

# SAINT PAUL BICYCLE COALITION

February 13, 2013

Dear CIB Committee and Whom It May Concern,

The Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition strongly supports Capital Improvement Budget requests for funding both Chatsworth and Aldine Bike Boulevards.

Saint Paul has very few north-south streets that cross any or all of the major obstacles and are safe for bicycling. These obstacles include the Interstate 94 trench, the CP Rail mainline/Ayd Mill Road, The BNSF railroad line and the UP railroad line. As a result, cyclists who want to ride from Macalester Groveland or Highland Park up to Como (or visa-versa), are often forced to ride on streets like Snelling or Lexington Avenues, with huge volumes of high-speed motor vehicle traffic, no bike lanes and often no shoulders. Many end up riding on sidewalks, causing conflicts with pedestrians and putting them at greater risk for being hit by left or right turning motorists at crosswalks.

Aldine Street has a bicycle-pedestrian bridge across Interstate 94 and a way to cross the CP-Rail tracks at grade (via Carol street). MnDOT recently concluded a Snelling Avenue Multi-Modal Study in which Aldine was identified as possible parallel alternative route to Snelling that could get cyclists up to Minnehaha or Hewitt Avenues (and over to Snelling), where MnDOT hopes to add bike lanes north to Como Avenue in the coming years. For details, see "Final Report" at--

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/snellingstudy/>

Aldine is also the western terminus of the soon-to-be completed Charles Avenue Bikeway and will be important for getting cyclists south to University Avenue so they can continue west towards Minneapolis. Aldine has low motor vehicle traffic volumes and low driving speeds, making it much safer for bicycling than Snelling or other major arterial streets.

Chatsworth is an even better north-south bike route. It starts farther south at Saint Clair Avenue in Highland Park, has a newly rebuilt bike-ped bridge over Interstate 94 and a new traffic light at University Avenue (enabling riders to cross this busy street). If a bike-ped bridge were eventually added across the BNSF rail line, north of Pierce Butler, Chatsworth would become the only north-south bike route to cross ALL the major obstacles from Highland Park all the way north to Como Park. Like Aldine, Chatsworth is a quiet, low-speed street with low motor vehicle traffic volumes. The new traffic light at University Avenue, while beneficial to cyclists, could also increase motor vehicle traffic volumes on Chatsworth in that immediate area. Bike Boulevard treatments like traffic circles and bump-outs within a block or so of the University intersection would

deter increased car traffic, reduce vehicle speeds and prevent that stretch of Chatsworth from becoming a cut-thru for automobiles.

Chatsworth was identified as a high-priority North-south bike route on the Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition's web site, part of a public process that also included bicycle advocates from Saint Paul Smart Trips, Transit for Livable Communities and Cycles For Change—  
<http://www.saintpaulbicyclecoalition.org/projects/>

We urge the CIB committee and anyone else ranking these projects to give them a high priority. They are urgently needed.

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