

From: [Alex Schieferdecker](#)
To: [Council Comment](#)
Subject: In Support of the 3rd Avenue 4-3 Conversion and Greening
Date: Thursday, April 14, 2016 1:35:17 PM

To the Minneapolis City Council,

I am a graduate student in the City and Regional Planning program at the University of Pennsylvania. My study concentrations are Urban Design and Transportation. Until last August, when I moved to attend school, I was a resident of Minneapolis, and I plan on returning to the city after completing my degree. As someone who cares deeply about Minneapolis and who is currently studying the intersection of good urban design and good transportation planning, I feel compelled to weigh in on the proposed 3rd Avenue protected bike lane and 4-3 conversion. In short; this is a rare win-win in road design, in which the best aesthetic option is also the best option for walkers, bikers, and cars. There's simply no credible reason to not move forward with the original Department of Public Works proposal.

The key thing to understand is that reducing the number of lanes on 3rd Avenue **will not have a meaningful effect on car traffic**. This is counter-intuitive, but the results of 4-3 conversions across the country bear out this fact. The reason why this is the case is because a 3-lane road makes a dedicated space for left turns, taking these cars out of the traffic flow while they wait to make turns. Drivers who are headed straight are not delayed by left turning drivers. As a by-product, three lanes roads not only flow smoother, but are also significantly safer, as there are less rear-end collisions (drivers breaking too late for stopped left turners), and less sideswipes (drivers in the left turn trying to make it into the right lane because they don't want to be delayed by a left turner).

Traffic engineers and transportation planners are not known for their communication skills, and it is for this reason that I think many people are unaware of the well-documented benefits of the 4-3 conversion. But they exist and are very real. The businesses along 3rd Avenue who have objected to losing a lane of traffic are acting reasonably, but they are (through not fault of their own) not in possession of the facts and the expertise in the topic of road design. The day after the 4-3 conversion is completed, they will witness firsthand the advantages of the new design, and any political pressure that may be threatened will dissipate. 3rd Avenue will be safer, simpler, and the effect on travel times will be virtually non-existent.

Of course, it goes without saying that the original proposed design for 3rd Avenue will be a revolutionary change for bicyclists heading into downtown, and pedestrians enjoying a beautiful urban street. But this isn't a "bikes vs cars" issue as I think the Star Tribune has occasionally portrayed it as. This is a "cars, bikes, and people vs bad street design" issue. The

choice is clear, I think!

Thanks for your attention!

Alex Schieferdecker