



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
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DATE: March 28, 2019
TO: Saint Paul Planning Commission
FROM: Fay Simer, Pedestrian Safety Advocate
SUBJECT: Review of Public Comments on the February 8, 2019 Public Hearing Draft of the Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan

BACKGROUND

The Planning Commission released the draft *Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan* for public testimony on December 14, 2018 and set a public hearing date of February 8, 2019. Two people spoke at the hearing. Before the record closed on February 11, 2019, six organizations submitted letters to the City and approximately 65 individuals commented via the City's website.

WHAT WE HEARD

In general, people expressed support from the draft plan. We heard:

1. A pedestrian plan is an important first step in making walking safer and easier in Saint Paul
2. The plan reflects the right vision, goals, and key priorities for Saint Paul
3. Objective prioritization is important to ensuring that resources for pedestrian infrastructure and programming are distributed equitably

We also heard that there are a few things the plan should address further:

1. The role of trees and the urban forest in making a comfortable walking environment
2. The importance of "non-sidewalk" infrastructure in supporting walking, including stairs, cut-throughs, parking lot design, and driveway openings
3. The importance of personal security to people's comfort while walking
4. The importance of lighting in making pedestrians visible, especially at crossings
5. The need to address pedestrian needs at specific locations outside of High Priority Areas for Walking Investments.
6. The importance of educating pedestrians about safe crossing behaviors

A few general themes emerge from the comments:

1. Affirmation: At least 15 comments were submitted indicating overall support for the plan and its goals.
2. Coordination with other travel modes: Commenters expressed concern about pedestrian safety around other modes that use sidewalks and crosswalks, including bicycles and scooters.



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3. Land Use and Zoning: Commenters expressed a need to address pedestrian safety and comfort through design decisions on private property, e.g. driveway openings, “eyes on the street,” and parking lot design.
4. Priority Areas: In general, commenters affirmed that data-driven prioritization is important to making walking more equitable. However, many people had concerns about specific locations that were not in High Priority Areas for Walking Investments and wondered how or when they would be addressed.
5. Sidewalks: Filling sidewalk gaps is important, as are maintenance of our sidewalks system and good sidewalk design.
6. Street crossings: Pedestrians need to be visible at street crossings. In addition to infrastructure treatments, motorist speeds, motorist behaviors, and pedestrian behaviors compromise pedestrians’ safety at street crossings.

STAFF RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

Staff entered all 188 unique comments into a matrix (posted at <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>). For each comment; the following information is presented:

- who made the comment;
- a response to the comment;
- whether a change in the draft plan is recommended; and
- if a change is recommended, what it is (proposed new language).

To facilitate review of the matrix, the spreadsheet includes two tabs:

1. The complete matrix, with all comments, responses, and recommended revisions to the draft plan.
2. An abridged version showing only those comments where a change in the draft plan is recommended.

Staff proposes adding four new action items to the draft plan in response to public testimony. They are included in the matrix and highlighted here:

- *Request that Ramsey County and MnDOT review local cost participation policies for consistency with their adopted multimodal policy goals.*
- *Work with State agency partners to identify needs and strategies for increased education about safe walking behaviors.*
- *Increase opportunities for community collaboration on street design and implementation in partnership with Saint Paul District Councils and other interested organizations.*
- *Pursue opportunities to enhance pedestrian connectivity in places where streets do not connect across natural features or major pedestrian barriers.*

Staff also recommends revisions to three action items. Proposed new language is *italicized* below:

- Action 1-1: ~~Support access to transit stops by supporting safe crossings and waiting environments.~~ *Work with partners to support safe walking environments through initiatives such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, lighting improvements, neighborhood walks, and litter pickup.*

- Action 1.4: Ensure visibility of pedestrian crossings. Review street lighting, sign placement, street furniture, bus shelters, foliage growth and parking restrictions at intersections as part of all reconstruction projects and requests for crossing improvements.
- Action 2-8: Develop a public awareness campaign to educate residents, businesses, and other property owners about the City snow removal ordinance and encourage people to report violations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the proposed revisions and recommend adoption of the Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan, with the revisions proposed in the attached comment matrix. Following Planning Commission review and recommendation, staff will revise the plan and forward a final draft to the Mayor and City Council for adoption.

SCHEDULE FOR REVIEW AND ADOPTION

Below is schedule for review and adoption of the Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan.

March 25	Transportation Committee reviewed staff response to public testimony and voted to endorse the Draft Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan with the revisions proposed by staff
April 5	Planning Commission votes on recommended revisions; staff to prepare Planning Commission-recommended draft of Saint Paul Pedestrian Plan and forward to the Mayor and City Council
Spring 2019	City Council holds public hearing before voting on plan adoption

Supplemental Materials:

1. Comment Matrix (2 tabs) - <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>
2. Full text of letters from organizations (6) - <http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission>