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February 16th, 2016

To: Ethan Fawley, Executive Director - Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition
RE: Request to Study the Feasibility of a Protected Bike Lane on Washington Avenue East of 5th Avenue

Dear Ethan:

The DMNA Land Use Committee would like to thank the volunteers with the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition for presenting on the need to study the possible inclusion of protected bike lanes along Washington Avenue east of 5th Avenue. The Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association supports the Coalition's assertion that the planned restriping of this stretch of Washington in 2017 offers an opportunity to greatly improve bike safety on the corridor. Given that this portion of Washington Ave is a critical bike connection to and through Downtown, the DMNA strongly urges the County to evaluate the option of protected bike lanes.

The DMNA recently provided formal support for protected bike lanes on 3rd Avenue. The DMNA recognizes that protected bike lanes, more so than unprotected bike lanes, encourage cycling and enhance safety as well as improve the pedestrian experience. Therefore, the use of protected bikeways should be strongly considered where feasible and appropriate. However, the DMNA encourage the County and Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition to continue direct outreach to property owners and businesses along this corridor to ensure that their needs are adequately assessed and represented.

In addition to studying the implementation of protected bike lanes on this portion of Washington Ave., the DMNA further suggests that the County integrate wayfinding improvements that will encourage vehicles to use the new 35-W northbound entrance ramp on 4th Street to in order to reduce eastbound traffic on Washington. Diverting car traffic off of Washington Ave. will further improve bike safety.

The DMNA would like to commend the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition for its on-going advocacy to improve conditions for cyclists Downtown as well as it work to inform and engage community members.

Regards,

Nick Cichowicz
DMNA Board Chair

cc:

Kelley Yemen, Hennepin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
Matthew Dyr Dahl, Minneapolis Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
Council Member Jacob Frey, Minneapolis City Council – Ward 3