

**Ramsey Hill Association Meeting  
Regarding Master Plan for a Regional  
Trail on Summit Avenue**

*June 27, 2022*

# What is SARPA; What is SOS?

- SARPA is the acronym for the Summit Avenue Residential Preservation Association which is dedicated to the preservation of the historic, residential, and urban park character of Summit Avenue.
- SOS is the acronym for Save Our Street which is a true grass roots collection of people who are working hard to protect Summit from the harm a Regional Trail on Summit will cause.

# Introduction

What are we talking about?

The city plans to place a “Regional Linking Trail” along the entire 4 ½ mile length of Summit.

Most, if not all, of this Regional Trail will be a 12-foot-wide stretch of asphalt with a 4-foot buffer beside it off the street and above the curb.

# Why is RHA Sponsoring this Meeting and Why are SARPA and SOS Involved?

The Ramsey Hill Association is a highly respected organization which is looking at the city's plans for a Regional Trail. SARPA and SOS have been studying the city's plans for months and feel strongly that the Trail envisioned by them will do great harm to Summit and that there is a far better way. The RHA Board asked us to present our findings and views to its members. We are happy to do so.

# What is That Better Way?

The city should:

- Properly maintain Summit (indeed all streets); potholes and ruts should not be the norm.
- Narrow traffic lanes slightly to slow traffic; use that space to add a buffer for the bike lanes.
- Clearly mark the existing bike lanes and do not let those lane markings fade
- Enforce the speed limit and the truck prohibition.

# What is a Regional Linking Trail?

A Regional Linking Trail is defined by the Metropolitan Council as an off-street paved trail raised above the curb. In this case that is a 12-foot-wide slab of asphalt along Summit. The existing on-street bike lanes do not meet this definition.

To get approval for a Regional Trail the city must prepare a Master Plan and, after various intermediate but important steps, present that Master Plan to the City Council for approval and, if it is approved, present the Master Plan to the Met Council for its approval.

# What Configurations for a Regional Trail is the City Recommending?

Summit Avenue has three basic layouts.

- From Lexington to the Cathedral the road right of way (that is from the outer edge of the sidewalk on one side to the outer edge of the sidewalk on the opposite sidewalk) is 100 feet wide and there is no median. For this section the city has one recommended option: **a 2-way Trail with parking on one side only.**
- West of Lexington the road right of way is 200 feet wide. In one section there are two green parkway medians and in two non-contiguous sections there are single green medians.
- For the two green parkway medians section the city has one recommended option: **a 2-way Trail.**
- For the single green parkway median sections, the city has two recommended options: **a 2-Way Trail with Parking on One Side only or a 1-Way Trail with Parking on Both Sides**

# The City's Recommended Options

I will show you a diagram of the city's recommended option for Lexington to the Cathedral because RHA is in that section. We have blow ups of the options for the other sections of Summit that you can review later.

Summit from Lexington East has a 100 foot right of way. The city recommends narrowing the street by

- removing the two on-street bike lanes entirely and
- removing one parking lane entirely. That is, there will only be parking on one side of the street.

On the portion of Summit on which the bike lanes and parking lanes once stood the city recommends building

- an above the curb two-way asphalt paved 12- foot-wide Trail
- with a 4- foot buffer between it and the street.

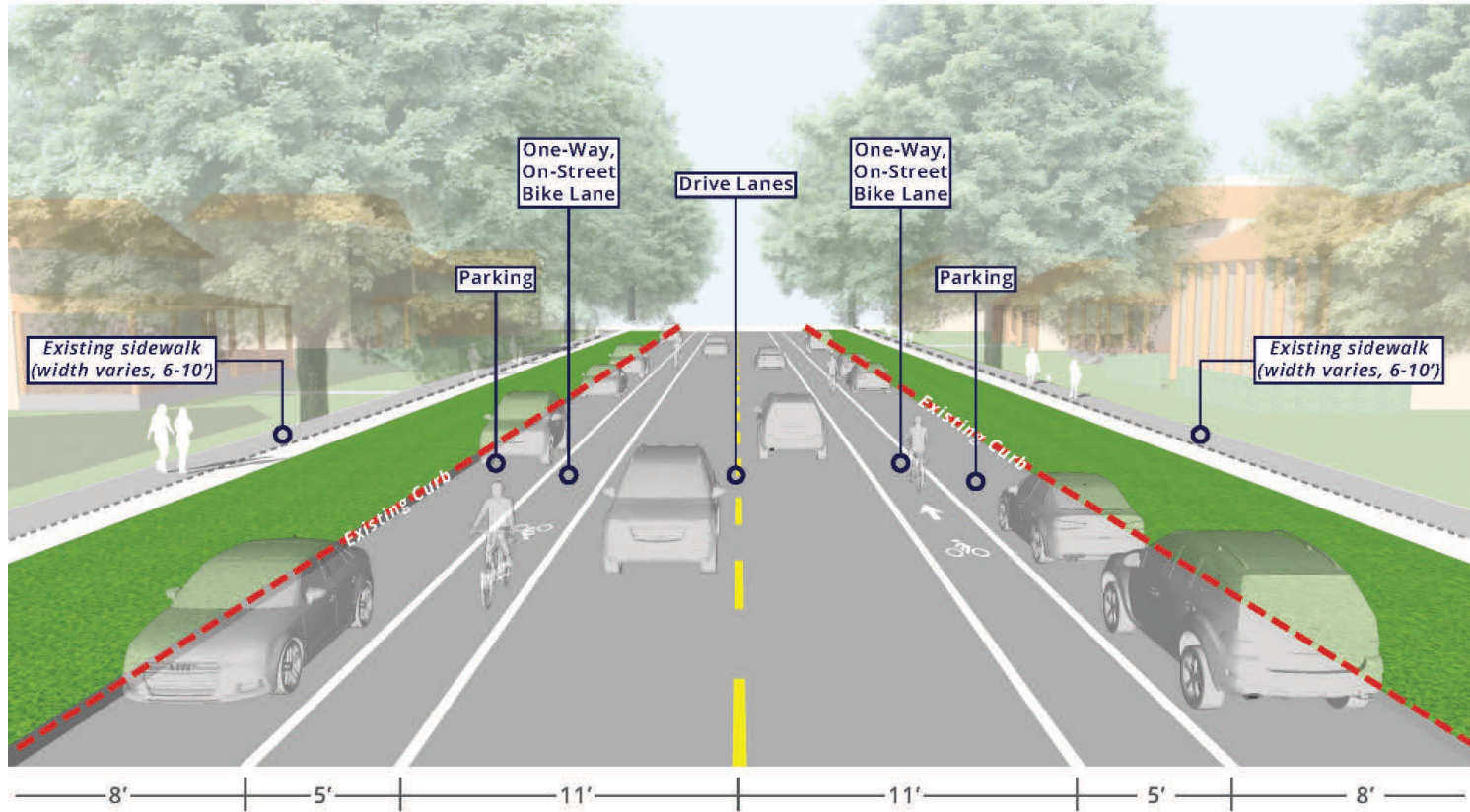


Diagram of the city's  
recommendation for the 100-foot  
Right of Way section East of  
Lexington

# Existing Condition

100' Right-of-Way | Segments D, E, and F

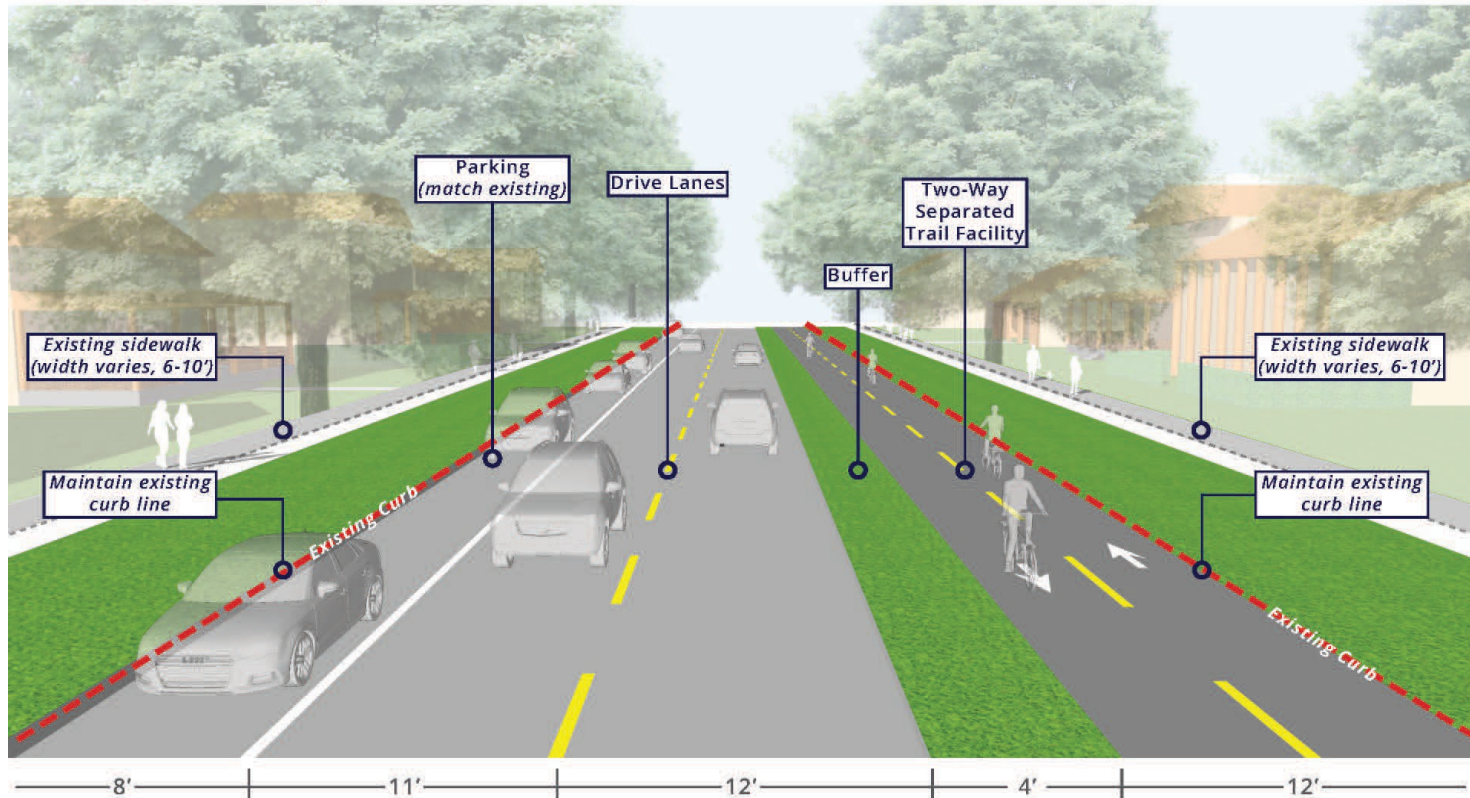
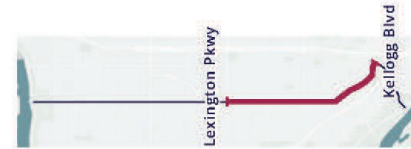
- Existing Curb Line
- Potential Impact Zone



No Median

## Two-Way Separated Trail, Parking One Side 100' Right-of-Way | Segments D, E, and F

- - - Existing Curb Line
- Potential Impact Zone



No Median – Option #1

# Summit from Lexington to the Cathedral

## Facts and Concerns

This option would:

- Remove the on-street bike lanes entirely.
- Eliminate parking on one side of the street and remove the parking lane altogether.
- Move one curb into the existing roadway 16 feet.
- Thus, all that would be left of the street would be one 8-foot parking lane and two traffic lanes one 11 feet wide and one 12 feet wide.
- On the portion of the street reclaimed from these changes the city would install a four-foot buffer and then a 12-foot-wide two-way paved asphalt bicycle Trail

This Recommended Plan is Bad.

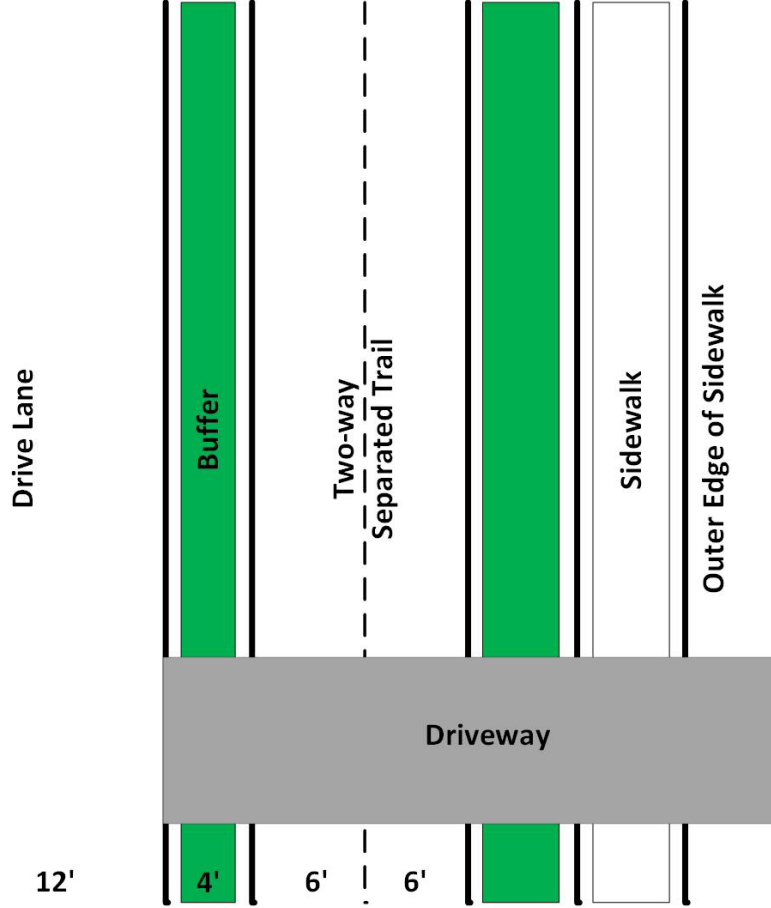
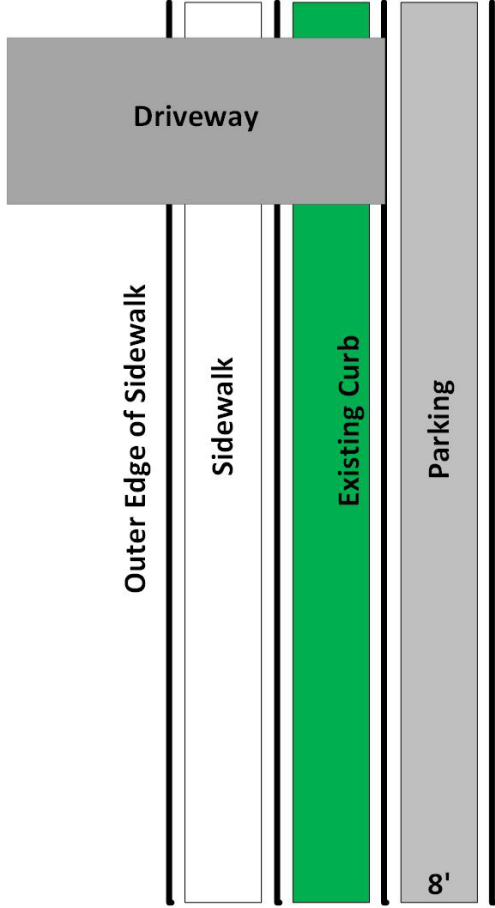
Why?

# It is Unsafe

- Many cyclists will continue to ride on the street but now they will be riding in the traffic lane not in a dedicated bike lane.
- Two-way bike trails are more unsafe for cyclists who ride on them. Here the individual bike lanes will only be six feet wide exposing riders to both oncoming and passing riders.
- The Trail will cross many driveways, walkways, cross walks, parking lot entrances and exits and side streets. Thus, not only will riders on the Trail need to contend with other riders coming at them from the front and passing them from behind they will need to contend with pedestrians many with small children and pets and vehicles coming at them from the side.
- People leaving or getting into their cars will be opening doors directly into the traffic lane.

# Cross Traffic Safety Issue

The next slide illustrates a part of the safety issue the recommended Trail creates at driveway crossings. Note that according to Google a 2022 Prius is 15 feet long.





## It Will Deface Historic Summit Avenue.

- The importance of the historic nature of Summit Avenue is beyond dispute. It has an historic symmetrical streetscape. The city's plan will destroy that.
- The best future for Summit Avenue is to preserve its past.

# It Will Create a Myriad of Practical Problems

- When the parking lane and both on-street bicycle lanes are removed Metro Mobility vans and garbage/recycle trucks and delivery vehicles (according to Google a UPS truck is 10 feet wide) and snow removal providers and lawn service companies will have nowhere to pull off to bring users to their destination, pick up trash, drop off packages unload equipment and otherwise conduct normal business.
- Where will the snow go? The sidewalks must be cleared for all of the many walkers who use and enjoy Summit year-round. The bike Trail must be cleared for the handful of bikes that will use it in the winter. The street must be plowed and with the narrower street it will be even more imperative that it be plowed from curb to curb.
- Where will the people who live on or near Summit who do not have garages or off-street parking park?

# It Will Imperil Trees and Green Space

The city's recommended plan nominally does not extend into the boulevard. However, the construction process will likely disturb the tree roots of the boulevard trees. Moreover, the city has reserved to itself the right to modify the plan and even a slight modification puts trees at risk. As an important aside, no matter how this bike Trail dispute turns out everyone, both those for the Trail and those against, must be very vigilant and hold the city to strict best construction practices so trees are not destroyed by "minor" modifications.

# What Might Be Good About the Trail?

For example, what about the family with younger children that is not comfortable riding on the street but thinks an off-street Trail would be better/safer for them?

I worry that they are being misled about how safe the Trail actually will be. Based on the evidence regarding two-way Trails and the many driveways etc. crossing any Trail, that feeling of more safety is actually illusory. We believe they would be safer and have a better cycling experience by riding on one of the streets that parallel Summit and have far less traffic.

# Thank You All

## For Your Time and Your Attention

Special thanks to:

The Cathedral of St Paul and Father Ubel for the use of the Cathedral and

To the Ramsey Hill Association for sponsoring this meeting.

Note: We have posters of each of the city's recommended options and people who can answer questions about them. We urge you to look at the diagrams and discuss them. And, for good measure, Research Historian Christopher Keith is here and can tell tales of Summit's rich history. Just ask him.