

Cespedes, Christopher

From: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 4:14 PM
To: Cespedes, Christopher
Subject: FW: Please do not add lanes & increase speeds on a city road

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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From: Kirk XXXXX XXXXX@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, January 23, 2023 1:24 AM
To: City Council <XXXXX@a2gov.org>
Cc: XXXXX XXXXX@a2gov.org; XXXXX, John XXXXX@a2gov.org; XXXXX Raymond XXXXX@a2gov.org; XXXXX XXXXX@a2gov.org; XXXXX XXXXX@umich.edu; XXXXX XXXXX@umich.edu; XXXXX XXXXX@umich.edu
Subject: Please do not add lanes & increase speeds on a city road

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Dear Council,

I'm frustrated by the process of how we got to this point in the EMCD bridge discussion and what is being considered tonight. The following questions come to mind:

- How is it that the city—which has adopted a commitment to Vision Zero (zero road deaths by 2025)—would arrive at doing the #1 thing that works against this goal on a city-owned project?
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- Are there any other circumstances where staff would recommend widening a road? Why is this being treated differently? A spirit of "collaboration" with UM? The attraction of saving a small fraction of our budget—at the expense of vulnerable road users?
- How is it that city staff's first instinct wasn't reducing car lanes on the bridge? Our Transportation Plan cites lane elimination as a key factor in improving road safety. Where do our plans contemplate widening a roadway for cars? (Especially a segment that sees less than 10,000 cars a day and a diet would not affect throughput whatsoever? Lane reconfigurations/road diets are recommended by the Federal Highway Administration because they reduce crashes by 19-47%. They have drastically reduced crashes and injuries on many city roads that carry much more volume than this. They save lives.)
- How many times do we have to hear, even from our own staff, that car speed is public enemy number one, and a wide road is a major cause of life-threatening speed?
- Would a Vision Zero practitioner ever sign off on this, regardless of tweaking a sidewalk width?

I drive and bike Fuller Road frequently. Some drivers exiting the medical campus already come across the bridge at an alarming rate of speed. I have had close calls with drivers who approach the intersection and turn too quickly. Widening the bridge will absolutely make these speeds worse, leading to higher-speed crashes and more injuries at the intersection. Yes, keeping the mouth of the intersection as-is is less-bad than widening that too. Likewise, an extra couple feet of sidewalk is better than less sidewalk. But I'm willing to bet that any engineer would be hard-pressed to

claim that the benefit of a slightly wider sidewalk even comes close to mitigating the increased danger of a significantly higher road design speed.

(What's even worse is that I recently learned that staff revealed designs contemplating additional lanes leading into the Fuller and Maiden Lane intersection, including slip lanes. This is likewise appalling: it will result in serious injury and must be stopped as well, even if UM is willing to pay for it.)

As you know, city council is solely responsible for setting policy and making certain that staff—via the City Administrator—carry out these policies. You recall that a former city council delayed lane reductions on Earhart and Green Roads, one of many bad decisions that angered a lot of residents. So I'm frustrated that this council would contemplate approving something that's worse than the already-dangerous status quo: *an actual road widening*.

In my view, the option in front of you was arrived at based on 1) the errant judgement of a different city council, 2) a series of staff decisions that ran counter to the city's adopted policies and plans, and 3) the assumption that a financial gift from UM should influence city council's commitment to safety for all road users. Therefore I think your decision now is to find out the actual costs and benefits of a redesign and to make a decision that you can fully stand behind, not something that sounds to me like "5% better than the absolute worst option."

In other words, whether you are new to the table or not, this is your decision on a city bridge—not a negotiation from the current unacceptable configuration, or a UM-driven project.

This issue can't get more black and white when it comes to road safety. While it appears to be a small project, I'm afraid that allowing this will also help legitimize even worse decisions in the future regarding the nearby intersection. Please don't make a road widening part of your legacy.

Sincerely,
Kirk XXXXX
XXXXX