

Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan

Community questions submitted for 2/27/2023 meeting via email, text, and comment.

Note: Many questions that were submitted via email were part of longer emails that included statements as well. Those emails were all forwarded to Saint Paul City Staff, and the questions from the emails were added to this spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was used to ask questions during the community meeting, questions were organized by topic so that follow-up questions would be easier to find.

Question Category	Do you have a question for the panelists?
Bike	Which 2-wheel-modes-of-transportation will be allowed on the proposed bike trail?
Bike	Perhaps, bikes that are ridden in Saint Paul need an annual bike license to use our premier trails?
Bike	All in all, is this great, but deluxe Bike Trail, not actually elitist?
Bike	Bicycle usage tracking currently appears to be completed in one counter at the west end of Summit. How will any supposed increases be tracked and evaluated? How will they be compared to other bike trails (such as Wheelock, which appears to show an increase by 10 riders)?
Bike	More importantly, what is the rationale for the claim that increasing bike traffic on Summit will necessarily decrease car traffic? Are there specific goals for this decrease, and how will it be tracked? Does the city have any data from within Saint Paul to support a reduction in car trips based specifically on this type of facility compared to standard bike lanes?
Bike	As an enthusiastic cyclist, and a resident of Saint Paul for over 60 years, I am wondering who would benefit from this very substantial redesign of Summit Avenue? Not year-round commuters, which will remain a tiny fraction of commuters (has any commuting been easy this winter?) Not recreational cyclists, who love the current striping, and want smooth pavement. And there is no certainty that it will be safer.
Bike	Is the data on bike traffic accurate?
Bike	Will electric scooters and skateboards be allowed to use these lanes?
Bike	How does ridership change before/after a project like this? Yes, there is data, and yes it becomes much more diverse it can/does/will serve both recreation , fitness, and transportation (sometimes all at the same time!)
Bike	From your research how many bicycle riders use the bike lanes on Summit during November, December, January, February? Please quantify with a numerical value.

Bike	<p>When will intersection designs for a typical street be ready to critique?</p> <p>2. How does Saint Paul meet its goal, "to increase the number of bicycle trips throughout the city" if everyday cyclists are only comfortable on trails?</p> <p>3. How will the trail be safe for both families and e-bikes going 20 mph?</p> <p>4. How will the driving lane be safe for e-bike commuters, cars and people getting in and out of their parked vehicles?</p>
Bike/ Equity	<p>Has there been a demographics study regarding the bike lanes? Not including recreational use on the weekends it seems that white males are the users. Is this strictly a recreational focus?</p>
Bike/ General	<p>Who gets preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -commuters? -bike clubs that peddle in groups/packs (these are often going very fast, thus the question about speed limits)? -families/friends for recreation and exercise -sightseers
Bike/ General	<p>How does the city explain the justification of high vehicle traffic for placing the proposed raised bike trail on Summit when only 1.3 miles of the 5.5-mile corridor of Summit's 5.5 miles fit the IHS criteria that justifies the consideration of a raised trail on Summit?</p>
Bike/ General	<p>Are you familiar with, "Performance-Based Practical Design (PBPD), which is required by the Minnesota Bike Facility Design Manual?" How does this very expensive trail that causes so many "tradeoffs" for all other road users possibly comply with the goals of PBPD?</p>
Bike/ Safety	<p>If there is a speed limit experienced bikers will still ride in the street. Won't this create more points of conflict not less?</p>
Bike/route	<p>Why were less expensive and less intrusive alternative bike facilities dismissed with no consideration at all? 4a. Follow up, why weren't NACTO guidelines for "constrained conditions" followed? (MN-DOT's Bike Facility Design Manual, BFDM (2), is the governing document for facility selection. It stipulates that "balanced and appropriate" solutions must be sought, particularly when there is a constrained right-of-way.)</p> <p>4b. Follow up: Why were Met Council standards that allow on-street lanes not taken into account for the Regional Trail? (Met Council's standard, contained on page 11 of the proposed plan, clearly states: "... on road facilities are acceptable when off-road trails are not feasible" (emphasis added).) Why were Met Council standards not taken into account for the Regional Trail?</p>
Budget	<p>What is the anticipated cost for this project and HOW much will it raise our already high Property Taxes?</p>
Budget	<p>Why does the city not take a sensible low-cost –approach to improve Summit Avenue for bikers?</p>

Budget	What is the actual budget? The 90% plan has several items not included in the \$12 million cost estimate and multiple references to details being determined at a later stage — is there a limit on the cost to this project, or is the 90% plan a blank check?
Budget/ General	we really want to increase safety on Summit Avenue — then why do we have to spend up to 90 million dollars to do this? High Vis striping, re-striping and narrowing the car lanes, and better signaling (even bike-specific signaling at problem areas like Snelling) could be done at a cost of about 1 million dollars.
Budget/ Time	You've discussed internally the timing of both the trail and full street reconstruction. If we assume \$12 million funding will be readily available, please provide the timeline for trail construction.
Community Engagement	Summit Avenue was added to Met Council Regional Parks Policy list for a feasibility study in 2005, 18 years ago. Were District Councils and residents been consistently notified of a way to take Summit Avenue off this list for a Regional Trail, or offered an opportunity to change the designation to a historical Special Recreation Feature?
Community Engagement	Will you make available online all questions and answers?
Community Engagement	As an important part of its "community engagement" process, will Parks and Rec answer all submitted questions and post its answers online for access by our community?
Community Engagement	Why was this "concept" with such a significant impact on our neighborhood not highlighted or discussed in earlier planning sessions?
Community Engagement	Why were the closures not highlighted or discussed in earlier plans?
Community Engagement	Chapter 2, page 44 states "The planning process developed strategies based upon feedback from local community events and from organizations including District Councils, Adaptive Recreation, and BIPOC-led outdoor recreation groups to create a trail that is inclusive and equitable for people of all races, ages and abilities." Could you please name precisely the groups referenced above that you invited for feedback, when you met with them, the number of people who showed up, and name the leadership of these groups.
Community Engagement	It is unconscionable — only 28 days to comment on 240+ page, poorly organized document?!?!?
Community Engagement	In building consensus for this plan I'm sure you have been engaging with residents of Summit Ave. From your estimates what percentage of Summit/Grand Avenue residents polled are in favor of the current proposal?
Community Engagement	If you don't know the answer to Q4 then how is it you wish to build a community based on equity, inclusion, and pragmatism when you don't listen to those you wish to govern? Q4. In building consensus for this plan I'm sure you have been engaging with residents of Summit Ave. From your estimates what percentage of Summit/Grand Avenue residents polled are in favor of the current proposal?

Community Engagement	This is a contentious issue and the city needs to get it right. Why not slow down the process?
Construction	Will you build the trail at one time, or in segments when each segment of Summit's underlying infrastructure must be replaced, in most cases decades from now? Please provide the timeline for each segment of Summit Avenue that must be fully reconstructed.
Curb	Bolton and Menk served as consultants on the guidelines, and on p226 of the plan they state "It is recommended that additions to Summit Avenue be as simple as possible and not change the existing curb lines." Why was this disregarded?
Curb lines	Your design consultants and technical advisory committees have recommended that you stay within existing curb lines so as to minimize tree loss and help preserve the historic integrity of Summit Avenue. The vast majority of our community also desperately want you to stay within curb lines. You've chosen to ignore your own consultants, technical advisors, and our community. Why?
Curb lines	Is it true that Sections A and C of Summit will not be widened beyond the existing curb lines to accommodate the trail?
Curb lines	Why does the 90% plan completely disregard the historic expert advice not to disturb the curbs? (Bolton & Menk, "... additions to Summit Avenue be as simple as possible and not change the existing curb lines..." (Page 226 – 90% plan – emphasis added). Why does the 90% plan completely disregard the historic expert advice not to disturb the curbs? (Bolton & Menk, "... additions to Summit Avenue be as simple as possible and not change the existing curb lines..." (Page 226 – 90% plan – emphasis added).
Curb lines	Why, exactly, would the construction of the Regional Trail in sections A and C on Summit Avenue require building beyond the current curb lines, given that these sections of the street are now among its very widest? I stress the words "why, exactly" because no specific answers were offered last night when this topic came up. I would like a clear and specific answer that goes beyond the responses "this is in keeping with best practices" or "this would create a better user experience."
Curbs/ Historic Nature	Summit is already ADA compliant why remove the historic curbs? Homeowners along Summit have to get HPC approval. Why not the city?
Curbs/ Trees	If the city removes the curbs and redoes all carriage walks and driveways the trees will be impacted on all 4 sides in the critical root zone resulting in massive tree loss is what I've been told by many of my neighbors. Can you explain how this will or will not happen?
Data	To the best of your understanding, what are your expectations for growth in utilization of the Regional Trail as it is proposed, and what data are there to support your estimates?
Decision making	In discussing the trail, many have said that the work reconstructing Summit Avenue "needs to be completed anyway." Can the City discuss when (prior to the planning for the bike lanes) this long-term plan was released? As most streets in Saint Paul are of the same age (per city plans and the current lead line replacement maps), what is the long-term plan for the remainder of the streets (In other words "Why Summit now and what is the plan for everything else?")

Decision making	What is the cost of this plan and who pays for it?
Decision making	Why do city leaders and planners refuse to consider any alternate plans?
Decision making	How is community and stakeholder feedback taken into consideration? Who, specifically, weighs these considerations and makes the final decision?
Decision making	Why won't the Carter administration listen to taxpayers?
Decision making	Please explain why this trail, which so many disagree with, is not an actual ballot question so the taxpayers can vote whether or not the regional trail will happen.
Decision making	Will you make a unilateral final decision on this incredibly significant "concept" or will you first engage the residents of Summit Avenue and neighboring communities in an open, fair, and meaningful discussion?
Decision making	When you make your final decision on closing one, some, or all medians, will it be unilateral like your other major decisions, or will you have an open and meaningful discussion with our communities?
Decision making	Is the Master Plan a Master Plan or a visionary document as the City states. If so, what is the difference?
Decision making	Once the City Council approves a plan, how much additional citizen input will be solicited?
Decision making	What amount of community opposition would it take for you to consider changing the design proposed for the regional bike path?
Decision making	Please QUANTIFY the amount of each: opposition, and support, you have received so far.
Decision making	Why the big hurry? Can't we slow this down and get it right?
Decision making	Why does the plan need to be approved by the City Council in April 2023? What dictates that time frame?
Decision making	There are conflicting statements by SOS and StreetMN as to what may happen to Summit Avenue from Lexington to Victoria. What are the facts?
Decision Making	Will the Park Commission and Planning commission have a public hearing and vote on recommending approval?
Decision Making	A bike trail plan was dropped in our laps. Never were we even given a chance to say if a bike trail was even wanted or needed by the people of Saint Paul. We were simply told "here are options ABC choose one" How come we never were given a chance to vote as to whether this was a necessity?
Decision Making	There was a reference to the Transportation Committee. Is that a Planning Commission Committee?
Decision Making/ Community Engagement	Given the amount of agreement between various sides (eg, SOS vs. StreetMN) what—in a word or two-- is stopping a mutually agreeable solution?
Decision Making/ Community Engagement	Why rush through a 200+ page 90% plan that leaves many design elements unsettled with only 28 day of public comment?
Equity	Could you please explain how the proposed trail on Summit is of benefit to people

	who live in the Rondo neighborhood? How many bike trails are available in that neighborhood? How do you propose Rondo residents will access the fancy trail on Summit?
Equity/ Decision Making	With Equity as an important project goal and recalling that this project is of *regional significance to the greater community, which voices have been permitted to take up more than their share of space in the conversation, and which voices or community members have not had as much input as they should, both in the current discussion and historically?
Equity/ Decision Making	Is the city giving too much consideration to wealthy residents and businesses when it comes to projects that are meant to serve the public interest? (Why do many parts of Highland Park and Edgecumbe have no sidewalks, for example?)
Equity/ Decision Making	There is a bike lane that stops at the beginning of the Rondo neighborhood and starts right after running down Marshall all the way to the river. Was this corridor through a historic BIPOC neighborhood ever considered?
Funding	I was told Public Works turned down an offer for a test section of high-visibility painting at no cost. Is this true? If so, why would the City turn down a free trial of a less expensive solution that is approved by NACTO?
Funding	New curbs, bump-outs and gutters were constructed this summer from Snelling to Ayd Mill. What was the cost of this work? Follow up: New Summit Avenue curbs, ramps, bump-outs and gutters were constructed this summer (2022) from Snelling to Ayd Mill. By relocating the bike facility and raising it up, these newly constructed bump-outs will have to be extended, new ADA ramps (crossing Summit) will have to be removed and re-ramped 8 feet outward, and gutters will have to be removed and drainage redone. (a) If the person answering says this is not true, can they guarantee in writing that this will not occur? (b) If the person answering says this is true, what is the cost for removing and rebuilding this infrastructure?
Funding	Why has the Parks and Recreation people addressed the issue of monies coming from the Federal Government to pay for their plans? They would not discuss this at any of their meetings. Is it because Federal Monies have strings attached to them? They need to be more transparent. Who are they serving on this project?
Funding	Please ask if they will be looking at misread property taxes for this project. I was surprised when he said this is 100 million dollars isn't funded.
Funding	Why regional Trail- Why not just trail? Is this fed money difference?
Funding	If the tax plan is not improved would this affect the plan? What
Funding	What if the tax plan is not improved?
General	Why are the city's consultants' recommendations being ignored?
General	In what ways is this Bike Trail going to benefit the aging-in-place population and senior citizens in general?
General	Could you speak more to the strategic goals and any objectives (like inclusion, climate resiliency, etc) that the new draft plan is hoping to address and why those are important for the future of St. Paul at a high level?

General	<p>from pg 42 of the 90% plan: "A regional trail along Summit Avenue would provide an off-street trail for community members and serve as a reliable alternative transportation option to cars."</p> <p>Please explain how a regional trail on Summit is a "reliable alternative" to a car for a mother with toddler twins who have a doctor appointment? to a 75-year-old who has to get groceries? to a parent with kids and equipment who must get all to a hockey game? to an office worker in January?</p>
Historic Nature	Isn't the city required to follow their own policies here with regards to the curbs and other streetscape elements? Why is this being disregarded for Summit, arguably the two historic districts in the city with the most distinguishing street features?
Historic Nature	Instead of moving forward with current Master Plan, will Parks and Rec commit to a 3rd party Bicycle Trail designer with expert experience in historic, dense residential neighborhoods?
Historic Nature	(Will the) PW says the curbs, brick carriage walks, streetlights and sidewalks will all be replaced and not preserved.
Historic Nature	Isn't the plan inconsistent with the Bolten and Menck report about historic preservations?
Lane width	Is it true that this trail design requires the wider 12-foot lanes since it eliminates any shoulder or parking lane?
Maintenance	What is the city's plan for keeping Summit and the new bike path plowed during the winter?
Maintenance	Where will the snow be heaped, to keep the bike trail usable all winter?
Maintenance	The way st. Payl plows now leave snow piles out two feet at least out from the curb. With an elevated curb outside the bike path, where is the snow going to go? Up onto the bike path or 2-3 feet out totally blocking the parking lane?
Maintenance	Recent snow events and the trends for more and larger snowfalls make me question how the city plans to maintain this boulevard when 90% of the adjacent side streets in St Paul are almost impassable with a 2-wheel drive vehicle. Please give a response as to who is responsible for snow/ice removal and precisely how this is accomplished.
Maintenance	won't the snow from Summit be plowed into the proposed bikeway?
Maintenance/ Snow	What are operating costs for new trail – clearing snow, maintenance, leaf removal etc on annual basis.
Maintenance/ Snow	What are the annual costs to the city of St. Paul be to maintain the elevated bike paths?
Parking	Would it be possible to eliminate the on-street parking in Section A?
Parking	Why should we tolerate much less prioritize free on-street car storage as a preferred use for the premium public space that is the Summit Avenue Parkway, particularly for some of the city's wealthiest residents who have other viable options?
Parking	Did the council ever consider reverting Summit Avenue to its pre-automobile car-free parkway that was its best historic version? If so, what was the result of that

	consideration, or if not, why was that not considered?
Parking	Near Summit and Dale parking is at nearly 100% 24 hours a day. Where will renters park their cars? Further with the opening of 695 Grand there will be additional constraints on parking. What is the city's plan?
Parking/ Accessibility	I am an amputee and I am very concerned about the parking places being removed. Employees and customers of Grand Avenue businesses utilize those spots. I myself have had to go home or to a business in another area, losing my leg in 2007. Losing non-handicapped parking being lost will hurt.
Parking/ Accessibility	If I want to visit someone on Summit during snow season, I would have to park on the parking side of Summit, walk to the next intersection, cross Summit (possibly requiring 2 traffic light cycles), and then walk all the way back to the house. Good luck to anyone with mobility issues.
Parking/ Accessibility	Displacing hundreds of parking stalls in the winter for a very small handful of bicycles is a challenging sell. This will disproportionately marginalize renters, elderly, handicapped, and business owners on Grand Ave. Please tell us why bikers interests have been placed over the renters, tenants, and citizens of Summit Ave, particularly in the winter.
Parking/ Roads	Where will residents and guests of residents be able to park on Summit. How many parking spaces will be lost. What will be impact on other side streets. --
Pedestrians	How does the plan affect pedestrian traffic?
Pedestrians	More people walk Summit than bike. What does the plan do for pedestrian safety?
Pedestrians/ Safety	How does the plan address people with mobility issues crossing multiple conflict points on their way home, place of worship or school?
Public Works- Roads	What is the life expectancy of this new design of Summit?
Public Works- Roads	Will the driving lanes narrow?
Public Works- Roads	What is the timeline from today to completion? Will Summit's potholes be filled between now and when construction begins?
Renters/ Equity	<p>What about us renters? What about our safety walking to our parked cars at night, or getting groceries and laundry baskets inside? Why is the safety of a handful bikers in winter more important than the hundreds of multifamily households?</p> <p>6a: Follow up: Why does the 90% plan remove the parking only in the places it's most heavily utilized (aka East of Lexington)?</p> <p>6b. Follow up: Why do we care if parking is only utilized at 30% in the areas the plan is preserving parking? In other words, is this a purposeful or an accidental misrepresentation? Will it be corrected?</p> <p>6c. How did the public comment against removing any parking at all get turned into "retain as much as possible." Who made that false characterization?</p>

Roads/ Decision Making	Where is the data that Summit Avenue needs a total rebuild as opposed to a mill and overlay? Is the underground infrastructure failing?
Route/ Bikes	Do we understand that Summit Avenue's peak occurred *because it served primarily as a bicycle route, and that the introduction of the automobile is specifically what has destroyed it's "historic character"?
Routes	What other routes, if any, have been explored?
Routes	Have any other streets been investigated?
Routes	Where is Segment G? How does a bike trail intersect with a busy freeway entrance? How does a safe, accessible to all (ages 8-80 as we've heard), factor in getting up or down to Sam Morgan (Shepard Rd) on Eagle Parkway whose grade elevation is similar to Ramsey Hill? Is that the design plan for linking trail to Capitol City Bikeway - Kellogg/ W.7th/ Shepard Road?
Routes	<p>Why were alternative routes dismissed "at a high level" (when? by whom?) 2a Follow up: Which route is more direct from Kellogg to Lake Street bridge, via Marshall or Summit?</p> <p>2b. True or false: Ayd Mill and short line railroad spur offer a conflict-protected right-of-way and a bridge across the Mississippi?</p> <p>2c. True or false: Both Jefferson and Little Bohemia both offer potential east legs from the Ayd Mil to the Sam Morgan that would avoid the high conflict freeway entrance/exit at Kellogg and 35-E and have fewer conflicts/crossings than Summit?</p> <p>2d. Segment G puts a "trail" though the 35-E Kellogg interchange. What are the vehicle turning and crossing counts at this interchange?</p> <p>2e. True or false: the Sam Morgan trail already connects to the Mississippi River Trail?</p> <p>2f. Jefferson was dismissed for being too steep. What is the steepness grade for Eagle Street (where the trail is planned) compared to Jefferson (from Victoria to Ayd Mill entrance)?</p> <p>2g. True or false: Portland Avenue (dismissed as a parallel bike boulevard, which would be needed only from Western to Griggs) has one-sided parking already in many sections and allows access to several schools and churches?</p> <p>2h. True or False: Griggs is a Bike Boulevard that crosses Summit Avenue?</p> <p>2i. True or false: Griggs is not listed as a bike boulevard on most maps in the 90% Plan?</p> <p>2j. True or false: bike boulevard are statistically the safest type of on-road facility?</p>
Routes	How can we get alternative routes to be studied in depth?
Safety	Does the plan make the biker's ride safer?

Safety	Where are the traffic and safety studies detailing the safety impact of these closures?
Safety	Summit is most dangerous at intersections. This raised cycle path offers no protection at intersections at all, and results in blind crossings and atypical intersections. Any of the loosely described intersection improvements could be made without a raised trail. Why not just make intersection improvements now and study the result?
Safety	Why are pedestrian and cyclist crashes conflated?
Safety	Seatbelt usage in cars are mandated with financial tickets and potential loss of licenses for drivers. Safety-approved helmets should be mandated for bicyclists. Ones specially designed for children of all ages, too. Yes, issue tickets for bicyclists not complying with transportation law. I will always do all I can to keep bicyclists safe. But we'll all be safer if bicycling safety changes, too.
Safety	What other traffic calming measures should be included to ensure this space is suitable for all users in this *parkway*? (Reduced speed limits, speed tables, curb bump-outs, narrowed travel lanes, traffic diverters, etc) For any of these proven traffic safety measures that are *not implemented, the city should provide adequate justification for why these features are not included.
Safety/pedestrian	Why have pedestrians been left out? Pedestrians are the larger and more vulnerable non-car road user. How could plan authors state with a straight face that you possibly state that building a bike trail is benefit to pedestrians?
Traffic	If they slow down traffic, where will traffic go? They are restricting traffic in the Grand Ave plan.
Traffic	Do you expect less cars/ traffic on Summit?
Tree	Have you included in your tree loss inventory the approximately 600 - 800 mature trees that will be lost with this "concept"?
Trees	Will Parks and Rec commit to a 3rd party expert to assess the tree loss along Summit Avenue?
Trees	Is the data on tree removal accurate?
Trees	In a meeting with Met Council 1/7/22 a significant takeaway is that “ the trail treadway should be placed where it will have no adverse impact to the natural resource base”. How does massive tree loss, removal of greenspace from miles of medians and boulevards, and bituminous (petroleum based) concrete poured on 150 driveways, 10 miles of buffers (east/west) adhere to that?
Trees	Why is city consistently ignoring the recommendations of their hired consultants?
Trees	In suburban and park trails this is less of a problem because trees are a greater distance from trails. Along Summit, trees and trails are cheek to jowl. How do you propose to keep tree roots and asphalt trail compatible?
Trees	The City's Forester, Rachel Coyle, has stated that "the city cannot meet its climate goals without preserving trees." What metrics are being used to make this statement? What climate goals? What number of trees?
Trees	Sean Kershaw has stated that 221 of the avenue's more than 1500 trees are

	vulnerable because of street construction. How did he determine that number? How does that square with the City's climate goals?
Trees	The City's plan states that curb lines on Sections A and C on both sides, boulevards, and medians will be moved. These segments are the most densely canopied areas of Summit where the tree destruction will be the worst. What climate goals will be affected?
Trees	So, why disrupt this beautiful street and threaten so many trees?
Trees	Why is Parks and Rec ignoring this conclusion to propose an experiment on Summit Avenue with the very trail designs that change all of the curb lines and they previously labeled NOT RECOMMENDED – Due to Potential Boulevard Impacts at their June 6, 2022, Public Information Session (pgs. 42 and 46 of June 6th slides)?
Trees	What I am hoping you can help address is the concern for the trees I'm seeing from most of the opposition. While of course *any* restoration project could pose potential risk to the trees, I am wondering if you can share more about how the plan protects trees, particularly in sections A and C where the "transportation envelope" is expanded. I hope to help reassure neighbors who are concerned.
Trees	Opponents of the Summit Avenue Regional Trail Plan often cite loss of trees as a primary reason for their opposition. Elsewhere, however, I have heard that the street maintenance required would put tree roots at risk regardless of whether separated bike lanes were added to that work. Can you shed light on a) the risk to Summit's trees and b) where that risk might come from (redoing the infrastructure or building the bike trail).
Trees	I own a business on Grand and they do not replant trees. They say forestry St. Paul does not have enough money because there has been such a loss of trees in Saint Paul. Explain how the same number of trees would be replanted?
Trees	Will the two years of drought impact tree health?
Trees	What is the current tree preservation enforcement?
Trees	And what % of the trail plan was your tree impact determined, was it done before the proposed 6 foot widening of Summit and therefore isn't your tree impact assessment underestimating the tree risk?