

Cespedes, Christopher

From: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission
Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2024 1:51 PM
To: Cespedes, Christopher
Subject: FW: Concerns about the proposed Pauline reconfiguration

From: Adam Goodman <XXXXXX@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 18, 2024 1:25 PM
To: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission <XXXXXX@a2gov.org>
Cc: Briggs, Erica <XXXXXX@a2gov.org>; Akmon, Dharma XXXXXX@a2gov.org
Subject: Concerns about the proposed Pauline reconfiguration

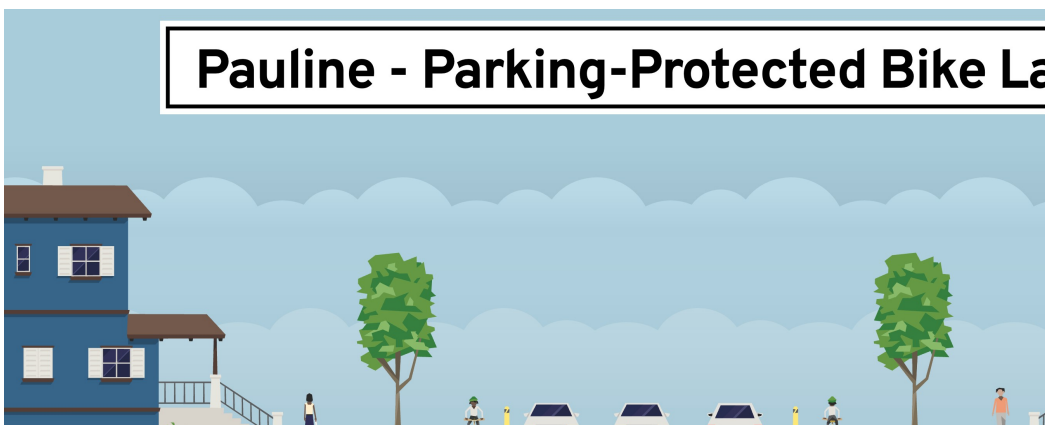
Hi transportation commission members and staff,

I'm writing with some concerns about the proposed reconfiguration for Pauline between Seventh and Main, as depicted on this month's agenda.

Almost two years ago, I wrote to the commission with serious concerns about proposed designs for South Seventh: <https://a2gov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11335215&GUID=BF1BDBAF-2942-44EB-9ADF-8D04FFAE17DC>. Thankfully, following that discussion, City Council intervened; the design that's now under construction is a marked improvement over what had previously been proposed.

Unfortunately, this proposed design for Pauline seems to repeat many of the same problems seen in the rejected designs for South Seventh. Specifically, it will (1) exacerbate potential speeding issues by increasing the perceived width of the road for drivers, (2) oblige people to bike in the "door zone" of parked cars, and (3) compromise the effectiveness of curb extensions ("bump outs") while simultaneously making them problematic choke points for people riding bikes.

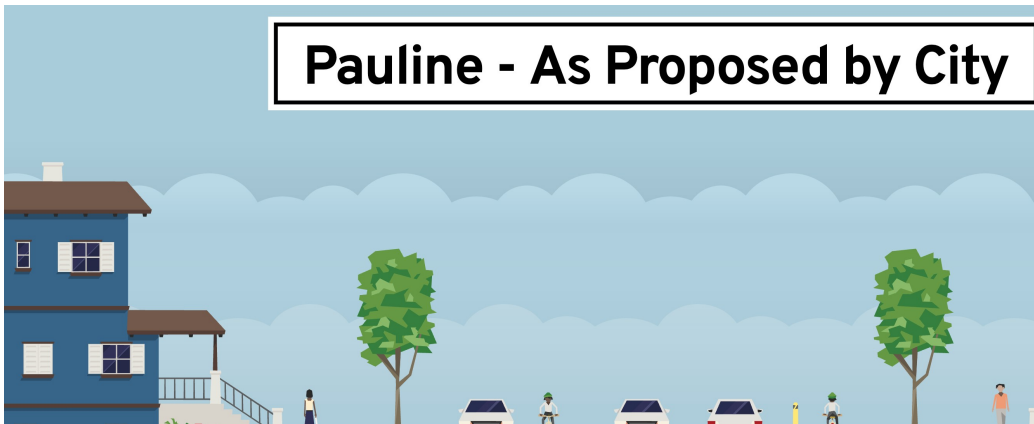
These first two problems could have been resolved by instead using a "parking-protected bike lane" design:



In this design, people riding bikes would have properly separated bike lanes on both sides of Pauline, as well as a proper buffer between the bike lane and car doors. Where present, parked cars would enhance

the separation between the bike lane and the road, and crucially, they would visually narrow the road for drivers.

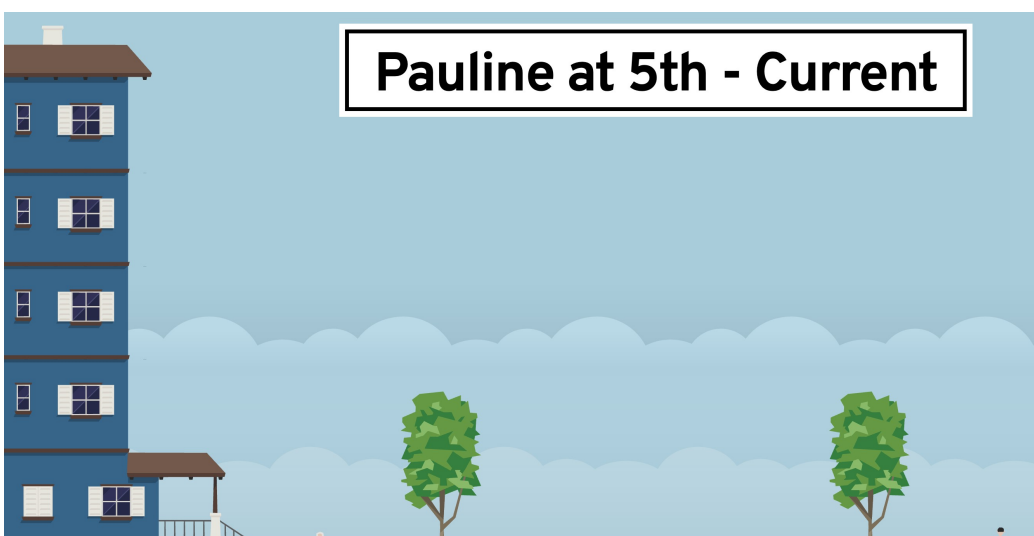
Contrast that with the city's proposed design for a door-zone bike lane with curbside parking:



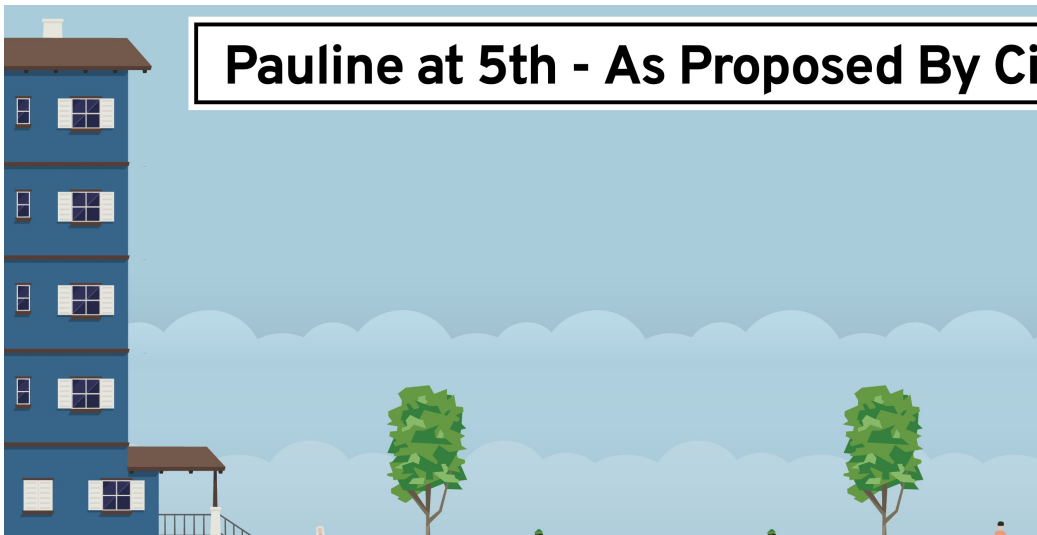
In this case, the clear width between parked cars on one side and delineators on the other is significantly wider, and as a result could subconsciously encourage speeding. And of course, the bike lanes next to parked cars would place people in the "door zone" and provide no vertical separation from moving traffic.

I'm aware that the city did offer the concept of a "parking-protected bike lane" in a survey conducted earlier this year. The results of the survey do not appear to have been shared publicly yet; but regardless, it strikes me as extremely problematic to choose a design based on survey results when a mountain of evidence from across the country clearly shows that one of these designs is safer - for all users - than the other.

As for curb extensions, I think it's particularly notable that the plan for Pauline would actually *widen* the road and increase the pedestrian crossing distance at Pauline and 5th. An existing set of curb extensions makes the road quite narrow there:

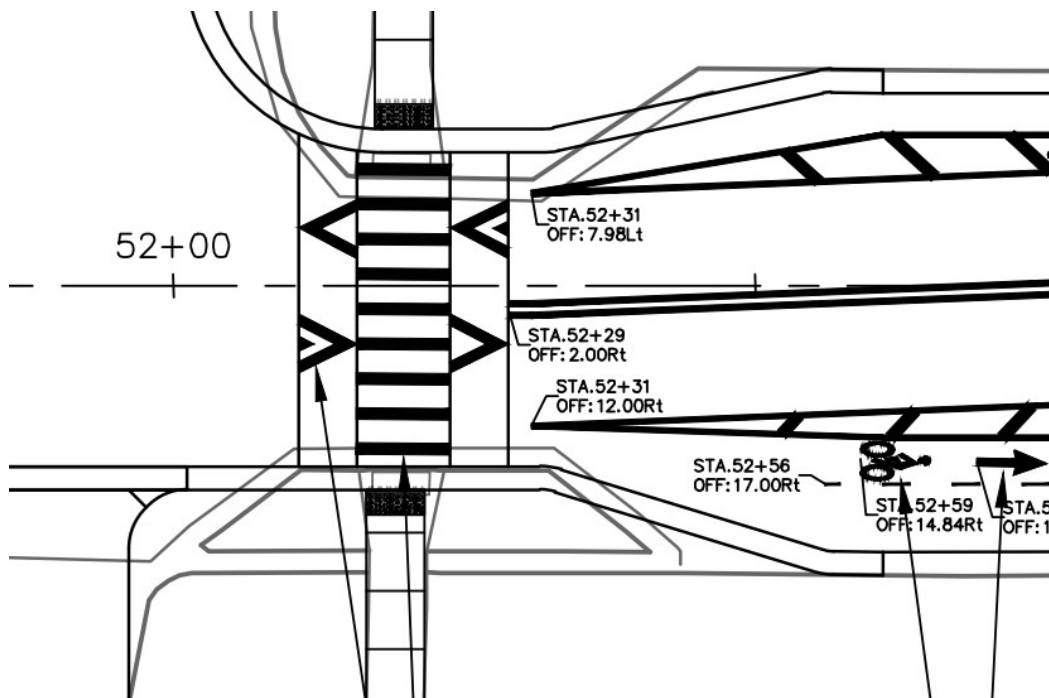


However, the proposed design would actually widen this section to add (unbuffered, painted) bike lanes:



You can see this in the actual drawing provided by the city

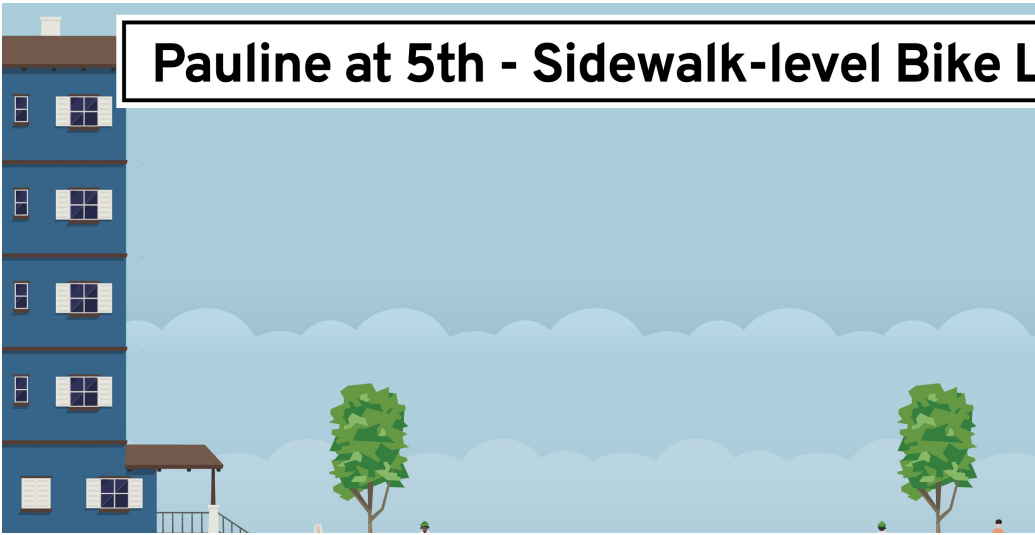
(<https://a2gov.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13239848&GUID=DF1F42B7-9678-4846-9C07-799A3964983F>), which shows the existing curbline overlaid with the proposed new curbline:



This is a bad deal for everyone. By widening the road, it'll reduce the effectiveness of this curb extension as a "speed management" tool and increase the pedestrian crossing distance. At the same time, it creates a choke point for people riding bikes and removes their buffer/separation from moving traffic.

I believe that this bad compromise is an unnecessary one. We could instead keep the bike lanes separated from traffic by - for example - temporarily elevating them up to sidewalk level and setting them back a bit further from the roadway:

Pauline at 5th - Sidewalk-level Bike L



This would keep a narrow roadway for drivers and shorter crossing distances for pedestrians, while maintaining separation of the bike lanes. It's also an idea that has plenty of precedent in our city - it's very similar to the design approach we have employed for *every single roundabout* in the city:



It also would be conceptually very similar to what's shown in NACTO's guidance for protected intersections: <https://nacto.org/publication/dont-give-up-at-the-intersection/protected-intersections/>

With all that said, I need to be clear that I do think the city's proposed design for Pauline is an improvement over its current configuration. I also appreciate that some ideas have been included that may partially mitigate the problems I identified here, e.g. some proposed speed tables for additional speed management.

I simply believe we can, and should, do better.

- Adam

P.S. Please note that the dimensions shown in my streetmix diagrams are approximate - I did my best to try to infer measurements from the city's pavement-marking diagram, but I'm sure I didn't get this perfectly correct.