Attachment #2

BAC Feedback on Bike Master Plan Map

June 1, 2011 - DRAFT

This draft is intended for review & comment – please forward comments to Matthew Hendricks at hendricks612@gmail.com

Streets recommended by the BAC for inclusion on the Bike Master Plan Map

10th Ave S Bike Blvd - the 10th Ave Bike Blvd on the blocks just north of Lake Street should be a sharrow instead; it simply cannot work as a bike blvd given the amount of parking and loading dock access it provides. I thought that this was going to be changed?

38th Street West of Bloomington - this is wide enough for lanes, it would provide access to local businesses, and would continue the lanes that come from the east. I know that staff think that there will be a new interchange at 38th, but I can't imagine that will happen soon since they just redid 35W near there.

Lyndale Ave north of Plymouth Ave - no alternatives in this area is; ripe for 4-to-3 lane conversion on section south of Broadway; the two-lane segment north of Broadway will be more challenging, but maybe sharrows or bike lanes if space.

Nicollet Ave from Grant Street to 40th Street - being reconstructed soon; important commercial area. Could be great connection between Midtown Greenway and downtown core to connect all of S Mpls easily to downtown.

Johnson Street NE, north of Hennepin - low parking rates throughout; no parallel route for 6 blocks in either direction. Could connect to 10th Ave Bikeway to U of M.

Washington Avenue between 7 Corners and 3rd Ave South – This stretch of Washington has been discussed several times at the BAC, and below are some of the justifications for adding it to the Bike Master Plan Map.

1. *It's an important corridor connecting the U of M to Downtown*. While Washington Avenue isn't the only connection between these two major generators of bike traffic, it is one of the most direct.

2. *There's room to explore several different options for adding bike lanes*. Washington Avenue between 3rd Avenue South and the 35-W interchange is roughly 98 feet wide, from curb to curb, which means that relative to other corridors such as Lake Street or Lyndale Avenue, there is much more space to work with.

The current configuration of Washington Avenue includes three 13-foot travel lanes in each direction and a center median/turn lane with a total width of roughly 20 feet.

Presuming that it would be difficult to reconstruct the median & center turn lanes in the near future, there are still some options for re-striping Washington that would provide space for bike lanes.

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One option involves a 10-5-12-12-20-12-12-5-10 configuration, with the 10-foot parking lane used as space for pedestrian bumpouts near the intersections.

Another options involves a 10-5-12-12-20-12-12-6-9 configuration, with the 10 foot parking lane converting to a right-turn lane near the intersections. The disadvantage of this is that the pedestrian crossing distances are not reduced. The advantage is that it provides for two lanes of through-traffic for cars, with dedicated lanes for both left- and right-turning vehicles.

Each of the first two options has the advantage of providing curbside parking on both sides of the avenue, which could be helpful for local retail & restaurants and provide a functional buffer between the travel lanes and the sidewalk.

A third option would preserve all of the current travel lanes, but reduce them by 2 feet each, from 13 feet to 11 feet, to allow for the addition of a 6-foot bike lane in each direction. This would yield a 6-11-11-11-20-11-11-11-6 layout. A disadvantage of this design is that it would not allow for curbside parking.

These three scenarios aren't the only conceivable ways to re-stripe the road, but they demonstrate that a 98-foot wide corridor provides a variety of options to balance the needs of multiple stakeholders.

3. *Because of the amount of space available, a simple re-striping of the street may be sufficient to add bike lanes. This solution would be relatively inexpensive.*

4. *A careful redesign of Washington Avenue might increase total capacity, or at least keep it roughly the same*. One of the key factors that will impact the capacity of Washington Avenue for moving cars is signal timing. The proportion of green light time for traffic along Washington Avenue could be increased by making two adjustments:

- decrease the crossing distance from 98 feet to 78 feet by adding pedestrian curb bumpouts that are roughly the width of a new curbside parking area. This would allow for shorter red-light periods for vehicles on Washington.

- decrease the amount of time in each signal cycle devoted to left-turn movements. (Or have the left-turn part of the cycle activate only when vehicles are present in the left turn lane.) Frequently, drivers on Washington sit waiting for left-turn only phases of the signal cycle even when there are no vehicles present in the left turn lanes.

Because the current signal timing doesn't seem to be programmed to maximize the capacity of Washington, a closer study of the street could result in capacity improvements. This could help off-set any losses in capacity resulting from a reduction in the number of lanes.

5. *Washington Avenue's significance as a key connection between 35-W and Downtown may diminish as other connections nearby are enhanced*. There is planning underway to improve/create ramp access to

35-W from 4th and 5th Avenues. This would provide an alternative way of accessing the highway that would absorb some of the traffic that now uses Washington.

6. *The character of Washington Avenue will be an important factor in the redevelopment of the eastern edge of Downtown Minneapolis.*

Washington Avenue cuts through a neighborhood in transition. The blocks east of 3rd Ave South were vacant or underutilized (in many cases surface parking or abandoned buildings) for decades. After many years of focused strategic investment by the City, the Mill District has added hundreds of condominiums and apartments. The neighborhood boasts the Mill City Museum, the Guthrie Theater, the MacPhail Center for Music, the Mill District Farmer's Market, and several new restaurants that support and benefit from the new development and cultural destinations.

Washington Avenue forms a border between the increasingly vibrant Mill District, and a district of surface parking south of Washington that has failed to redevelop. Roughly 25 acres of surface parking can be found within 1,000 feet of the Metrodome LRT station. Despite its proximity to an LRT station, a major sports facility, downtown Minneapolis, and the Riverfront, the blocks south of Washington have not yet seen the level of investment that can be observed north of Washington.

To the extent that Washington Avenue creates a barrier to foot and bike traffic, it will separate the Mill District from the rest of East Downtown and deter redevelopment. A Washington Avenue that provides safe, attractive space for the pedestrian and the bicyclist will help connect the vitality and development momentum of the Mill District to the area surrounding the Metrodome LRT station.

In summary, it's fair to ask whether a street in an increasingly residential and walkable urban neighborhood needs to be 7 lanes wide, with each lane measuring 13 feet wide. Washington Avenue is a County Road, and thus the City of Minneapolis isn't in the lead position with respect to design and lane configuration. Given that context, it may be in the City's best interest to add Washington to the Bike Master Plan Map, and ask the County to take a close look at rebalancing the way pedestrians and bicyclists are accommodated in this important corridor. Perhaps 2011 isn't the right time to take on this project, but certainly as the 4th and 5th Avenue interchanges with 35-W advance towards construction, it seems logical to review Washington Avenue's role and design.

Washington Avenue west of 3rd Ave S – In this section, the widths vary significantly and the nature of the street changes block-by-block. Particularly in the Warehouse District, it would likely be beneficial to explore bike lanes because the alternative (2nd St) does not connect to Washington Avenue between 5th Ave N and 10th Ave N. In addition, there's a concentration of retail, office, and restaurant businesses along Washington that would benefit from being more accessible by bicycle.

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Streets for which the BAC recommends further study and potential future inclusion on the Bike Master Plan Map.

While we recognize that for various reasons this group of streets are not strong candidates for inclusion on the Bike Master Plan Map at this time, we feel it is critical that the City prioritize ways that we can provide better access to commercial streets with many destinations. In most of these cases, there's also an opportunity to improve community livability and vitality, in addition to improving bicycle access (Cedar Avenue is an example of street design that degrades livability and property values.)

Cedar Ave - Cedar doesn't have as many commercial destinations as other streets worth fighting for.

Lake Street - Recently reconstructed.

Lyndale Ave South - recently reconstructed and north of Lake, Lyndale currently has too much traffic to be a good candidate for an early 4-to-3 lane conversion.

Broadway NE - It's definitely needed with no alternative route, but it's definitely challenging with higher traffic volumes and truck traffic and no option but a 4-to-3 conversion.

University Ave N and SE; North - is tough with non rush hour parking; SE is Central Corridor and would be a tough sell considering the alternative bike route nearby.