

From: ruurd@dutchconsulting.net [mailto:ruurd@dutchconsulting.net]
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 10:07 PM
To: Council
Subject: RE: Duluth Bikes Comment on proposed Superior Street Resolutions - PDF version

Dear Council members, please find attached the PDF version. This may make it easier for you to see the comments concerning the draft resolutions.

Sincerely, on behalf of the Duluth Bike Coalition

Ruurd Schoolderman



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----- Original Message -----

Subject: Duluth Bikes Comment on proposed Superior Street Resolutions
From: <ruurd@dutchconsulting.net>
Date: Wed, September 23, 2015 8:53 pm
To: council@duluthmn.gov

Dear Council members, please see attached our response on the proposed Superior Street resolutions.

In reading this please note that based on the last two downtown bike traffic counts over 600 people ride their bikes downtown on a (workday) daily basis (350 Lake Walk, 150 Superior Street, 100 Coming in from West End 2nd Street). Also please note that bikes for many is not an alternate mode of transportation. Many do not have a choice (the young and economically disadvantaged). And if they do have a choice, driving is a choice as well. Even

though with 600 downtown users people on bikes are a smaller (but growing) user group, that does not warrant their needs for traffic safety should be ignored.

Key points in summary are:

1. It was our understanding that the city administration was going to present a resolution on the overall Superior Street design direction. The proposed three resolutions only discuss whether or not to include bike lanes. This is surprising since the Superior Street re-design is about more than bikes. Will the city council give direction on the other design details at a later date?

2. Resolutions 15-0666R and 15-0667R claim that on street parking and pedestrian amenities were a priority. The public meeting record, as shared on the Superior St. project webpage, does not support the claim that stakeholders prioritized parking and pedestrian amenities over a bike facility. It is true that businesses had a stronger preference for parking, however the citizen representatives clearly voiced the importance of accommodating bikes in the design. When reviewing public meeting feedback there appears to be a fairly even balance between those who prioritize parking and those who prioritize bike accommodation and creating a quality public space. (See attached summary analysis of the meeting records)

3. The bikeways survey shows that 54% of the enthused and confident and 59% strong and fearless cyclists (those most likely ride their bikes now downtown) identified Superior St. as their first choice. Only the no-way-no-how (non-cyclists) group ranked Michigan street as the 1st choice. Further, only 20% of those most likely to ride identified Michigan as an alternative. To say based on these numbers that Michigan street is a preferred alternative is a stretch if the objective is to build a bike facility that will be used. Finally, First street as a fall back option came in second to last with 7.5% ranking it as first choice (note business owners ranked it last with 3.6%).

4. On what basis can the council support Michigan and 1st Street as alternatives? There has not been any stakeholder involvement with the impacted property and business owners to our knowledge. In essence the Superior St. problem is tossed over the fence to other business owners. Is this fair? Secondly, the practical details are not clear, therefore it is impossible to know whether the alternative is a better or worse option than accommodation on Superior Street. Finally, no funding has been identified to retrofit these alternative options should they be feasible.

5. If Superior St. will be reclassified as an on-road bike route what consequences does this have for the road design? In particular the diagonal parking is a hazard for people on bikes. Diagonal parking will require a MN-DOT variance for state aid funding. A strong argument can be made against granting such a variance once Superior St. is re-classified as an on-road bike route in order to accommodate bike safety.

6. Although some accommodation in resolution 15-0667R is better than none, it is a missed opportunity to not use the Superior Street reconstruction to improve both pedestrian and bike safety for the Lake Ave-Superior St. crossing and in the process improve the link between downtown and Canal Park to drawn in people.

6. The inclusion of the following sentence in the purpose statement of resolution 15-0668R seems unnecessary : "...Inclusion of bike lanes will reduce available space for sidewalk cafes/plaza areas, as well as trees, plantings, and on-street parking". In the first place with creative design (e.g. seasonal use of parking space as parklets per the choice of business owners) public space can be accommodated.

Secondly, if it is deemed necessary to add such a statement, then one could also suggest adding the following statement to the purpose statement of resolutions 15-0666R and 15-0667R: "..

The choice to prioritize parking will result in a continuation of an unsafe and uncomfortable traffic situation for the less confident bikers wanting to access superior st. and will likely perpetuate if not increase sidewalk ridership (currently double the city average at 27%)". The point being that the council is asked to make choices. In all cases these choices have trade offs. We advocate to make sure that in the choice you make there is room for safe accommodation of people on bikes on Superior Street.

Thank you for your time.

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Title

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A DOWNTOWN BIKE FACILITY ON MICHIGAN STREET OR FIRST STREET

Body

CITY PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS, the city of Duluth wishes to encourage bicycling as an alternate mode of transportation; and

WHEREAS, the city adopted a Bikeways Plan in 2013 that indicated Superior Street as a location for on-street bike lanes; and

WHEREAS, the Superior Street Reconstruction Project's Preliminary Design Phase has studied Superior Street as a location for an on-street bike facility and found that such facility would reduce parking and desired amenity spaces;

WHEREAS, a Downtown Bikeways Study was conducted that included a public meeting, a survey with 640 responses, and meetings with stakeholders, and showed that priorities along Superior Street include pedestrian space and on-street parking, with support for bike facilities instead along adjacent downtown streets;

WHEREAS, the Downtown Bikeways Study showed that Michigan Street was the preferred alternative for a bike facility downtown;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the 2013 Bikeways Plan be amended to change Superior Street from "on road - bike lane" to "on-road bike route" from Sixth Avenue West to Tenth Avenue East.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the city of Duluth dedicate resources to plan and design physically separated two-way bike lanes on Michigan Street, and if such design finds the Michigan Street alternative to be infeasible, the city of Duluth will dedicate resources to design and construct physically separated bike lanes on First Street.

Statement of Purpose

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to allow for the Superior Street Reconstruction Project to proceed without the inclusion of on-street bike lanes, focusing on providing attractive pedestrian spaces and amenities, adequate on-street parking, and bike amenities such as bike racks, while supporting design of bike facilities on Michigan Street, if feasible, or if Michigan Street is not feasible, on First Street.

Commented [RS1]: The survey clearly demonstrate that those most likely to bike prefer Superior Street as their first option. This statement does not reflect the public record as can be found on the Superior St. Project page. The public record on the Superior St. page shows the following, see summary of meeting results below:

Meeting 1:

- 22 participants
- 11 were pro-bike (7 concerned citizens and 4 business/property owners)
- 4 pro-parking (1 citizen and 3 business owners)
- 7 did not comment on this as an issue.

Meeting 2: Teams ID'd design element preferences.

- Eight of nine teams identified bike facilities as an element they would like to see (including 2 business owners teams. It should be noted that parking was also a major concern for the business teams.)

Commented [RS2]: The survey found that only 20% of those most likely to bike identified Michigan as an alternative. Of the interested but concerned only 24% identified Michigan St. With that low level of support, one can put some serious question marks to which extend Michigan is the "preferred alternative".

Commented [RS3]: If Superior Street will be marked as an on-road bike route, what measures will be taken in the final design to promote bike safety? Angled parking does not promote this (see survey responses). **Angled parking requires a variance from MNDOT. Angled parking goes against bike safety and a strong argument could be made**

Commented [RS4]: Both proposed alternatives have not been studied, nor discussed with affected stakeholders or the target user group, nor is funding in place. There is no good plan or basis for the council members to support dedicating resources to Michigan or first street as an alternative option based on what we currently have.

Commented [m5]: The purpose of the entire resolution guiding the whole Superior Street redesign is to not include bike lane? This is curious, it was our understanding that the council would receive a resolution concerning the final design direction for Superior St. Surely this is about more than whether or not to include a bike lane?

Commented [RS6]: How does the council expect the less confident rider to get to these amenities when there is no bike facility on Superior Street? This approach will likely increase sidewalk riding causing bike-ped user conflicts and continue the car-bike user conflicts on the road.

Commented [RS7]: To be in line with the purpose statement for resolution option 3 we suggest adding: The choice to prioritize (angled) parking will result in a continuation of an unsafe and uncomfortable traffic situation for the less confident bikers wanting to access Superior St. and will likely perpetuate if not increase sidewalk ridership (currently at 27%)

Title

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A DOWNTOWN BIKE FACILITY ON MICHIGAN STREET FROM SIXTH AVENUE WEST TO FIRST AVENUE EAST, AND ON SUPERIOR STREET FROM FIRST AVENUE EAST TO FOURTH AVENUE EAST

Body

CITY PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS, the city of Duluth wishes to encourage bicycling as an alternate mode of transportation; and

WHEREAS, the city adopted a Bikeways Plan in 2013 that indicated Superior Street as a location for on-street bike lanes; and

WHEREAS, the Superior Street Reconstruction Project's Preliminary Design Phase has studied Superior Street as a location for an on-street bike facility and found physically separated bike lanes are feasible but would reduce parking and desired amenity spaces; and

WHEREAS, a bike facility could be included only with converting adjacent parking spaces to parallel, rather than diagonal, spaces; and

WHEREAS, a Downtown Bikeways Study was conducted that included a public meeting, a survey with 640 responses, and meetings with stakeholders, and showed that priorities along Superior Street include pedestrian space and on-street parking, with support for bike facilities along adjacent downtown streets;

WHEREAS, the Downtown Bikeways Study showed that Michigan Street was the preferred alternative for a bike facility downtown;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the city of Duluth dedicate resources to plan and design physically separated two-way bike lanes on Michigan Street from Sixth Avenue West to First Avenue East.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superior Street Reconstruction Project shall include a design for physically separated bike lanes from First Avenue East to Fourth Avenue East.

Statement of Purpose

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to provide for a two-way bike facility, with protected or physically separated lanes, on Michigan Street from Sixth Avenue West to First Avenue East, and on Superior Street from First Avenue East to Fourth Avenue East.

Commented [RS8]: A bike lane would only reduce amenity space if the choice is made to maintain parking on both sides of the street along the entire length of the corridor. Further, amenities can be accommodated with creative design solutions such as seasonal use of on-street parking as parklets for outdoor seating

The following statement would also be true... and found parking on both sides is feasible but would impact the feasibility of accommodating a protected bike lane and desired amenity spaces

Let's be up front about the fact that at this point parking is given a higher priority than safe bike accommodation.

Commented [RS9]: See our previous comments on these statements in first resolution.

Commented [RS10]: Although some accommodation is better than none, it is a missed opportunity to not use this project to improve both pedestrian and bike safety for the Lake Ave-Superior St. crossing, and improve the linkage with Canal Park.

Commented [RS11]: To be in line with the purpose statement for resolution option 3 we suggest adding: The choice to prioritize parking will result in a continuation of an unsafe and uncomfortable traffic situation for the less confident bikers wanting to access Superior St. and will likely perpetuate if not increase sidewalk ridership (currently at 27%)

Title

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A DOWNTOWN BIKE FACILITY ON SUPERIOR STREET

Body

CITY PROPOSAL:

WHEREAS, the city of Duluth wishes to encourage bicycling as an alternate mode of transportation; and

WHEREAS, the city adopted a Bikeways Plan in 2013 that indicated Superior Street as a location for on-street bike lanes; and

WHEREAS, the Superior Street Reconstruction Project's Preliminary Design Phase has studied Superior Street as a location for an on-street bike facility and found physically separated bike lanes are feasible; and

WHEREAS, a bike facility could be included only with converting all parking spaces to parallel, rather than diagonal, spaces;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Superior Street Reconstruction Project shall include a design for physically separated bike lanes.

Statement of Purpose

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to designate Superior Street as a location for a bike facility with protected or physically separated bike lanes. Inclusion of bike lanes will reduce available space for sidewalk cafes/plaza areas, as well as trees, plantings, and on-street parking.

Commented [m12]: It is not an "alternate" mode. Many do not have a choice (young and economically disadvantaged). And if they do have a choice, driving is a choice as well.

Commented [RS13]: Yes this is true. However, the design could build in flexibility how space is used for either parking or outdoor amenities on seasonal needs. This leaves the impression that it is all or nothing, whereas good design and flexibility leaves room for re-configuration.

Commented [RS14]: Why is this part of the statement of purpose? See our proposed additions for the statement of purpose above for consistency.