

PIERCE BUTLER/LEXINGTON PARKWAY BICYCLE CONNECTION

Project Importance

Provides direct connection between regional East/West and North/South bicycle routes, improving the integrity and structural linkage of a transportation asset

Provides bicycle infrastructure that meets the needs of increasing numbers of bicycle commuters, by providing less stops and clear routes

Improves ability for western and eastern neighborhoods to reach Como Park by bicycle, reducing parking demand in the park and providing alternative route that bypasses University Avenue congestion

Enhances the functionality of the Lexington Parkway Regional Trail

Safety Concerns

Remedies the need for bicyclists to cross Lexington Parkway traffic (23,000 vpd) to access the new Lexington bike/ped bridge (completed Fall 2012)

Completion of the new Lexington bike/ped bridges has created a dangerous crossing at Lexington near Hubbard, and the Como Pool (2012) has created additional use of the off road regional trail

Allows the connection between the two routes to operate correctly with each other now that the Lexington off-road regional trail has been widened to appropriate standards (completed Fall 2012)

Demonstrated Commitment

People expect straightforward connections in the transportation infrastructure network, and this funding allows bicycle commuters and recreational riders to more directly access employment, parks and trails

Earlier investments in the tunnel (\$900,000) and Lexington bike/ped bridge (\$1,070,000) of federal transportation money will be maximized by enhancing ability to use them

Proposal was ranked 15 out of 54 proposals considered by Streets and Utilities Task Force in 1012-2013 CIB cycle

Lexington bike/ped bridge project was proposed by neighbors and adopted by Public Works. The District 11 Neighbors support the same approach for the proposed connection of the two major bike routes.

The District 10 Como Community Council, Hamline Midway Coalition (District 11), Leonando's Basement and Sparc community development corporation (serving Districts 6 and 11) all supported this proposal in the 2012 – 2013 cycle and are likely to do so again.

Community benefit

The entire city of St. Paul bicycle transportation network is affected because this project directly connects a regional route with a regional trail, and existing routes can be used instead of building new ones

Livability and property values of surrounding neighborhoods are enhanced by having better connections to Como Regional Park and better connections for recreational and commuting cyclists

Direct route connection enhances linkage to other city parks and trails

The area will be improved with better bicycle signage, and coordination of lighting with the Lexington bike/ped bridge will enhance appearance of the connection

Air quality will improve as more people use alternative modes of transportation

Parking congestion in nearby Como Park will be reduced when more people are able to safely cycle to the park

Long Range Impact

Housing near both routes will become more affordable by improving alternatives to expensive car ownership by better route design for commuter and recreational cyclists (economic sustainability)

Project will support the wide range of people who cycle as an affordable way to keep healthy and fit (social sustainability, economic sustainability through improved health of citizens)

Project will improve access to Como Park, including the wide range of programs and services offered at the park including the Zoo, Conservatory, Aquatic facility (2012), West Picnic Area Playground (2013), Japanese Gardens (2013) and the Como Woodland outdoor classroom (social and environmental sustainability)

Project enhances our strong network of parks (environmental sustainability)

Carbon emissions are reduced when people are able to use alternative transportation such as bicycling, especially when properly designed for recreational and commuter use (environmental sustainability)

Both routes are part of the bicycle map included in the Transportation chapter and the Parks and Recreation chapter of the Comprehensive Plan for St. Paul

Project is on the northern perimeter of the St. Paul Central Corridor Bike/Walk Action Plan

Project provides improved access to historically significant Como Park

Stated outcomes of the Comp Plan include “connectivity of major routes” and a modest investment in this project achieves this by directly connecting two major bicycle routes

District 11 Neighbors want to tell you about
our proposed transportation connection route.
It will help bike commuters have no doubt
of which way to go. They won't have to scout.
When connections aren't there people don't get out.
They become couch potatoes and do nothing but pout.

We have a safer way to meet
our Como neighbors, and that's neat.
Thanks to your support, we safely can take
the Lexington bridge up to Como Lake.
Bikers and hikers everywhere
can help the environment by doing their share.

But now we need a new connection
to take us in an east or west direction.
Before you today for your inspection
is a ramp idea for biker protection.
We need clear linkage along this section.
We hope you will make this your top selection.

We know that your service is very tough,
but just do your best and that will be enough.
Thanks, task force members for all that you do,
and please accept our very best wishes to you.

The District 11 Neighbors

We are a group of neighbors who originally banded together to propose building a replacement for the Griggs Recreation Center around 2001, which did get built. After the bicycle/pedestrian tunnel under the Canadian Pacific railroad tracks had been funded in 2003 with \$900,000 in federal transportation money, our group realized that this would increase the number of people wishing cycle or walk to Como Park from neighborhoods to the south. (The tunnel eventually was built around 2006 after extensive coordination with the railroad). In 2005, we proposed an adjacent bicycle/pedestrian bridge to Lexington Parkway, to cross over the BNSF railroad tracks and Pierce Butler Route, which was funded through CIB and constructed in 2012. The off-road path from Minnehaha to Jessamine on the west side of Lexington was widened to appropriate standards and lighting and signage were improved along the route. These additional features were added to the project after the Public Works department "adopted" our proposal and submitted it in later CIB cycles, for which we thank them. Because Lexington Parkway has now been designated as a regional trail making it eligible for other non-city funding in the future, further enhancements to this major north/south route become more likely. This makes directly connecting Pierce Butler even more important for the growth of the regional bicycle transportation network.