



**CITY OF SAINT PAUL**  
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TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Reuben Collins

DATE: 2/27/2015

**SUBJECT: Summary of Public Hearing and Recommendations on draft Saint Paul Bicycle Plan**

On December 5, 2014, the Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the draft Saint Paul Bicycle Plan (SPBP). Since the second draft of the SPBP was released on October 6, 2014, the following statements have been received by city staff.

- 33 statements were delivered at the public hearing.
- 98 statements were received through the Open Saint Paul online tool.
- 42 statements were received via email
- 7 Statements were received from other groups or organizations: CapitolRiver Council, District 1 Community Council, Fresh Energy, Friends of the Parks and Trails, Lower Phalen Creek Project, Sierra Club, Smart Trips/Women on Bikes
- Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, Saint Paul Building Owners and Managers Association, & Wabasha Partners reiterated their previous statement dated April 1, 2014.

In some cases, individuals submitted similar or identical statements through multiple channels.

This feedback received is in addition to the feedback received on the first draft of the SPBP between January and April, 2014, when staff received nearly 400 written statements, including statements from 10 District Councils. This is also in addition to the feedback received from the public through several phases of public involvement and outreach since 2011 when the planning process began. Appendix A, B, C, E, and F of the SPBP summarize all of the feedback received since 2011.

The statements received were evaluated and subjectively placed into one of the following four categories:



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Statement Characterization	% of Statements Received
Support the SPBP as is. No recommendations or concerns were stated.	40%
Support the SPBP, but offered recommendations for improvement or expressed a concern.	35%
Did not specifically state support or opposition to the SPBP, but offered recommendations or expressed a concern.	10%
Opposed to the SPBP.	15%

The testimony received was generally supportive of the SPBP. Supporters cited reasons such as quality of life, economic development potential, safety, livability, a desire for transportation options, affordability, and health benefits. Those opposed to the SPBP cited reasons such as cost, misguided priorities, and impacts to parking.

## Recommended Changes in Response to Statements

The following is a list of the most frequent concerns or recommendations raised at the public hearing or received through other channels, along with staff recommendation or response.

- **Parking** – The largest concern voiced at the public hearing was concern regarding potential loss of parking in downtown due to construction of the downtown loop & spur trail concept proposed in the SPBP. Commenters concerns ranged from a general lack of parking in the downtown area, the need for more convenient parking near retail storefronts, the importance of on-street parking on particular streets such as Wabasha Street, and concerns about the price of parking (too expensive).
  - **Staff Response:** Staff recommends no changes to the SPBP. Staff is currently conducting a downtown parking study to help understand issues relating to parking and develop strategies for improving the overall parking situation in downtown. This study will be complete in early 2015. The SPBP recommends that further study is needed of the downtown loop & spur before implementation to allow time for additional conversation about parking and other issues. That additional study of the downtown loop & spur would also happen in 2015 to allow the two studies to inform each other.
- **Bicycle Parking Ordinance:** Numerous individuals voiced concern with Action Item 7.1.1, which recommended that the City consider adopting an ordinance that would prohibit locking bicycles to certain objects in the public right-of-way. Many commenters felt that there is not currently enough bicycle parking, thus resulting in bicycles locked to things

other than bike racks. Many felt it was inappropriate to begin restricting bicycle parking options while there exists a deficit of legitimate bike parking options in many locations.

- **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends removing Action Item 7.1.1, and reiterates a commitment to Action Items 7.1.4 and 7.1.5 (to be renumbered 7.1.3 and 7.1.4), which address concerns regarding a lack of bicycle parking. While the action item will be removed, the SPBP text will retain general statements that it is undesirable for bicycles to be locked to certain objects within the public right-of-way.
- **Recommending bikeways on Arterials vs. parallel routes** - Several statements questioned the purpose of recommending bikeways be developed along arterials, instead recommending that bikeways be identified on streets with lower motorized traffic volumes. Specific questions were raised regarding Cleveland Avenue and Fairview Avenue. However, these comments are balanced by comments from other individuals stating that not enough of the arterials are represented for bikeways in the SPBP, specifically with reference to West 7th and East 7th. Smart Trips included a recommendation in their statement that “the addition of more arterials as bicycle routes should be considered”, citing the directness of routes and access to destinations along arterials.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends no changes to the SPBP. Discussion about whether bicyclists and the city as a whole are best served by having bicycle routes on arterials or parallel routes has been a common theme throughout the creation of the SPBP and is a topic of much discussion nationally and in every city that endeavors to craft a bicycle plan. The preferences of bicyclists are diverse, and the SPBP strives to strike a balance between bicycle routes on arterials and routes on parallel routes.
- **Maintenance** – Several comments recommended that the SPBP address winter maintenance procedures. Statements recommended setting minimum maintenance standards or identifying maintenance schedules or procedures.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends no changes to the SPBP. Staff agrees this is an important topic, but developing maintenance standards is outside the scope of this planning effort. However, maintenance issues can be addressed in future studies or planning efforts.
- **Update Timeline** – Several commenters stated that the recommendation for the SPBP to be updated in 5-7 years was too long a timeframe and that more frequent updating would be desirable.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends no changes to the SPBP. Completion of the Comprehensive Plan in 2018 will provide an interim opportunity for assessing progress. An update to the SPBP may be initiated sooner than 5-7 years if it becomes clear that an update is needed.
- **Citywide traffic speeds and Truck Routes** – Several commenters mentioned a desire to consider lowering speed limits throughout the city, or on residential streets, citing safety concerns. Others commented regarding prohibiting truck traffic on certain routes, particularly along Raymond Avenue.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends no changes to the SPBP. Citywide traffic speeds and modifications to freight routes are outside the scope of this planning effort.

- **Education, Enforcement, & Encouragement** – Several commenters requested that the SPBP address issues of education, encouragement, and enforcement of traffic laws.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends the addition of Section 8.7: Education, Encouragement, & Enforcement, to mention the importance of these topics and to discuss how the City might seek partnerships with other agencies such as MnDOT or other advocacy groups to create materials, programs, or initiatives regarding education, encouragement, & enforcement. The text includes an action item to pursue these efforts.
- **Cost** – Several commenters expressed concern about cost. Some felt that any investment in bicycle infrastructure is unwarranted and should not be a priority. Others expressed concern about the cost of certain recommendations, the downtown loop & spur in particular. Others were not concerned about the cost, but thought that the planning level cost estimates presented in Section 9.6 overestimated the costs of developing bikeways.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends adding additional text to Section 9.6 clarifying that bundling bicycle projects with other roadway projects is anticipated to bring significant cost savings.
- **Case Avenue, Jessamine Avenue, and Lawson Avenue** – Several commenters mentioned concerns about changes to the east/west routes proposed for the Payne-Phalen neighborhood. The first draft of the SPBP had recommended routes on Case Avenue and Jessamine Avenue. In the second draft of the SPBP, these two routes were removed and replaced by a single planned route on Lawson Avenue.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends returning to the original routes proposed in the first draft of the SPBP, which includes routes proposed for Case Avenue and Jessamine Avenue.
- **Prioritization** – Several commenters requested additional clarification regarding prioritization strategies. The draft SPBP had identified 15 prioritization principles to be used in helping to identify priorities, however, many felt that they weren't helpful, or that it wasn't clear how they would be used to identify potential projects.
  - **Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends revising the 15 prioritization principles down to a less cumbersome 5 prioritization principles. A methodology for creating a prioritization matrix is proposed to be used to aid in making decisions about how to prioritize elements of the bicycle network.

## Other Recommended Changes

City staff also proposed the following changes to the document as a result of additional internal dialogue between departments and additional conversation with Metropolitan Council staff regarding consistency with the draft 2040 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP) and 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan (RPPP), which are anticipated to be adopted in early 2015.

- **Section 4.0 Policy and Planning Context** – The first draft of the SPBP released in January 2014 included an extensive discussion of the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies such as the Metropolitan Council, MnDOT, Ramsey County, & the DNR. The second draft of the SPBP released on October 2014 moved much of this text to the appendix in an effort to improve readability and clarity. However, after discussion with Metropolitan Council staff,

city staff recommends moving much of the text back into Section 4.0 and eliminating the appendix item. This section will include additional discussion of the Regional Bicycle Transportation Network (RBTN) that was not in previous drafts.

- **Section 5.2 – Bicycle Network Functional Classification** – The SPBP included language about the Metropolitan Council being “in process” of updating the TPP. Staff recommends removing outdated language relating to the RBTN in light of anticipated adoption of the TPP before adoption of the SPBP. This section will also include stronger language about the challenges associated with the use of freight railroad corridors for bikeway development.
- **Section 6** – Staff recommends inserting a new section 6.4 to discuss the RBTN. A new figure will be inserted (as Figure 6) to present the RBTN in Saint Paul. The text will include an action item to identify specific RBTN alignments within the search corridors.
- **Section 6.5 –Regional Trail Improvements – (renumbered from Section 6.4)** – Staff recommends revising the language to be more consistent with language used in the 2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan, due to be adopted by the Metropolitan Council in advance of the SPBP. The associated Figure 7 (renumbered from Figure 6) relating to Regional Trail has been significantly revised, though the inherent recommendations remain the same. Usage of terms such as “regional trail search corridor” or “planned regional trail” have been revised to be more consistent with the 2040 RPPP.
- **Section 7.2 Showers, Lockers, and other Amenities** – The SPBP suggested considering a change to the zoning code to encourage or require showers and locker rooms in some developments. After additional discussion with zoning and planning staff, it is unclear if the zoning code is the appropriate tool to accomplish the intent of this action item. Staff recommends that the text be amended to allow for the zoning code or other planning and regulation tools to accomplish the intent.
- **Trout Brook Regional Trail** – A recommendation for an off-street path along Jackson Street from Maryland to Arlington has been added as a possible interim alignment for the Trout Brook Regional Trail until the freight railroad spur becomes available for trail use.
- **Minor Route Adjustments** – Minor adjustments have been made to routes on Saratoga Street and Pascal Street to suggest a connection will be made using the planned CP Rail Trail. Minor Adjustments have been made to routes on Fuller Avenue, Aurora Avenue, and Shields Avenue to be more consistent with the recommendations in the Bike/Walk Central Corridor Action Plan. A small trail connection has been added within Victoria Park.
- **General Formatting and Appearance** –A new cover sheet has been added and pagination has been adjusted. Table numbers have been added, and the contents of the tables have been updated to reflect additions to the bicycle network that have taken place since the draft was released.

## Transportation Committee Recommendations and Amendments

The Transportation Committee reviewed the feedback received as well as staff recommendations on 1/12/2015. At that time, staff was directed to incorporate the changes summarized above into an updated draft of the SPBP to be reviewed in context. As a result, a third and final draft of the SPBP was published to the project website on 2/2/2015 incorporating the above changes and was considered by the Transportation Committee on 2/9/2015.

At the 2/9/2015 meeting, the Transportation Committee reviewed the updated draft of the SPBP and reviewed a staff recommendation to recommend approval of the draft SPBP. After reviewing the presented information and public feedback, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of the SPBP to be adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, and recommended five amendments to the SPBP, as described below.

### **Transportation Committee Amendment 1**

The Transportation Committee recommended amending the SPBP to include the following text in Chapter 6.10:

*“Connections between the loop and other existing and planned routes into and out of downtown will be developed prior to or in concurrence with the loop to ensure connectivity to the surrounding bicycle network.”*

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends adding the text with the following modifications:

*“Connections between the loop and other existing and planned routes into and out of downtown ~~will~~ should, where feasible, be developed prior to or in concurrence with the loop to ensure connectivity to the surrounding bicycle network.”*

Staff agrees that connectivity between the downtown network and the surrounding facilities is critical, but some flexibility will be needed in implementation phasing. Developing a phasing plan for the downtown network is among the tasks that will be completed in 2015 as part of the separate study of the downtown bicycle network.

### **Transportation Committee Amendment 2**

The Transportation Committee recommended amending the SPBP to include the following text in Chapter 9.5:

*“Saint Paul Bicycle Plan progress shall be reviewed annually by the Transportation Committee.”*

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends including the text and agrees this is a valuable addition to the SPBP.

### **Transportation Committee Amendment 3**

The Transportation Committee recommended amending the SPBP to include the following text in Chapter 9:

*“City staff will compile a ranked list and plan for completing the Action Items listed in the Saint Paul Bicycle Plan for Transportation Committee review.”*

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends including the text and agrees this is a valuable addition to the SPBP.

### **Transportation Committee Amendment 4**

The Transportation Committee recommended amending the SPBP to add 7th street from “White Bear Avenue to Fort Snelling” to Figure 3 as a “major bikeway” and to Figure 4 as an “in-

street separated lane” facility. The Committee members cited the importance of connecting people on bicycles to destinations and identified the 7th Street corridor as a critical arterial for connecting to the many businesses and other destinations along the corridor. The Committee noted the uniqueness of the 7th Street corridor alignment being contrary to the typical Saint Paul grid street network, resulting in challenges identifying suitable alternative parallel routes. The Committee members believed that the draft SPBP did not offer viable alternatives to the 7th Street corridor.

Staff recognizes that the configuration of 7th Street contrary to the typical grid street network throughout the city means that there generally are not suitable parallel alternate routes to 7th Street. Shepard Road is generally parallel, but is a quarter to a half mile away, and often separated from the 7th Street corridor by the river bluff. The SPBP includes the planned conversion of the CP Rail Spur serving the Ford Site to a bicycle and pedestrian trail, but staff recognizes that this corridor does not serve the full 7th Street Corridor, or make critical connections with downtown.

Staff does not oppose the addition of safe bicycle facilities on 7th Street, however, there is uncertainty relating to how it would be implemented. 7th Street was not included in the draft SPBP for the following reasons:

- The current configuration of right-of-way width, traffic volumes, and on-street parking would require trade-offs that staff determined to be unlikely.
- There is uncertainty around the corridor pending the results of the Riverview Corridor transit study currently underway.
- The city is currently in process of conducting a study of a potential reconfiguration of the interchange connecting 7th Street to Shepard Road. One of the stated purposes of this study is to explore the potential to rebalance traffic volumes on 7th Street and Shepard Road, which would impact the potential for bicycle facilities along 7th Street.

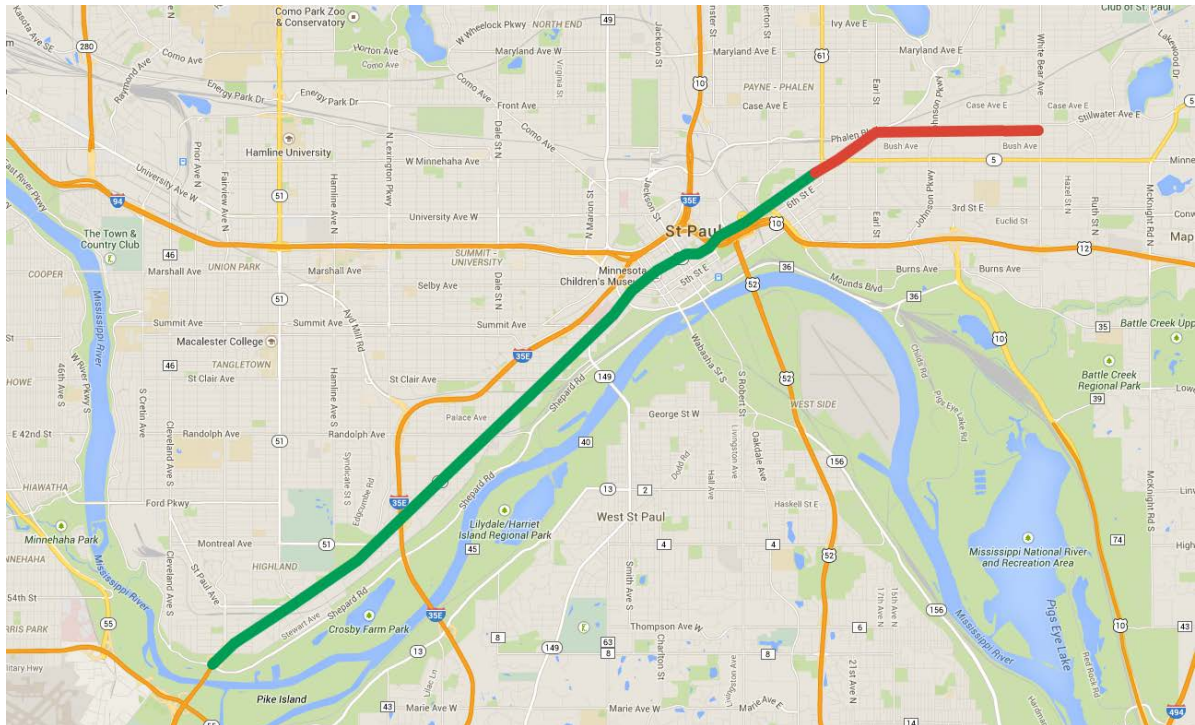
7th Street is a MnDOT Trunk Highway (TH-5) and has ultimate authority over any modifications to the corridor. MnDOT has expressed reservation about adding 7th Street to Figures 3 and 4, but expressed interest in partnering with the City on a separate study of the 7th Street Corridor.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff believes that the 7th Street corridor east of Arcade Street is substantially different in character and alignment than west of Arcade Street. East of Arcade Street, 7th Street is primarily residential, and the SPBP identifies alternative parallel routes, primarily Margaret Street, which is approximately 0.4 miles to the south. Therefore, staff recommends that 7th Street east of Margaret Street not be added to Figure 3 and Figure 4 of the SPBP.

Staff recommends identifying the 7th Street corridor from Mississippi River Boulevard to Margaret Street be added to Figures 3 and 4 with a new designation of “Corridor for Additional Study.” This would allow the City and MnDOT to partner on a separate follow-up study of the corridor after adoption of the SPBP. In addition, a portion of the 7th Street corridor is located within the Riverview Corridor transit study currently underway. Staff recommends working with the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority to explore the feasibility of bicycle facilities on W 7th Street as part of that study.





*The green line identifies where staff recommends amending the SPBP to identify a “Corridor for Additional Study”. The red line identifies where staff does not recommend amending the SPBP.*

### **Transportation Committee Amendment 5**

Transportation Committee recommended amending the SPBP to reclassify University from Aldine Street to Transfer Road on Figure 3 from a “minor bikeway” to a “major bikeway” and on Figure 4 from “enhanced shared lane” to “in-street separated lane”. The Committee members spoke highly of the Charles Avenue bikeway project that continues east of Aldine Street. The Committee also recognized the intent to improve Territorial Road and Charles Avenue west of Vandalia Street. The Committee concluded that the staff recommendation for “enhanced shared lanes” would not be effective at encouraging a diverse population, including families and children, to consider bicycling to be a viable transportation option and desired to see a bikeway facility type that afforded more protection and separation from traffic.

The draft SPBP identifies this portion of University Avenue as a “minor bikeway” with a facility type of “enhanced shared lane”. It is also identified as an interim route until a parallel route north or south of University Avenue can be identified. The plan identifies several parallel routes to be developed as an alternative to University Avenue, however, they all require acquisition of private property, relocating businesses, or coordination with the railroad and are not realistic options on a short term time frame. In the mean time, staff recognizes that the roadway network is such that people riding bicycles don’t have realistic alternatives to using University Avenue.

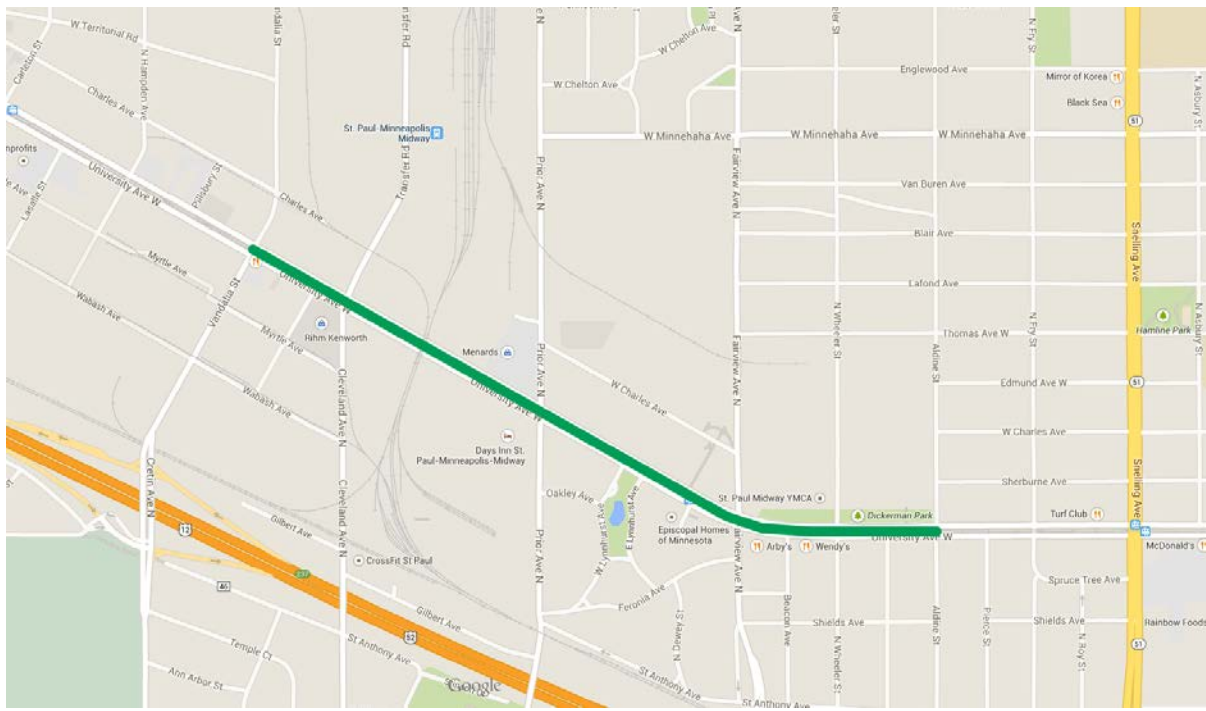
Staff recommended a bikeway facility type of “enhanced shared lane” for this portion of University Avenue due to the current configuration of right-of-way width and traffic volumes that would require trade-offs that staff determined to be unlikely.



University Avenue is a County Roadway (CSAH 34), and the County has ultimate authority over any modifications to the corridor. County staff expressed concerns with modifying the facility type recommendation on the corridor without adequate time for review by the County.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff evaluation of the roadway network in the area identifies the critical bottleneck on University Avenue to extend from Vandalia Street to Aldine Street. Because of the lack of short-term alternatives to University Avenue, staff recommends modifying Figure 3 to identify University Avenue from Vandalia Avenue to Aldine Street as a “major bikeway”. Staff recommends that the Figure 4 not be modified, retaining the recommendation for an “enhanced shared lane”.



*The green line identifies where staff recommends amending Figure 3 to identify the segment as a “major bikeway”.*