

I am here to draw your attention to the capital preventive maintenance project planned for N. Maple Rd. A mill-and-fill is scheduled to take place on N. Maple Rd. this year between Dexter and Foss st, that's just south of the roundabouts by M-14.

I live on N. Maple Rd. where this project is happening. I have a very personal stake in having all modes of travel be safe. My family travels this road every day to walk to school, catch the bus, and drive to work.

As part of the project, the road markings will need to be repainted. My understanding is this stretch of N. Maple will be converted from 4 to 3 lanes BUT only if it is deemed 4 lanes are not necessary, based on the traffic levels.

This is an unfortunate and outdated engineering standard. It values car throughput above all else, particularly the safety of people who, by choice, age, or circumstance, get around the city without a car.

Regardless of the volume of traffic, this section of Maple Rd, specifically between Dexter and Miller, should be changed to no more than a 3-lane configuration. One lane in each direction with bike lanes and a center turn lane.

Currently, this road is designed to encourage speeding. The lanes are 11 feet wide with two lanes in each direction. Wide lanes induce speeding. Two lanes means speeding traffic can pass slower traffic. No center turn lane means passing happens in both lanes. This increases vehicular conflict points and makes the road more dangerous for drivers.

There are no marked pedestrian crossings anywhere between Dexter and Miller. Walking at an average human pace means you must wait until you have 500 feet of clearance in both directions before crossing. In reality, it means you have to hustle to get across the street to the bus stop in time... and that's assuming you're a reasonably fit adult.

There are stretches of sidewalk that are too close to the speeding traffic lanes for comfort. It is an unpleasant experience that discourages walking.

No bike lanes means only an intrepid few people bike along this road. I see them and tried it a few times myself! It is not a street configuration that accommodates, let alone encourages, people to travel by bike.

So what can be done? Ideally, there would be more trees planted, protected bike lanes, perhaps a raised crosswalk or three, and better lighting. I know that is not in the City's budget right now. However, much can be done with just paint. And since the repainting is happening anyway, let's do it in a way that makes travel safer for people walking, on bikes, and in cars, too.

We're all humans. Let's face it, we all make mistakes. None of us are perfect drivers, or bike riders, or walkers. We all stumble at some point. Leaving in place a road design that encourages high-speed driving where people are also walking and biking is a recipe for disaster. Higher car speeds result in more tragic crashes. Let's redesign N. Maple Rd. so when a mistake inevitably happens, it is much less likely to be tragic.

I look forward to working with my neighbors, the Transportation Commission, and the city engineers to help paint a better street. One that values people inside and outside of cars, and doesn't sacrifice people's safety and health at the altar of traffic throughput.

Please don't allow N. Maple Road to remain in its current, unsafe, 4-lane configuration.

Thank you for your time.