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April 18th, 2016

RE: DMNA Support for a Protected Bike Lane on 11th Avenue South

Dear Simon:

The DMNA supports the revised plan for a protected bike lane on 11th Avenue South as presented to the DMNA Land Use Committee on 4.5.2016. By reducing the amount of parking that will be eliminated along Gold Medal Park to accommodate the new bike lane, the revised plan offers a compromise that addresses the committee's concerns with the previous design (presented in February 2016).

The initial plan would have resulted in a 72% reduction of on-street parking along 11th Avenue South. The revised plan preserves 10 additional on-street parking spaces, which will lower the on-street parking reduction to 58% on 11th Avenue South. It is important to note that while the reduction of parking on 11th Avenue South seems dramatic, the scale of the loss is much smaller when placed in context of total on-street parking availability within one block of the proposed protected bikeway. Total combined on-street parking availability along 11th Avenue South and within one block will be reduced by just 14% to accommodate the protected bike lane.

A protected bike lane along 11th Avenue South is particularly strategic as this segment of road provides a critical link for cyclists arriving/departing via West River Parkway and the Hiawatha LRT Trail. 11th Avenue provides connections to the U.S. Bank Stadium and bike infrastructure that leads to the core of Downtown, as well as provides continuous north/south passage through the Downtown East and Elliott Park neighborhoods.

The DMNA values the continued development of a network of protected bike lanes, which improves safety for cyclists and encourages community members to travel to and through Downtown on bicycle. Protected bike lanes also improve the pedestrian experience by providing a buffer between the sidewalk and automotive traffic as well as encouraging cyclists to use designated bike infrastructure in lieu of riding on the sidewalk.

Without diminishing the importance of investing in a robust network of protected bike lanes, one must acknowledge that cars remain a primary form of transportation for many in the region. While there are many suburban transit options during the work week, evening and weekend service to Downtown is limited. As such, parking availability must remain a consideration in sound land use and transportation planning.

The DMNA is aware that CPED has engaged businesses with frontage along 11th Avenue to discuss the impact of the parking reduction. We urge you to continue to work with them, just as you have the DMNA, to address concerns. The DMNA further encourages the City to work with property owners on 11th Avenue South to install additional bike parking to offset the lost automotive parking and accommodate the expected increase in cyclists.

Regards,
Nick Cichowicz
DMNA Board Chair