

Cespedes, Christopher

From: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 4:04 PM
To: Cespedes, Christopher
Subject: FW: East Medical Center Drive Bridge

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

From: Alex XXXXXX < XXXXXX >
Sent: Saturday, January 14, 2023 3:16 PM
To: XXXXXX @umich.edu; XXXXXX @umich.edu; XXXXXX @a2gov.org
Cc: XXXXXX @michigan.gov; XXXXXX @michigan.gov; City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission < XXXXXX @a2gov.org>; Engineering XXXXXX @a2gov.org
Subject: East Medical Center Drive Bridge

Hello there!

I'm writing to you as an Ann Arbor resident who is concerned about the proposed traffic increase on East Medical Center Drive. I believe this is a counterproductive and harmful idea for several reasons.

First, it is [well known that adding lanes for cars has an effect of induced demand](#), tending to increase traffic. One likely net effect of this increase would thus be increased travel time for emergency vehicles going to and from the hospital. As this street is the hospital's main connection to a significant chunk of its emergency service area, this will have a harmful effect on the quality and speed of care received by trauma patients. This is quite contrary to one of the stated reasons I've seen for this expansion, which is to allow faster access for emergency vehicles to the hospital from Fuller Rd. Indeed, if the primary goal of this project is to improve emergency vehicles' access to the road network, the best thing that could be done is to close the section of E Medical Center Drive between W M.C.D. and Fuller Rd to personal cars, providing one lane in each direction for emergency vehicles and buses only.

Second, this change is likely to be harmful to the many pedestrians and bicyclists who use this bridge for a variety of reasons. Some reasons friends, family and acquaintances of mine use that bridge on a regular basis include commuting to work at the hospital (by bicycle, on foot, and by car parking at Lot M71, after which they need to walk across the bridge to get to work), scheduled outpatient appointments at the hospital, visiting inpatient family or friends in any of the hospital's wards, visiting the wonderful Nichols Arboretum, and of course travelling past the hospital complex to get to other places near the university. While I don't believe it's anyone's intention to increase hospital revenue by adding to the emergency visits, I can't help but wonder how many extra trauma patients will wind up in the ER because of this change. Increasing the distance one has to travel to cross the street is just one of the things that leads to more [deaths and injuries](#). Indeed, narrowing the street on this bridge and adding a refuge island for pedestrians and proper infrastructure for bicycles while providing only a minimal inconvenience for cars by detouring them along Glen Ave would not only improve the situation for emergency vehicles and the people depending on them, but also for the many people who use this bridge when walking, in their wheelchairs, on a bus, or biking.

Third, encouraging more car traffic on this bridge is contrary to both [the university's](#) and [the city's](#) sustainability goals. Not only is the best way to reduce car traffic to make it more convenient to use other modes of transport such as buses, bikes, scooters, and our own feet, but it's also one of the best ways to increase the [fuel efficiency](#) of transportation and [reduce greenhouse gas emissions](#). Expanding this bridge for cars is directly contrary to our environmental goals.

Finally, this is an accessibility nightmare. [The data shows](#) that people with disabilities are more likely than the general public to visit a hospital, [less likely to drive](#), and indeed less likely to live in a household where anyone owns a car. Given that people with disabilities make up a larger share of a hospital's patients than of the general public, it behooves all hospitals to ensure that they are extra welcoming to those with disabilities, including mobility-related ones. But this cannot simply stop at the hospital's doors. The hospital, and the university of Michigan as a whole, has a duty to lead, not follow, on accessibility, and the City of Ann Arbor should be doing the same.

Let's make Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan, and the hospital a better place to be by making it safer and more accessible to everyone - not just those in cars.

Thank you,

Alex