of the area are aware of the lack of parking already and are alarmed by anything that will make it worse.

As our population ages and more residents lose mobility, this problem will only worsen. Whatever is going to happen in the future of the Summit/Grand Avenue corridor should include more parking in general, and more ADA parking in particular. Cars may be powered by wind, solar, electric, or other means in the future, but they will still need a place to park.

I haven't used Metro Mobility myself (yet), but in their later years both my mother and father utilized Metro Mobility on occasions when I was unable to assist them. If you take a serious look at the City's plan for above the curb bike paths on both sides of Summit, you should see it will make the use of Metro Mobility a serious challenge and less safe. I hope this factor is being seriously studied before any changes are made.

Thank you for allowing my concerns to be addressed at this time.

If anyone has any questions or would like to speak with me on this issue, I would be glad to speak with you or meet with you as long as there is parking reasonably close to where we would meet.

Sincerely,

Kenn Rockler

Rockler Consulting
454 Ashland Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55102
kennrock@hotmail.com

612-205-0110 (cell/text)

Video submission from Dan Reed.

Though I applied to give my testimony regarding the Summit Ave Bike project there was not enough for all of us to be heard. The board chair encouraged us to share our opinions via written or video. I appreciate that and here is the link to my brief testimony: <https://vimeo.com/875388424>

To the members of the Metropolitan Council,

I had the happy displeasure this afternoon of being over represented in the public comment portion of today's meeting. I understand the Council has heard enough on the matter in its many public meetings. I regret that you all are caught in the crossfire between opposing viewpoints. But since I took time off from work to be present, I thought I might as well enter my comments in the record.

I promise, it will take less than two minutes to read.

In preparing to address the Met Council (thank you for this opportunity), I thought I would bone up on the Met Council's Thrive 2040 plan, and the Transportation Policy Plan (TPP). With highlighter in hand, I sought connections between what Thrive aspired towards, and what the Summit Trail Plan offered.

It wasn't hard. Here are a few examples of common themes I found.

Sewers.

Thrive calls for preserving, repairing, and rebuilding aging sewers. Remember what happened in Uptown, Minneapolis earlier this year, when a sewer failure resulted in a massive sinkhole. Sewer sinkholes would be a bad look for Summit!

Encourage Alternatives to single-occupant automobile travel. Reduce vehicle miles traveled, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The advent of Bus Rapid Transit shows that you can't expect to grow your ridership if you don't also improve service. Similarly, you can't expect to make cycling more attractive by maintaining the status quo.

Provide more opportunities to use bikes as transportation, linking riders to key destinations, job centers, schools and universities, transit connections, and commercial corridors.

Create facilities that appeal to a broad range of abilities and levels of experience. Thrive 2040 recognizes separated facilities are one approach to this.

Support the needs of winter cyclists by emphasizing the importance of snow clearing.

Create Regional trail facilities that connect recreational riders to amenities such as parks, waterways, and other scenic destinations.

Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan checks all of those boxes. And it is unique in its function as both a regional trail and as a transportation corridor. The SART will serve as a "gateway drug" for potentially thousands of recreational riders to choose cycling as an alternative to driving. Let's get this done. Please vote to approve the Summit Regional Trail.

Thank you, once again, for your time in weighing all of the public testimony, and thank you for the work you do for our community.

Ed Steinhauer

Council Members,

My name is James Slegers. I live in the Hamline Midway neighborhood of Saint Paul. I walk, bike, scoot, and drive along Summit all the time.

Summit Avenue is a crucial bike route for the entire region, forming a beltline across St Paul that is used as a connection for people across the metro. It is one of the most heavily used bicycle routes in Saint Paul. It makes accessible a beautiful part of the city. But many of my friends who have children have told me that they would love to bike here, but find it to be daunting or unsafe as is. Riders must ride between parked cars and 30mph traffic, dodge cracks, potholes, ice, debris dumpsters, poorly parked cars, and open car doors.

A curb separated alignment that this plan recommends reduces or eliminates all the risk factors that would-be bicyclists are deferred by and that worry even accomplished cyclists. Curb separated and parking protected paths are also what state and national street planning guidelines recommend for a street like this, precisely for these safety reasons. Surveys also show that these are the types of facilities that women, children, older people, and less confident riders find safer and more inviting. If we are building a path that will last for decades, let's build one that everyone can use. This is a corridor where 4000+ children attend schools, and many others attend worship or visit local businesses.

I want my friends and their children to be able to bike here safely. I want to be able to bike on this path 50 years from now when I'm 85. Please vote to recommend this trail plan to be included in your regional plans. It is a regional asset that will be used for decades as a park as well as an important transportation network link.

Thank you,
James Slegers
Hamline Midway, Saint Paul

Hello,

I support the plan for the Summit Ave Regional Trail. I think it's important to make Summit safer for cyclists and pedestrians and this plan will do that.

This plan will increase cycling along the route which is important for the future of our city.

Thank you

Michael Tracy
1867 Berkeley Ave
St Paul

I am writing in support of the proposed Summit Avenue Regional Trail plan that the Metropolitan Council will vote on on Wednesday.

There are myriad social, environmental, and traffic benefits that will profit the many, and few disadvantage that hinder only a small portion of the community.

I hope you will do you best to help the plan proceed.

Sincerely,
Andrew Ritchie

Dear Members of the Metropolitan Council,

I am reaching out to express my wholehearted endorsement of the Summit Avenue Bike Plan. As a citizen of Saint Paul, I firmly believe that this plan marks a significant stride toward establishing a more comprehensive and environmentally sustainable transportation network.

The proposed Summit Avenue Bike Plan doesn't just cater to the escalating demand for safer and more accessible cycling alternatives; it also aligns with our commitment to promoting eco-friendly transportation methods. By introducing protected bike lanes along Summit Avenue, we can stimulate greater cycling adoption among our residents, consequently mitigating traffic congestion and reducing carbon emissions.

This plan has substantial potential for elevating our community's overall quality of life. Secure and user-friendly bike infrastructure cultivates healthier lifestyles, fosters community involvement, and bolsters local business growth. It cultivates a vibrant and unified neighborhood, where residents can connect with one another and explore our picturesque city sustainably.

I implore you to support the Summit Avenue Bike Plan and prioritize the well-being of our city and its inhabitants. By investing in cycling infrastructure, we are making an investment in our community's future and fostering a more sustainable and equitable urban landscape.

I thank you for your time and consideration. I'm looking forward to riding on this path!

Yours sincerely,

Brian Nelson
1748 Leone Ave
Saint Paul, MN
emailbriannelson@gmail.com

Dear Met Council Members,

Please know of my support for approving the Summit Ave Regional Trail. I think the planning was thoughtful and community engagement appropriate. There is a need to look towards the future use and needs to transform and support safe transit and transportation options in Saint Paul and regionally.

The benefits of the Summit Ave Regional Trail support the community's common good and will move us towards a transformative, safe, effective, and modern trail system. I hope we will continue to expand trail systems, such as Summit Ave, throughout Saint Paul, Ramsey County, and the Met Council region.

I am grateful for your work to move us forward in sustainable development.

With appreciation,

Andy Dirksen
2182 Stanford Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 55105

Hello Met Council Members,

I am writing to express my support for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan. It is pro-environment, pro-health and pro-future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Andy
--
Andrew Wright
1942 Irving Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Dear Met Council members,

I am writing as an educator, a parent, a resident of Merriam Park, and a year-round bike commuter to ask for your support for the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan.

The Summit Ave bike lane has many positive benefits for my own personal life: it makes my daily commute easier and safer (I ride along that corridor to work every weekday - and have had several close calls), and makes bike commuting safer for my family members (my college-student daughter rides between her apartment and Macalester College nearly every weekday, and her boyfriend rides along Summit from their apartment to St Paul College many days of the week).

Importantly, this bike lane has positive benefits for the whole community. By making biking safer, we'll attract many other bike commuters along a street that connects many neighborhoods to downtown St Paul and other key nodes of employment, shopping, and amenities.

More bikers means less air pollution and noise from cars, fewer hassles with parking, and a generally more pleasant experience of Summit Avenue. Despite what some anti-bike-plan community members might say, I find crossing a street with a few bikers much safer than trying to cross it with much faster, heavier and more distracted cars. People on bikes help create stronger social fabric - bikers greet each other, make eye contact and greet pedestrians at stop lights, and (unlike cars) are not anonymous and closed off to all social interactions.

Furthermore, keep in mind that there are *many* schools located near Summit Avenue, and young people are more likely to use bikes than any other age group - some because they're not old enough to drive a car, some because they are at college and don't have/need a car, and some for the pure pleasure of enjoying exercise and being outside. My own students at Macalester love to bike down to the Mississippi River, but they don't always feel safe riding on Summit. Others ride to many locations in St Paul for internships, and a new bike path on Summit would make their journeys safer and more pleasant. School children (and their parents) don't feel safe riding to school on Summit's current, inadequate bike path.

The college students I work with are thinking carefully about their futures. They want to live in a place that reflects their values and concerns. They want to live in a place that enhances their quality of life and supports their efforts to combat climate change and other forms of environmental injustice. Safe, modern bike infrastructure will make St Paul a more appealing place to live, and expand access to safe biking for many.

Thank you for all you do.
Christie Manning
1764 Hague Avenue

Saturday, October 14, 2023

Good morning, Honorable Chair Charles Zelle & Metropolitan Council;

I am writing to support the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan. I have written once previously and that email may not have been received. I also attended the 11 October meeting but did not speak.

The Summit Avenue plan by design improves the overall function and makes the entire street system work better for everyone that uses the street, including bicycle transit, walking, people with disabilities, ambulances, cars, tour buses, and moving vans, etc.

The basic change of design is the switching of the alignment of the cycleway space with the parking space for motor vehicles, and this becomes a narrower street the entire length with a boulevard level grade separated bicycle space that is much easier to maintain in the winter, and makes it far easier for public works staff to prevent the progressive buildup of snow berms on the side of the streets that result in narrowing the passable width of the entire street. This is a huge benefit.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Paul Nelson
1678 Van Buren Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651-315-9659 Cell
651-645-6996 Landline
mrl.paul@usfamily.net

Dear council member Zelle,

I'm writing to voice my support for the proposed separated Summit bike lane. My support is based on the following factors:

- Summit Avenue is a long-standing, key bike route that is heavily used.
- The current configuration doesn't provide adequate safety, especially for older riders or families with children.
- I feel strongly that the separated path can be executed while still preserving the unique character of Summit Avenue.

Thanks for your attention,

Ron Gerdes
2142 Hartford Avenue
St. Paul

Thank you for considering a plan to make Summit Avenue, so loved by walkers, runners, and bicyclists, safer for all of us. I have been bicycling Summit since 1995, and for 10 years was a year-round bicycle commuter from Mackubin and Summit to the Mississippi River Road and it would be great to have a safer route.

I live in the Cathedral Hill neighborhood. You will see many "Save our Street" signs, but I have talked to many neighbors and few of them have even reviewed the plan carefully. I have urged everyone to understand that Summit is a park for all of us, and having a safer place for non-motorized transport is a benefit to all.

Best,

Sherry Gray
Saint Paul, Minnesota

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(*) / (*)

Dear Metropolitan Council members,

I am a Saint Paul resident and live just a few blocks south from Summit Ave. I am engaged with my local community, including as a board member of the Macalester Groveland Community Council.

The Summit Avenue Regional Trail plan has the broad support of the St. Paul City Council and the community because it would improve a popular recreation route and vital transportation corridor with better safety and accessibility for all residents of St Paul, and especially for our youth.

I wanted to bring to your attention some compelling information regarding the Summit Regional Trail plan and its potential impact on St. Paul's youth, children, and families, which I believe is consistent with Metropolitan Council's policies and in particular with its groundbreaking 2021 study, titled "Adventure Close to Home: Connecting Youth with the Regional Park System."

The Metropolitan Council's study delves into the needs, motivations, and challenges faced by youth aged 12-20 when accessing and utilizing the Regional Park System. Importantly, the study reveals two key findings that directly align with the objectives of the Summit Regional Trail plan:

1. Youth actively seek improved options for independent travel to parks, whether it be on foot or by bike.
2. Youth demonstrate a strong interest in developing their biking skills, with biking ranking as their second most preferred activity after swimming.

These findings highlight the urgent need to provide enhanced opportunities for our youth to connect with parks, and the Summit Regional Trail plan is well positioned to address these needs effectively.

The strategic location of the Summit Avenue Regional Trail, which connects multiple middle schools, high schools, and colleges with two regional parks, emphasizes the plan's potential to translate the Metropolitan Council's public policy into reality. By incorporating the insights derived from your own 2021 report and facilitating enhanced access for our urban youth, the Summit Regional Trail Plan has the capacity to make a significant impact in fostering a stronger bond between our community's younger generation and the Regional Park System.

I wanted to share this information with you as you prepare for the meeting of the Summit Regional Trail plan. These insights into the needs and aspirations of our youth will serve as powerful supporting evidence, showcasing the plan's alignment with the Metropolitan Council's vision and its potential to positively impact our community.

Personally, I have actively engaged with my community to raise awareness about the trail plan's value for our youth. The resolution "MORE DAILY TRIPS ON FOOT AND BY BIKE; PLANNING SUMMIT AVENUE FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE," which was approved by the Board of Directors of the Macalester Groveland

Community Council by a vote of 12-0 with 1 abstention, exemplifies the collective support we have garnered in a neighborhood that has residents living on Summit Ave.

Finally, I have reached out to a wide audience by publishing letters in the Villager and the Star Tribune. I firmly believe that the Summit Regional Trail plan will not only provide an accessible and safe route for pedestrians and cyclists but also offer numerous opportunities for our youth to engage in healthy activities, connect with nature, and foster a sense of community.

I kindly request your support in raising the interests of our youth during the Council's discussion of the Summit Avenue Regional Trail plan. By advocating for the trail plan and highlighting the positive impact the regional trail will have on the younger generation, you can help ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are considered.

Once again, I sincerely appreciate your commitment to our community and your dedication to making informed decisions that benefit all residents, including our youth. Thank you for your support of the Summit Regional Trail plan.

Yours sincerely,
Hugo Bruggeman
1923 Princeton Ave

A copy of the Macalester Groveland Community Council resolution and letter to the Strib are attached as pdf.

Dear Met Council,

I'm writing to you because I know the council is being lobbied by interest groups to halt or delay the Summit Avenue Bike Trail.

The summit bike path designed by the city is an outstanding amenity with broad and deep support in the community and amongst community leaders. I urge the council to fully support its implementation as designed.

1. It will save lives and prevent injuries.
2. It makes biking accessible for less confident bikers, including children, the elderly, and those new to biking.
3. It's good for the environment because it will replace car rides with bike rides.

Saint Paul city staff and elected decision-makers pursued an open and rigorous process that should be supported.

- There were multiple, well-attended public hearings over many months. Every public comment was accepted and received by decision-makers.
- The city plans were well documented and researched, with empirical data on demand and safety issues as well as survey data and demand forecasts.

I am a homeowner and voter raising a family in Saint Paul. I bike often.

These types of bike infrastructure are what cities all over the US and the world implement to invest in city quality of life for everyone. Sadly, interest groups like SOS have spread disinformation about this when a visit to any other city, or Wheelock Parkway in Saint Paul, shows what a great amenity this is.

I urge you and the council to support the passed proposal.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Quam
1825 Selby Ave, Saint Paul

Hi everyone,

While there are many great reasons to support protected, grade-separated bike lanes on Summit Avenue, I want to highlight one particular benefit - providing kids with a safe and independent route to school. Over the last 50 years, the number of kids who walk and bike to school has dropped from about half to a little over ten percent. Even in the last 15 years, the number of kids specifically biking to school has declined by about 20 percent

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.outsideonline.com%2Fculture%2Fopinion%2Ffewer-kids-are-riding-bikes%2F%3Fscope%3Danon&data=05%7C01%7CCharles.Zelle%40metc.state.mn.us%7Cf0d17b39c6fe4cceaafdc08dbcc0fb20d%7Cddbff68b482a457381e0fef8156a4fd0%7C0%7C0%7C638328140178038854%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=llrJxVtz6C2%2FtWDJJJaQa3nXy8oy9%2B4CeZ%2BBpobe6kp8%3D&reserved=0> . In a relatively dense urban environment like Saint Paul, the primary impediment to both actual and perceived safety for kids biking to school is the physical danger that results from proximity to automobiles.

Adding separated bike lanes to the outside of any parking lane, whether one- or two-way, would provide substantial protection for students cycling to school by adding a parking buffer (where a parking lane is present) and separating the bike lane(s) from moving traffic, as well as aiding in winter maintenance for year-round cycling access. Separated bike lanes would also provide protection for students walking to school by narrowing the roadway available to cars to reduce crossing distance and encourage driving speeds within the posted speed limit of 25 mph.

Summit Avenue is exactly the right place for protected, grade-separated bike lanes. Most of our local schools are within a half mile of Summit, including J.J. Hill Montessori (0.4 miles up Chatsworth), Global Arts Plus Lower (0.4 miles down Oxford), Saint Thomas More Catholic School (on Summit), Saint Paul Academy (0.3 miles down Dunlap), Laura Jeffrey Academy (on Summit), and Hidden River Middle School (on Summit). These protected, grade-separated bike lanes on Summit Avenue would form the safe backbone of a connected network of cycling infrastructure for at least the Union Park, Summit-University, Mac-Groveland, and Summit Hill neighborhoods.

I live on Lincoln Avenue, a couple blocks south of Summit, with my spouse and two young children. I frequently bike along Summit to drop my daughter off at daycare, and the portion east of Lexington slated for reconstruction is especially hazardous due to the positioning of the bike lane in the car door space and the proximity to motorists. But even the buffered lanes west of Lexington are exposed to careless motorists who treat Summit Avenue as a speedy and low-attention east-west cut-through. Even if your perception of motorist behavior is less negative than my own, kids aren't always predictable, and

providing them with a separate space protects them from mistakes that they or a motorist may make. A city that's safe for kids is safe for everyone.

Please support funding for the design and construction of infrastructure to make Summit Avenue a safe way for students to travel to and from school.

Thank you,

Joe Steinbronn
1072 Lincoln Avenue

Dear Council Members,

I have lived on Summit Avenue for over 20 years now and over 45 years in St.Paul. I regularly bike on Summit and other bikeways and streets around the twin cities. While I've cycled all my life, including other cities in the US and countries in Europe, at 71 years old I'm well aware of the safety needs of both older and younger cyclists.

I've been hit by a car while riding my bike in downtown St. Paul that ran a red light. I landed on the windshield of the car and luckily only got broken fingers plus many bruises and abrasions - my bike was destroyed with a badly bent frame!

The opportunity to make Summit Avenue safer and more beautiful is presented in this well designed regional trail plan. The issue of tree loss is being purposely misrepresented by the SOS group as a NIMBY issue to garner opposition to the trail. The tree loss will be no different than what is required to rebuild Summit Avenue from the ground up, since the new trail will still be within the existing curb-to-curb distances. New trees can be planted, human lives cannot be replaced.

Please support this safest and best environmental plan for this generation and our future existence!

Thank you,
Terry Brueck
St. Paul

October 15, 2023,

TO: Members, Metropolitan Council

FROM: Marilyn Bach, Ph.D.
Member, Save Our Street

I URGE THE METROPOLITAN COUNCIL TO PAUSE APPROVAL OF THE SUMMIT AVENUE REGIONAL TRAIL

On May 24, 2023, the Saint Paul City Council voted 6-to-1 to impose the Summit Avenue Bike Trail proposal on its citizenry. The Metropolitan Council now has an opportunity to correct that premature decision.

Good government requires that its representatives genuinely listen to and engage with its citizens in legitimate dialogue and discourse so that its actions reflect the best interests of its citizenry. Chapter 5 page 76 of the *Met Council Regional Park Policy Plan* addresses the Met Council's **obligations** in evaluating a master plan for approval: ... " The process must include opportunity for the public to be heard and to have influence over the contents of the master plan ..."

The entire process used to engage residents of Saint Paul in the development of the Summit Avenue Regional Trail was illegitimate, a sham, and a breach of public trust.

On June 6, 2022, although Covid restrictions had largely been lifted, the city held a virtual meeting to discuss the draft Summit Trail Proposal. More than 400 citizens attended the meeting raising their concerns and asking pointed questions. On June 8th, an inter-staff memo disclosed that rather than encouraging input from citizens, staff's concern was "how do we shut this line of questioning down?" (1.)

When a study of posts on Engage Saint Paul (the official website for public engagement) demonstrated that public opinion was 20 to 1 against the Summit Trail Proposal, the city did indeed shut down public input (see [Analysis of Comments on Engage St. Paul Website Indicates Strong Opposition of the plan](#)). On October 14, 2022, the city actually **deleted** the Summit Trail Proposal section of the Engage Saint Paul website.

Initially, Engage Saint Paul website functions were visible and available to the public. This included the ability to ask a question, share an idea, see the ideas posted by others, and utilize the "like" function to express support for that idea. When the Summit Trail Proposal section reopened, it was "blind" to citizens. Citizens could not see the comments of others. Unable to see comments, we could not weigh in or "like" them.

Faith in the Metropolitan Council as a legitimate governing public body has recently been questioned (see [Make Met Council an elected body? Task force to begin work on changes aimed at accountability | MinnPost](#)).

I urge the Metropolitan Council to **PAUSE** any Summit Bike Trail Proposal decision. **DELAY THE DECISION**. More study is needed **with experts using context sensitive design**. Citizen opposition is broad and deep. The process used for public engagement by the City of Saint Paul was deeply flawed and inhibited public input. ~~The Metropolitan Council's limitation of citizen input to 15 minutes at its October 11, 2023 meeting only exacerbates the suppression of public input.~~

Marilyn Bach, Ph.D. , Member Save Our Street
9 Saint Albans St. S
Saint Paul, MN 55105

1. Document: Email File Name: RE Summit Ave RT Master Plan Public Meeting Staff Update(1)
Authors: City (From Westman, HunWen; To Norton, Mary; others) Date of Email: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 3:49 PM

From: Westman, HunWen (CI-StPaul) <HunWen.Westman@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 3:49 PM
To: Norton, Mary (CI-StPaul) <Mary.Norton@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Messer, Alice (CI-StPaul) <alice.messer@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Mikaela Isaacson <mikaela.isaacson@bolton-menk.com>
Subject: RE: Summit Ave. RT Master Plan - Public Meeting Staff Update

Mary – attached are my notes from our breakout room on Monday evening. Not sure if you wanted them since you have the video, but wanted to make sure you got the questions in particular. (They're accusatory questions, but if they're not answered, we'll almost certainly be accused of not listening.)

- Has decision already been made that it will be one of the two options provided?
- Why haven't we been given numbers for ped/bike crashes?
- How well has Ayd Mill Trail been used?
- Why is it a good idea to have more bicycles?

The first question wasn't framed as a question so much as a few people trying to force a statement that decisions have already been made, or they wouldn't be asked to choose between two options (the one-

way vs two-way trail). I thought about this a bit afterward – how to shut this line of questioning down without stepping into their trap – and here's where I was headed:

No decisions are made. This project is tasked with putting forth a recommendation for what a regional trail on Summit Ave would look like if there was one. The process will continue to narrow down the range of options, at each step looking at remaining options more closely, until a recommendation is determined. The process could be linear or iterative depending on the results of closer examination at each step.

The decision to look at Summit Ave came out of the City's comprehensive planning process [I think? Is that where Summit as a regional trail search corridor came from? – yes, that is correct], which identified Summit Ave as a regional trail search corridor, and was a result of broad input from around the city and looking at the city transportation and park systems as a whole.

It's too long, and kind of answering two different questions, but thought I'd share in case any of it is helpful as you all work through answers to a lot of pointed questions. Obviously no obligation to use any of it as I'm sure you have your own thoughts too. This is well said, thank you!

Thanks,
HunWen Westman, P.E.



SIERRA CLUB

NORTH STAR CHAPTER

2300 Myrtle Avenue, Suite 260
Saint Paul, MN 55114
612-659-9124
sierraclub.org/minnesota

October 17, 2023

Metropolitan Council
390 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55101

Dear Metropolitan Council Members,

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter urges you to support the City of Saint Paul's [Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan](#) which will convert existing on-street bike lanes to safer and more accessible off-street, protected, one-way trails.

The Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan has three major advantages over the existing bike lanes:

1. Protected bike paths will be more comfortable for everyone, but especially families, students, and less experienced riders.
2. The paths would be maintainable in winter, unlike the current on-street bike lanes that disappear in ice, snow, and slush.
3. Off-street bicycle paths and narrowing Summit Avenue will calm speeding traffic and shorten crossing distances, making it easier and safer for people walking.

Transportation is the #1 source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state. Converting short car trips (under three miles) to bicycle trips is key to meeting our carbon reduction goals and reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), especially in urban areas like Saint Paul. Calming traffic and providing safer spaces for people to walk, bike, and roll will help persuade more people to ride or walk instead of driving. A safer Summit Avenue will also reduce pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle crashes, while improving air quality and public health.

The Sierra Club encourages you to support the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan to help make the metropolitan region more sustainable, livable, and resilient.

Sincerely,

Margaret Levin, State Director
Risa Hustad, Land Use and Transportation Chair
Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Dear Metropolitan Council Members,

I am a 50-year resident of St Paul and have lived on Summit Ave for twenty-five years. I am asking you to support the Summit Regional Trail Plan.

Just as Council Member Mitra Jalali said in May, I feel that the Summit Avenue Regional Trail reflects our community's vision for the future as a safer, more connected, and more sustainable Saint Paul. As a homeowner on Summit, I support the plan because it will replace essential sewer and water infrastructure that is over a 100 years old and in need of repair. It will also create a separated bike path, which will be much safer than the painted bike lane we have today. I am a Polio survivor. My husband and I ride a recumbent tandem called a Terra Trike. We, and many of my neighbors who use bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, scooters and ebikes, can't wait to roll down the new path. It will truly support people of all ages and all abilities to enjoy Summit Avenue.

Thank you for your consideration,

Catherine Plessner
2038 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, Mn 55105

April 18, 2023

Director Andy Rodriguez
Project Manager Mary Norton
Parks and Recreation Department
City of Saint Paul
VIA EMAIL

To Whom It May Concern:

On Thursday, April 13th, 2023 the Board of Directors of the Macalester Groveland Community Council ("MGCC") held a special public eMeeting via Zoom, at which it considered the a recommendation from its standing Transportation Committee regarding the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan. The Board of Directors passed the following resolution by a final vote of 12-0 with 1 abstention:

MORE DAILY TRIPS ON FOOT AND BY BIKE; PLANNING SUMMIT AVENUE FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

WHEREAS the reconstruction of Summit Avenue presents a rare opportunity to restore, preserve, and enhance this city street as the leafy, expansive linear park and community social space of its original conception;

WHEREAS Summit Avenue serves as a route to seven middle and high schools in the area* as well as many other youth destinations including parks, recreational centers, faith institutions, commercial establishments including tea and coffee shops, candy and ice cream stores, book and toy stores, dance and fitness clubs, and summer camps;

WHEREAS the current, 90% Draft, Summit Regional Trail Plan lacks information, analysis or explanations to develop Summit Avenue as a safe corridor for children, families and youth to make more of their daily trips to the many destinations near Summit Ave on foot and by bike;

WHEREAS the current, 90% Draft, Summit Regional Trail Plan does not refer to Saint Paul's 2017 Safe Routes to School plan, which does support children and families in making daily trips by bike or on foot;

WHEREAS the plan has not sufficiently included the community engagement and input from children and youth under 18 years old**;

WHEREAS year after year, a well-configured and safer Summit Avenue could provide thousands of these children, youth and their families with the option to more safely bike or walk along one of the nations greatest Victorian residential boulevards--which, over a ten-year period would impact the lives of tens of thousands of children and youth on their daily trips to school and to many other destinations in the area;

WHEREAS the above becomes an issue of equity as well as children's and youth's rights to health, happiness, safety and protection;

WHEREAS promoting walking and biking on Summit Avenue for daily trips in this part of the city would show our commitment to support future generations and to combat climate change;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Macalester-Groveland Community Council requests that the City Parks and Recreation Department will better document their engagement with youth community members and families, as well as school boards and PTO's of middle and high schools, faith institutions, and business associations in the vicinity of Summit Ave to inform and develop a section of the Summit Regional Trail Plan that presents information, analysis, requirements and recommendations to reconstruct Summit Avenue as a safe corridor for children and youth to make more of their daily trips to visit the many destinations along Summit Avenue by bike and on foot. This section should also have a few pictures of youth biking; not any such picture is included in the current plan.

* Every year 500 to 600 students start grade 6, and a cohort of about 4,200 students is enrolled across all grades of these seven schools

** For instance, in the survey of over 1,300 participants children and youth under 18 formed 7% of survey respondents, while this age groups forms about 17% of the neighborhood's population.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Alexa Golemo
Executive Director
Macalester-Groveland Community Council

cc (via email): Ward 3, City of Saint Paul
Ward 4, City of Saint Paul

Make Summit Safe for Kids by Hugo Bruggeman

Future generations will appreciate a reconstructed Summit Avenue. The safety of its painted bike lanes, once revolutionary, has become questionable. Bikers face risks from cars drifting into the center bike lane from the left and from parked cars intruding upon the bike lane from the right, especially in winter. Only experienced and confident bikers are willing to navigate these risks.

The city of St Paul has developed a plan to replace the painted bike lanes on Summit Avenue with a safer and more appealing trail for cycling enthusiasts. Although the plan promotes cycling in general, it is essential to prioritize children and youth in this effort. Young people, in particular, lack experience and confidence in navigating the risks of biking between lanes of parked and moving cars. The new plan addresses this by creating separate and elevated bike trails that are free from the hazards posed by cars.

The proposed trail offers several benefits for young people, including a safer environment for unsupervised outdoor activities, socializing with peers, and physical exercise. With hundreds of thousands of kids projected to use the trail for daily trips between schools, homes, and local businesses, the potential impact is significant for the next century. Furthermore, by designating the Summit Avenue Regional Trail for non-carbon-based transportation, we join young people in the fight against climate disruption.

Decision-makers will soon vote on the plan. I hope they will consider the sustainable transportation benefits of the Summit Avenue Regional Trail plan for future generations.

To whom it may concern,

I am opposed to the regional bike trail down Summit. **The SART is not the right fit for the neighborhood/ community. Due to the nature of the trail severe complications, and it is more dangerous than bikers and pedestrians. You will find runners on the bike trail. There are more bike/ pedestrian accident than cars! Too many, students, and runners utilize Summit! Think of what you're doing!!!**

According to the bike coalition, the intersection near Kowalski's you should never have a bike path and a walking path in that segment. It is too dangerous. This is according to the bike coalition.

You need to reference the bike, coalition, the people that you have taken advice from. I do not understand why you bend the rules to get what you want.

This will just end up with too many people getting hurt. For what?

Your name is will be on it.

**Cynthia Rapacz
45 Albert Street S
Unit 1
St. Paul, MN 55105**

Subject: Voice Mail (50 seconds)

I'm just calling on behalf of the bike lane that you're going to be voting on. I hope you can take the time to drive down this beautiful St. and see what it's all about. And think about no parking from the cathedral down to Lexington Ave. And an 8 foot wide band of green stripes 6 inches high on each side of the road, minus about 9900 trees. And then you can figure the cost. They say 13 million. It's going to be closer to 30 million by the time they even think about getting it done. I just hope you can good conscience vote the way you wanna vote. Thank you.

You received a voice mail from JANSON CAROL JE.

Subject: Comments re: 10/25/23 Summit Avenue Regional Trail: Please table the Off-Road Summit Avenue Regional Trail. Let's find other Regional routes to equitably & comfortably bicycle through St. Paul and connect the Mississippi River Blvd and Sam Morgan Trail

Please vote to Table the off-road Summit Avenue Regional Trail. Let's find other routes to comfortably bicycle through St. Paul.

Why?

1) Trees, the Ultimate Equity Machine, Public Air Quality

Trees are integral to the well being of people. Cutting into boulevards and corners for bike trail puts too many trees at risk. (Estimates 200 - 1,000). When full reconstruction on segments are needed; use new boring technology that minimizes utility sewer, etc. infrastructure. Trees are key elements to clean air. There are equal number of Walkers as Bikers, tree loss would dramatically reduce Pedestrian experience.

2) Safety, the Ultimate Equity Machine, TOO MANY CRASH CONFLICTS ALONG SUMMIT AVENUE

Yes, off-road trails are wonderful, along Mississippi River Boulevard where ZERO Conflicts exist with traffic, sidewalks, crosswalks and driveways. A Summit Avenue Trail features 150+ conflicts.

3) IMPROVE ON-STREET BIKE LANES, HI VISIBILITY color, add additional buffer to On-Street Bike Lane.

4) What is more welcoming to all Citizens?

- 4.7 miles for \$12 Million? (\$46,000 - \$50,000 per 100')
- 4.7 miles for \$1.2 Million? (\$4,000 - \$5,000 per 100')
- That is an additional \$10 Million for MORE BIKE LANES, and/or IMPROVEMENTS TO CURRENT BIKE LANES!

5) Instead, find alternatives. Look at the Grace/Shortline Trails posted at the Save Summit Avenue Website. I am in the "Interested but Concerned" camp, prefer to ride my bicycle on a street(s) and path(s) with fewer cars.

A BETTER OPTION for the OFF-ROAD TRAIL, an idea dubbed the "SHORTLINE - AYD MILL - GRACE Trail."

Respectfully submitted,

Bridget Allan Ales

St. Paul, MN
bridgetales2@gmail.com

While I signed up to speak at your October 11th meeting, I was told by staff that I would not be allowed to speak because all available slots for the 15 minutes had already been taken by bicycle coalition members; I therefore submit these written comments. I appreciate that Council Members have already received significant input, but glaring deficiencies in the proposed trail still need to be resolved. I respectfully request that the Metropolitan Council table consideration of this matter until the record before it addresses five critical flaws. Summit Avenue deserves a bicycle facility that matches its environmental and historic contributions, which the proposed trail fundamental fails to do.

The Process Was Seriously Flawed From the Beginning

- The City's own documents establish that before the process even started, the outcome was determined
 - City engineer Reuben Carter and Bicycle Coalition's Andy Singer emailed: "we already have 4 votes" in favor of the trail before any public process had even commenced
- Public comments on city's website for the trail were running almost 20:1 against it, so the city simply shut down that function on its website
- There was no meaningful engagement by the City with anyone who opposed the trail
 - Numerous alternatives were suggested; the City's documents confirm it *refused to evaluate* any of them
 - this violates Met Council's own requirements for considering master plans

The City Refused to Analyze the Loss of Trees

- The City initially admitted that at least 220 trees will be lost, and completely ignored data showing far more trees would be lost if the current trail design is implemented
- The City previously acknowledged that the plan it is now proposing could not be recommended due to tree loss
- The assertion that 'no trees will be lost', made to Met Council as recently as October 11 is factually false, and contradicted by all data
- The City's denial of the petition for an EAW asserts that any impacts on trees can be ignored because eventually trees grow back
 - Violates Met Council's own policy on tree preservation and greenhouse gas emissions

The City Refused to Address the Destruction of Summit's Historic Streetscape

- The City ignored its *own consultant's* warning that the existing curb lines should not be changed
 - 100% of the curb lines along Summit will now be altered, many dramatically
 - The City's zig-zag 'chicane' East of Lexington destroys, irreversibly, the existing symmetrical streetscape
- The City's claim that historic preservation does not apply to streetscapes is legally and factually incorrect
 - The City's own ordinances and policies recognize the importance of preserving the historic streetscape
 - The City has never submitted the proposed plan to SHPO or 106 Federal Historical Preservation Review

The City has Never Conducted an Alternatives Analysis

- City documents confirm only Summit Avenue itself was considered, not the full corridor as required by Met Council
- No designs other than above-curb trails were ever evaluated
- Rapid changes in technology (e.g. e-bikes, automated delivery devices) make proposed design obsolete

The City has Never Conducted Environmental Review

- Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA) prohibits projects where prudent and feasible alternatives exist
- The City refused to consider maintaining the existing bike lanes as the preferred environmental alternative
 - Preserves existing tree canopy
 - Preserves historic streetscape
 - Frees scarce resources to develop bike infrastructure in unserved areas
 - Preserves accessibility for the disabled that the proposed trails would destroy in violation of ADA
 - Ignores other state of the art safety improvements (e.g. high visibility lanes, better buffers, narrower traffic lanes)

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Cattanach
St. Paul, Mn.

Hi Bridget,
I could not make it to give my testimony regarding the Summit Ave Bike project.
I heard people were encouraged to share our opinions via written or video.
I appreciate that and here is the link to my brief testimony:

[Wheelchair Users Denied Safe Access on Vimeo](#)

Your consideration is greatly appreciated. Please forward to all interested parties including all the Council members

Thank you for your consideration.

Sent from [AOL Desktop](#)

Mike McLaughlin
mmclaug102@aol.com
651-222-5072

To whom it may concern,

Decreasing the lanes to 10 feet will impede on not only the US Postal Service, but all ground packaging services. I spoke to the US Postal Service myself. Feel free to do so. Has anyone done this? I've spoken

with mail carriers, delivery personnel. They just told me you will not get your mail. You will need to pick it up at the post office. This is not the service that is intended. Some people are elderly and disabled, and cannot do this. This is unlawful. And if you're thinking to yourself well if you can't pick up your mail because you're disabled, you should be in a nursing home. I have epilepsy, I'm 47 I cannot drive I rely on the Postal Service for my medication to help my seizures. Now, if you cannot understand this. And putting in a bike path and disregarding the ADA regulations, and this push for a cleaner environment, that everyone should bike. The ADA will have something to say about it. If your bike trail impedes with getting Metro Mobility in and out, this will be a huge issue. And it looks like it will.

But the most important thing is the emergency medical response. The size of a fire truck is 8 feet. You decrease the road to 10 feet. If you have street parking on one side that leaves less or the firefighters to work. Firefighters respond not only for fire's but also for emergency medical response.

They need to get in and out of their vehicle. How will they do this? Every other block?

Cynthia Rapacz
45 Albert Street South
Unit 1
St. Paul MN 55105

Met Councilmembers,
The Met Council 2040 Regional Parks Policy for Linking Trails states: "The trail treadway should be placed where it will have no adverse impact on the natural resource base."

Attached is a document that shows one of the proposed Summit Avenue Regional Bike Trail design elements that will directly result in the loss of trees. There are 46 intersections that will be impacted by the design element depicted in the attachment. All trees close to these intersections will need to be removed to make space for the trail to curve across the boulevard to cross the intersections adjacent to the crosswalk (as designed). This brings into question the City's claim that 'no trees will be impacted' by their proposed bike trail.

I'm asking you to review and factor this into your decision on how to vote on this proposal. From our view, no alternatives were considered and there is a much simpler, less costly option that would improve the existing bike facilities on Summit without risking damage to our local, historic treasure. It also more equitable to invest the \$12M dollars in other areas of the city that are without biking facilities.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

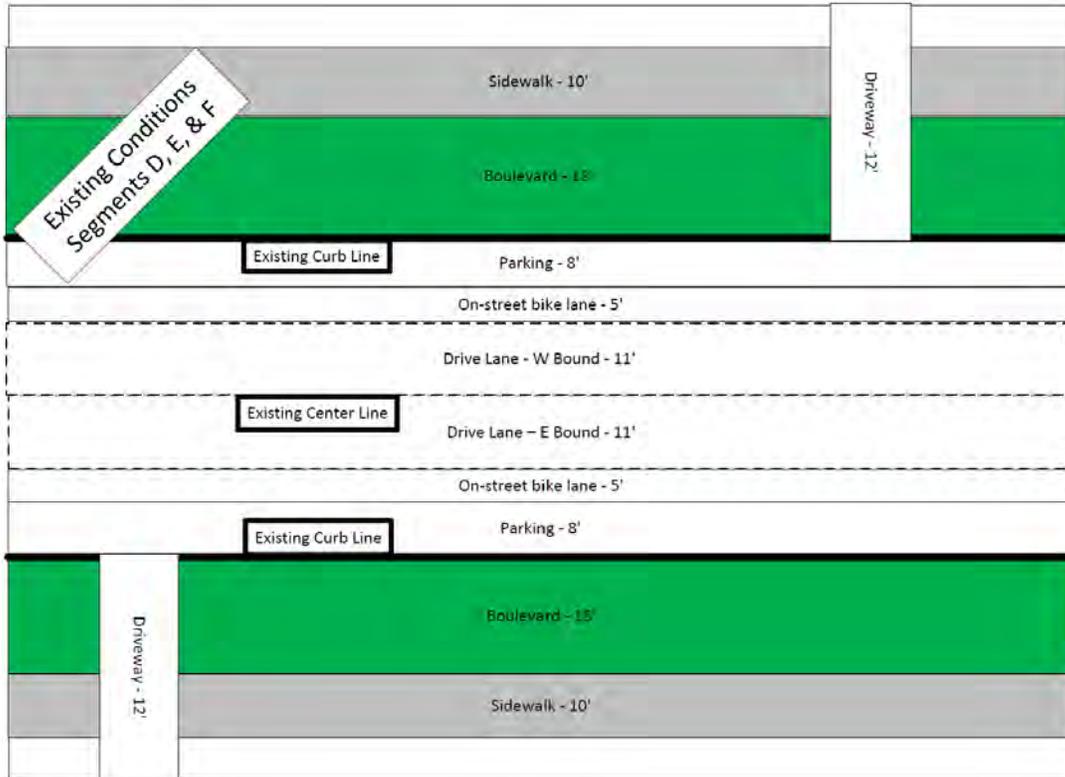
GRT

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

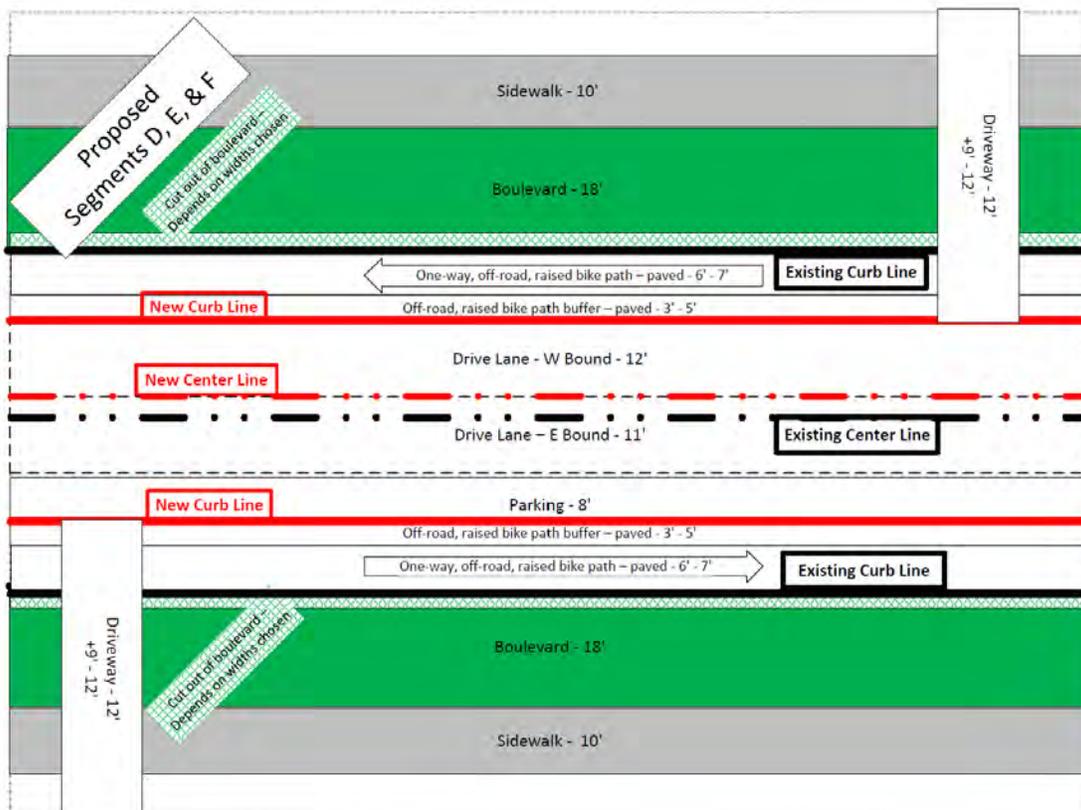
“... the sum of us can accomplish far more
than just some of us.”

THE SUM OF US by Heather McGhee

Existing Conditions – Segments D, E, & F (East of Lexington)



Plan Proposed – Segments D, E, & F (East of Lexington)



SAFETY & CROSSINGS

Safety for all modes and users of the Summit Avenue corridor is an important factor in planning for a regional trail facility. This project looks to create more physical separation between users with a separated bicycle trail facility.

The Summit Avenue corridor has experienced a number of crashes along its approximately 4.5 mile length from East River Blvd. to Kellogg Blvd.

Within a 10-year time frame between 2012 to 2021, there have been a total of 31 bicyclist involved crashes, or 3 per year on average. Of these crashes, 90% resulted in an injury or fatality. While the circumstances vary, the less time a vehicle and pedestrian or bicyclist share the same space, the less opportunity there is for conflict.

BEST PRACTICE TOOLKIT

Curb Extensions: Bump outs reduce road width, shorten crossing distances, and increase visibility for all modes.

Raised Crossings: Elevate Pedestrians and bicyclists for improved stability and traffic calming.

Signing & Striping: Intersection signage indicates the bicycle path through an intersection to highlight visibility between modes.

Reduction: Reduce curb radii and drive lane widths to encourage slower vehicle speeds.



MnDOT Crash data over a 10 year span was evaluated for the Summit Avenue corridor from the Mississippi River to Kellogg Blvd. The map above reflects concentrated areas of pedestrian and bicycle crashes.

Median closure concept focuses on creating contiguous spaces for pedestrians in the corridor to improve connectivity and reduce crossings with vehicles. The concept works with existing roadway geometry to maintain spatial and historic landscape elements

Median Closures

- 1 Vehicle Barriers: bollards, planters, etc.
- 2 Seating: Benches, tables, etc.
- 3 Decorative Paving: Reflect historic character of neighborhood through paving design; delineate path through center to contrast informal running path in median.

Intersections: Tool Kit Application Examples

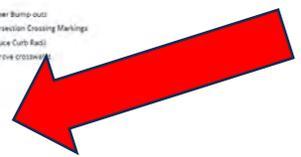
Unsignalized

- 1 Corner Bump out
- 2 Raised Crosswalk
- 3 Intersection Crossing Markings

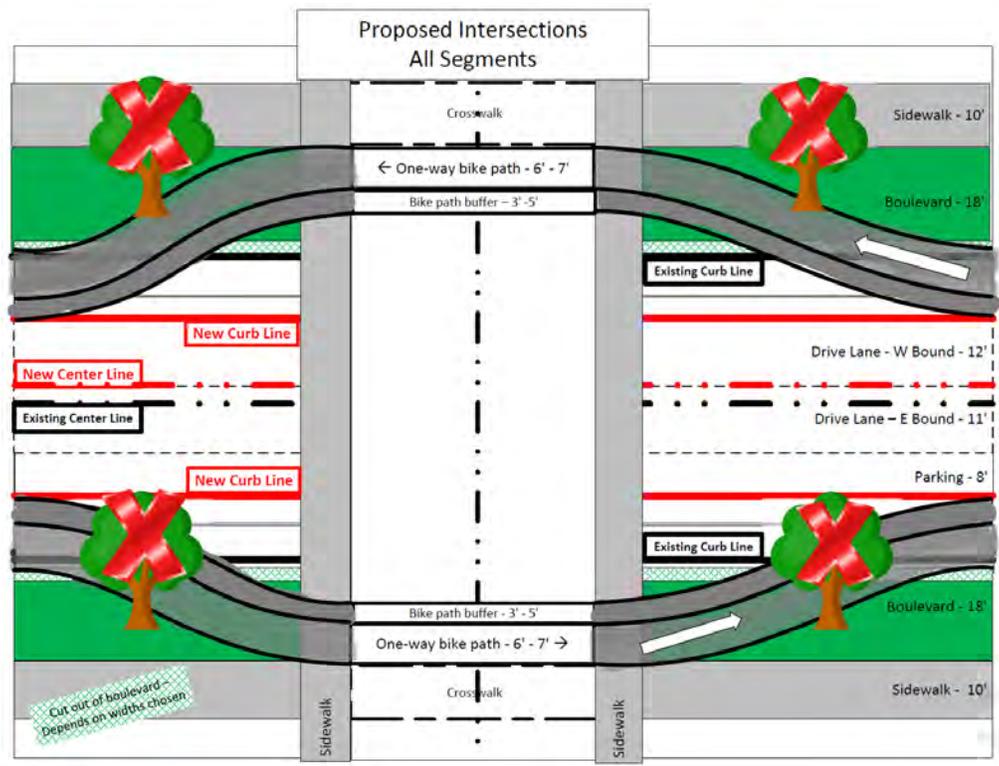
Signalized

- 1 Corner Bump out
- 2 Intersection Crossing Markings
- 3 Reduce Curb Radii
- 4 Improve Crossing

NOTE: Adjusting sidewalks at intersections will be determined based upon tree health, and final alignment will be evaluated beyond the master plan during design and engineering of a trail facility



Tree Loss Due to Trail Intersection Design



Example of trees that would be lost due to off-road trail construction.



Corner of Nina Street and Summit Avenue