

Ayd Mill Corridor:

Building a Linear Park *and* Reducing Neighborhood Traffic

Draft for City Council Review
Submitted as Comments to the Ayd Mill Draft Environmental Impact Statement
April 12, 1999

Comments from a Landmark Center Forum

April 6, 1999

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Sponsored by Neighborhoods First! with assistance from Minnesota Landmarks, Snow Lake Design, and Exlibris Productions

For more information contact Exlibris Productions at exlibris@visi.com

The citizens and government of St. Paul are facing an all too familiar prospect: the possibility of a new major road running through the heart of our city. At the same time, some of our neighbors are having their quality of life threatened by excessive traffic on neighborhood streets, in particular Lexington Parkway. To counter the prevalent model for managing increases in traffic volume- building more roads- this forum summary offers community generated ideas to create both a linear park and slow or reduce traffic on neighborhood streets.

The concepts in this document grew out of a series of meetings that culminated as a public forum held in the Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul on April 6, 1999. These gatherings sought to harness people's imaginations and to help them to create their own vision of what this land could look like in the future.

Participants helped design maps and illustrations, attached, of a Ayd Mill Park. They also offered ideas on potential ways to slow traffic on neighboring Lexington.

Participants

The attendees at the Linear Park Design workshop represented a range personal opinion on the question of whether the Ayd Mill Corridor should be used as a Park or a Road.

The meeting was publicized in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, via the Neighborhoods First! flyer network, and via targeted invitations to areas which might not be reached via these methods.

Special care was made to invite individuals to the forum who may not already favor the concept of a linear park. Specifically, invitations to the event were hand delivered to all the homes on Lexington from Randolph to Jefferson, and those homes on cul-de-sacs to the east of Lexington.

An effort was also made to reach individuals from an area which will be greatly effected by any decision in the Ayd mill corridor, but which have been only minimally included in the decision making process thus far: the residents of the West 7th Street community. Again, invitations were hand delivered to those blocks, which lie around the intersection of Randolph and 35E.

Gretchen Aar
Russ Adams
Deb Alper
Mike Andert
Joanne Backer
Emily Belleful
Sarah Berger
Peter Borgen
Michael Cline
Jim Cunningham

Nick Doyle
John Galatowitsch
Susan Hass
Matt Hollinshead
Christine Howe
Geo. Jurgensen
Lynn Kluz
Andrew Koebrick
Jean Madden
Jane M'Cluse

Debbie Meister
Lakshmi Muirhead
Karla Ness
Rolf Nordstrom
Gordon Pedersen
Stephanie Robison
Jack Rossbach
Stanton Sears
John Steiner-
Manning

Andy Steiner-
Manning
Karen Taulelle
Christopher
Telschow
Pat Tupper
Anna Wasescha
Vince Wharton
Josh Williams

Traffic Calming Ideas for Lexington

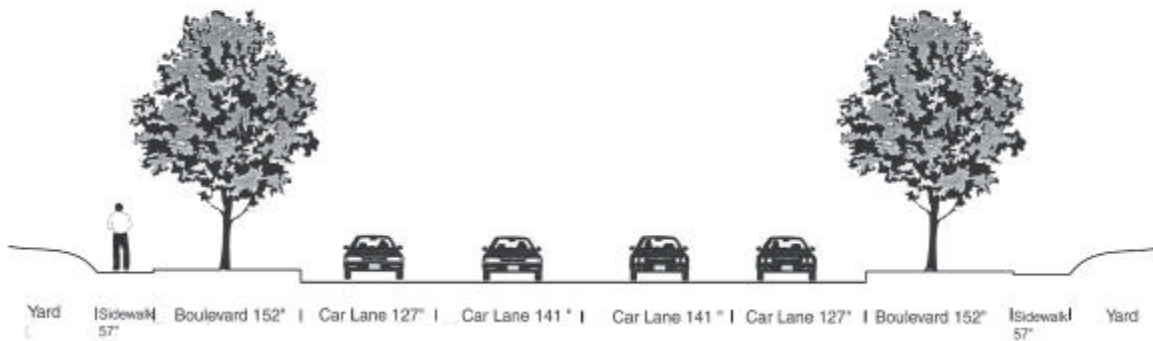
For the past 30 years city planners and civil engineers have focused almost completely on creating a traffic system based on moving the maximum number of cars at the maximum speed. In recent years, however, progressive planning professionals have begun to realize the disastrous implications of this model and have shifted their expertise towards understanding how to slow traffic.

Traffic Calming is now a growing discipline and conclusive strategies for making our residential streets safer, quieter, and now know. Landmark Forum participants suggested a number of traffic calming methods which have been proven by professional planners to be successful:

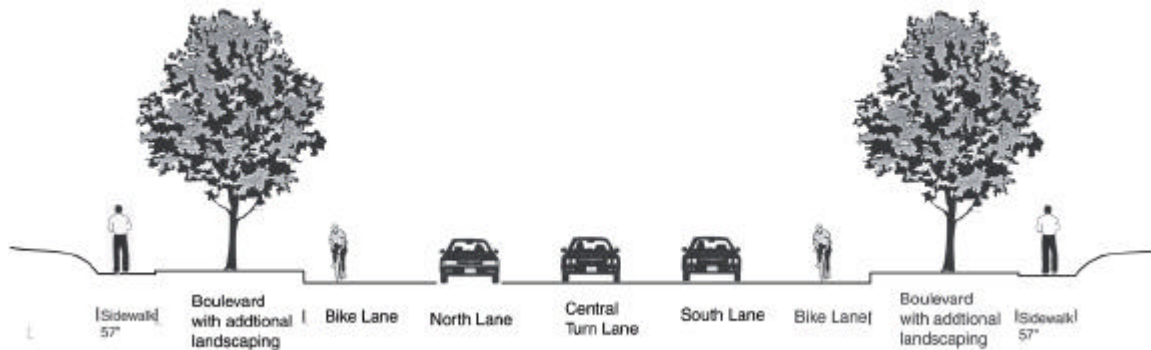
- Make Lexington a two-lane road with bike paths (see designs on next page). Use Fairview and Summit Ave. as a model. These streets, like Lexington, were once four lane speedways. By reducing the number of lanes allocated for cars, and making the streets safe for bicyclists, Lexington too could become a calmer, safer, street.
- Alternatively, continue the median now found on Lexington between I94 and Summit all the way to Randolph.
- Add traffic lights and/or stop signs on Lexington between St. Clair Avenue and Grand Avenue to reduce speeding.
- Enforce speed limits, including the use of photo cops.
- Limit right turns (northern) from Randolph to Lexington (except for circulator vans and bicycles) during rush hour. Currently, commuters from Southern suburbs exit 35E at Randolph and make this turn in an attempt to reach I94. We do not have to let our city be a cut-through route, at the cost of our children's safety.
- Close Randolph Avenue exits from 35E and add signage directing drivers to downtown and I-94. The next exit after Randolph is Victoria and cut-through commuters would not find exiting there to be an efficient way to reach I94. Rather, they would continue through Downtown St. Paul. Local residents, however, would be only minorly inconvenienced by having to exit at Victoria.
- Put neighborhood signs and banners across Lexington (i.e. Gateway signs in Minneapolis). Such signs catch drivers eyes and slow traffic.
- Ensure that future land use planning decisions impacting the area work to reduce traffic rather than create it. This includes limiting the number of new parking facilities built and the favoring new in-town housing rather than new developments which would draw distant commuters.
- Provide alleys for residents on Lexington between Randolph Avenue and Jefferson Avenue so that they can easily get into and out of their properties.
- Add seasonal speed bumps. Speed bumps could be removed in winter so that snow plows can get through.
- Work to raise gas prices in the state and parking prices within the city.
- Introduce circulator van on Lexington from St. Clair to Como, for locals.

- Create park and ride lots on Mendota side of 35E bridge with link to a circulator van/express bus on Lexington. Continue the circulator to I-94, Midway, and Roseville..
- Pay for traffic calming measures with funds that would have otherwise gone to road building.

Lexington Avenue : Current Design



Lexington Avenue : Traffic Calming Design



Park Design Concepts

The following ideas were generated through small group discussions. Individuals listed those elements of a future park which they felt were important:

- **Bike path:** Off road trails should be build west of the railroad tracks.
- **Community festivals:** Use events in the Park to draw people to St. Paul.
- **Community Gardens:** Help grow community and supply inexpensive food for the community.
- **Connections:** Link the park to Minneapolis via the Midtown Greenway, and to Downtown St. Paul by continuing trails from the corridor along the CP rail line.
- **Dog Facilities:** cater to our four legged friends with a fenced in dog area and drinking fountains with low dog-level water dispensers.
- **Economics:** Use the park to draw in visitors and to benefit the business of Selby through park-related revenues (i.e. bike rental at Boehm's Bike Shop)
- **Food and coffee café:** Allow small food and beverage venders to sell items in the park.
- **Forest or orchards:** In addition to shade trees, fruit trees should be included in the space
- **Gorge interpretive center:** Create an educational center at the South End of the corridor highlighting the history of the Mill and any native artifacts unearthed by archeological investigations.
- **Handicap accessibility:** Ensure that all park visitors can enjoy the space regardless of physical ability.
- **Legacy:** Leaving a park instead of a road was critically important to many participants
- **Neighborhood Access:** Additional trails should be constructed to make it easy to enter the sunken corridor.
- **Picnic areas:** With play areas
- **Public art:** Include places of outdoor artwork. Mention was made of the sculpture under a Seattle Bridge of a car-eating troll.
- **Safe Areas:** The park can be designed for safely by including emergency call boxes, clear lines of site, and by ensuring emergency vehicles can gain access to the site
- **Skateboards and bike course:** Provide off road biking BMX options and a place for kids to legally skateboard.
- **Water:** Restore the stream. The St. Paul Parks department has noted that creating a stream and ponds are feasible.