

Hess, Raymond

Subject: FW: Capital Improvement Plan items in the South State Street area

From: Adam Goodman <XXXXXXXXXX >

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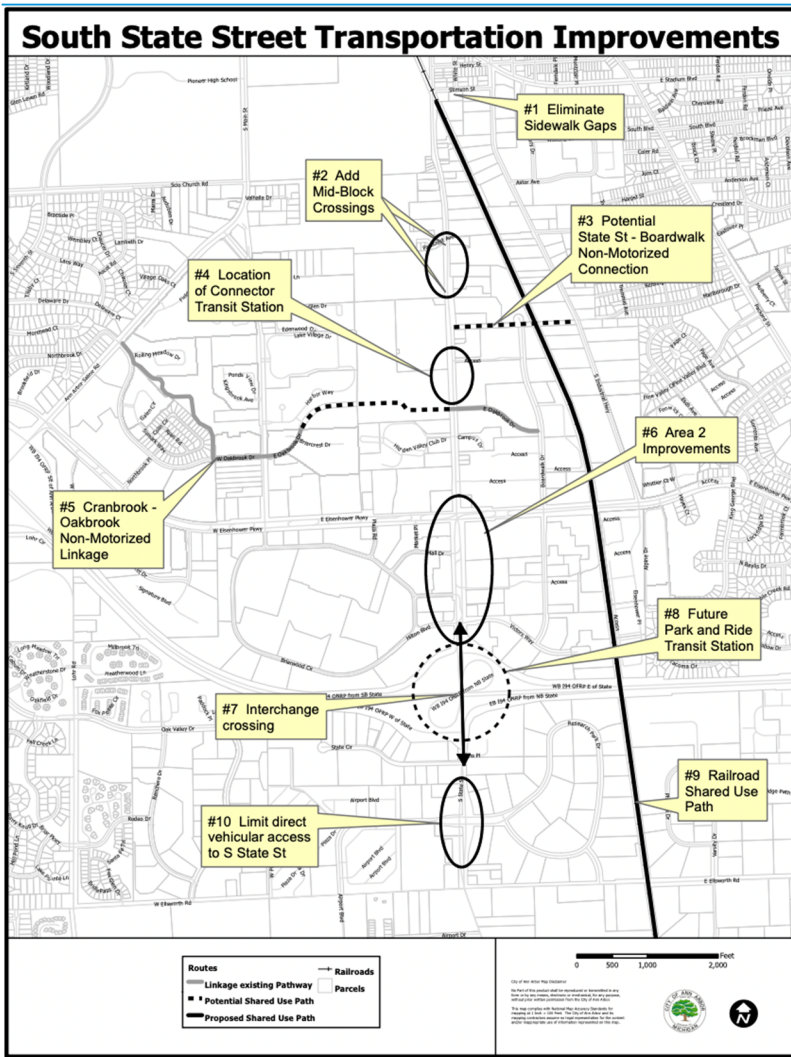
To: City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission <TransportationCommission@a2gov.org>; Briggs, Erica <XXXXXXXXXX >; molly kleinman <XXXXXXXXXX >

Subject: Capital Improvement Plan items in the South State Street area

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Hi all,

I watched last month's commission meeting with particular interest in the discussion about the Capital Improvements Plan and opportunities to improve non-motorized transportation infrastructure in the South State Street area. If the commission is interested in pursuing this approach (and I think it's a very logical and appropriate idea, given the new TC-1 zoning district) then I'd like to point to one specific item from the South State Street Corridor Plan (<https://www.a2gov.org/Documents/SSSC%20PLAN%20August%202013.pdf>) - building east-west connections between Main and State, and State and S. Industrial:



Specifically, item CM-7 identifies a possibility for building an east-west pathway between State and Industrial along an existing city-owned water main easement, and item LU-3 contemplates completing a connection between disparate segments of Oakbrook to connect State St. with Main St. (On the latter point, it may also be possible to work with UM to identify a connection through the soccer and tennis complexes. An informal route already exists, in fact.)

I wrote about this in my critique of the Treeline Master Plan earlier this year (<https://www.damnarbor.com/2022/01/opinion-why-i-dont-support-treeline.html>):

One great irony of the Treeline Master Plan is that earlier visions for the trail would actually have provided some benefit to areas of our community with significant non-motorized mobility challenges - specifically, the corridor south of Stadium, between Main St. and S. Industrial. As one example, the South State Street Corridor Plan from 2013 contemplated a non-motorized pathway along the railroad tracks extending under I-94 and all the way to the city limits at Ellsworth, as well as some potential east-west connections between Main and State, and between State and S. Industrial.

These connections would represent a massive improvement to non-motorized mobility in this area of town. Between the railroad tracks and the University of Michigan's closed-off athletic campus, getting around (or through) this part of town is currently quite challenging. Bicyclists or pedestrians heading east or west must travel all the way north to Stadium or south to Eisenhower (neither of which has particularly comfortable or safe bike lanes). There are better options for north/south travel - e.g. the new bike lanes on S. Industrial - but none of them would count as a low-stress / all-ages-and-abilities route.

Even if we were to e.g significantly improve the bicycle and pedestrian experience along Eisenhower, the problem is simply one of distance. Let's say somebody living in the vicinity of Rosewood or Jewett (east of S. Industrial), wanted to go pick up some groceries. "As the crow flies", Busch's on S. Main is less than a mile away. However, routing south to Eisenhower makes it a 2.5 mile excursion! That kind of added distance makes a world of difference in deciding whether biking or walking is convenient, or not.

Having more east-west connections through this area of town is essential if we want to encourage biking and walking as serious modes of transportation. Looking back, I'm disappointed that these connections were not identified and included in the comprehensive transportation plan adopted last year, even though they were present in prior planning documents. If it is feasible to do so, I believe this is an oversight that should be corrected.

As always, thanks for all the good work y'all do!

- Adam