

December 20, 2014

To Whom it May Concern,

I support Benita Warns' Capital Improvement Budget request to fund the building of a short, one-block-long bicycle path, from the corner of Saratoga Street and Dayton, going east, parallel to the CP Rail line, to Pascal Street. At this point, the pathway would either cross the CP Rail line on a bridge or cross it at-grade. It would then proceed north, on a thin strip of city-owned land to Marshall Avenue, where it would join both the Marshall Avenue bicycle lanes and the Pascal Street Bikeway.

To understand the importance of this CIB proposal, the committee needs some background information. In 2012-13, the Minnesota Department of Transportation conducted a Multi-Modal Study of Snelling Avenue, from Selby Avenue all the way north to Midway Parkway. It had over 25 representatives from alternative transportation groups, community councils, Metro Transit, Public Works Departments and the City Council. The group was lead by two MnDOT-selected engineering firms (ALTA and SEH). In addition to meetings and collecting data, the group held two public Open Houses at Hamline University attended by at least a hundred people, including some state legislators. The final recommendations of this study can be downloaded at--

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/snellingstudy/>

The plan sets call for shared bike lanes on Snelling Avenue from Selby to Marshall and separated bike lanes on Snelling from Marshall to St. Anthony Avenue. These bike lanes were to serve multiple purposes. One of the most important of these was to help cyclists get across the CP Rail tracks. In this way, cyclists on the proposed Saratoga Street Bikeway (south of Selby) could get north of the CP Rail tracks to the Pascal Street Bikeway (north of Marshall Avenue) by cutting over to Snelling, on Selby, and then cutting back east to Pascal on Marshall, Iglehart or Carroll Streets. The idea was that cyclists would thus be able to safely parallel Snelling Avenue all the way north to Hewitt where bicycle accommodations would be put on Snelling to get them across the BNSF and UP Rail lines to Como Avenue and points north.

Saint Paul lacks safe north-south routes for bicyclists that cross the various east-west freeways and rail-lines. The Snelling Avenue connection was critical for making Saratoga and Pascal into a new, safe, north-south route. Unfortunately, MnDOT and the City of Saint Paul unilaterally decided to throw out this part of the Multi-Modal Study recommendations. As a result, the proposed Saratoga Bikeway will uselessly end at Selby Avenue.

The CIB proposal before you would remedy this. It would create a direct bicycle (and pedestrian) connection from Saratoga Avenue to Pascal, across CP Rail, thus completing a major north-south route.

Federal law prohibits city condemnation of railroad land but, walking the route, I think there may be unused city land between the railroad's property and several private homes. If this is not available, a 20-foot easement for the pathway could be obtained from the adjoining property owners. Both Pascal (north of Marshall) and Saratoga (south of Selby) are identified as bikeways on the Draft Saint Paul Bikeways Plan which is due to go before the City Council in February, 2015.

This CIB funding proposal would fix a major gap in Saint Paul's current and proposed bicycle infrastructure. If the crossing of CP-Rail was done at-grade, the completed pathway connecting Saratoga and Pascal could be done fairly cheaply and benefit a lot of cyclists. There are several other at-grade street and pedestrian crossings of this rail line in other locations, so this seems legally doable.

I urge you to fund this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration,

Andy Singer
2103 Berkeley Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55105
651-917-3417
andy@andysinger.com



UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL

1602 Selby Avenue, Suite 10, Saint Paul, MN 55104

651.645.6887 | info@unionparkdc.org | www.unionparkdc.org

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March 5, 2015

Capital Improvement Budget Committee
c/o John McCarthy, Senior Budget Analyst
City of Saint Paul – Office of Financial Services
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Subject: CIB Proposal for Pascal Saratoga Street Bicycle Connection

To the Capital Improvement Budget Committee:

The Union Park District Council supports the Pascal Saratoga Street Bicycle Connection proposal.

This project implements recommendations of the City of St. Paul's Bicycle Plan, which is expected to be adopted in the coming weeks. Many Union Park residents participated in numerous meetings and public hearings to provide input into the final bicycle plan. With the new Vintage development at the northeast corner of Selby and Snelling Avenues, the need for safe and efficient bicycle routes will become more acute. We believe that this project will meet this need by providing:

- A direct link between two important bicycle routes.
- A safe, ADA-compliant route that crosses the major barriers of I-94 and the CP rail line.
- A direct connection to the future Midtown Greenway Extension Regional Trail.

There is a serious lack of safe routes for bicyclists to travel north and south through the Midway area. Due to high motorized-traffic counts on both Snelling and Hamline Avenues, it is not feasible to reduce the number of lanes to create space for bicycle travel. The cost to acquire additional right-of-way to widen either roadway is exponentially greater than the cost to provide a separate connection by building a bike/ped bridge over the railroad tracks.

This project has not only the support of Union Park, but also People For Bikes, St. Paul Women on Bikes, Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles, and many other local bicycle advocates. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Julie Reiter, Executive Director
Union Park District Council



peopleforbikes™

P.O. Box 2359 Boulder, CO 80306

PeopleForBikes.org / 303.449.4893

February 26, 2015

Streets and Utilities Task Force
Capital Budget Improvement Process
City of St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Members of the Task Force,

I am writing this letter in support of the Pascal/Saratoga Street Bicycle Route Connection. PeopleForBikes is please to extend our support to this worthy project.

Across the United States, municipalities, counties, regions and states are recognizing the many benefits and low cost of investing in bicycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Multi-use trails and bridges that allow people to walk and bicycle with safety and ease – like the facility proposed – are relatively inexpensive and reap multiple rewards, including improved health for the people who use them, better air quality, less congestion, and opportunities for economic benefits as people have more options for getting around. The proposed connector between bicycle routes on Pascal and Saratoga Streets will make it safer and easier for people traveling by bike. We applaud the Task Force for considering this investment, and encourage your members and constituents to join us in supporting it.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for supporting great projects that allow residents to bike and walk to where they live, learn, work and play.

With regards,

Zoe Kircos
Grant Manager



March 4, 2015

Capital Improvement Budget Committee
c/o John McCarthy, Senior Budget Analyst
City of Saint Paul – Office of Financial Services
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Subject: CIB Proposal for an off-road direct connection between Pascal Street and the proposed bicycle route on Saratoga Street.

To the Capital Improvement Budget Committee:

I'm writing on behalf of St. Paul Smart Trips to express our support for CIB funding to provide an off-road direct connection across the railroad tracks between the bicycle route on Pascal Street and the proposed bicycle route on Saratoga Street as proposed by Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles. St. Paul Smart Trips is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that improves access and mobility for those who travel in and around St. Paul. This project is also endorsed by St. Paul Women on Bikes, a Smart Trips program that works to make riding a bike in St. Paul safer and easier for women, children, and families.

As part of the soon-to-be approved St. Paul Bicycle Plan, city planners have proposed a north-south bicycle route on Saratoga Street, which terminates at Dayton Avenue. This CIB proposal would connect the Saratoga Street bicycle route with other important routes, creating a complete grid of bicycle infrastructure through this area. Completion of the proposed off-road facility would create safe ways for bicyclists to travel between Saratoga and Pascal Street. Pascal is an already functioning bicycle route that connects the neighborhoods south of I-94 to those to the north. In addition, the project would link people riding bikes to shopping and jobs along the Green Line.

Additionally, we feel that this project will increase neighborhood safety. Building a bridge across the railroad tracks will allow bicyclists and pedestrians to cross the tracks safely, and remove the footpath that pedestrians currently use to make illegal, at-grade crossings.

Finally, we feel that the proposed off-street connection is a sound use of city resources. Using city owned right-of-way as proposed is an easy and inexpensive way to improve conditions for riding a bike in St. Paul.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Treat".

Jessica Treat
Executive Director
St. Paul Smart Trips