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May 14, 2020

Councilmember Chris Tolbert
310-C City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd., West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Councilmember Mitra Jalali
310-D City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd., West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Councilmembers Tolbert and Nelson:

On April 14th, the Board of Directors of the Macalester-Groveland Community Council ("MGCC") held a public meeting, at which it considered a recommendation from its standing Transportation committee.

After discussion, the Board of the MGCC passed the following resolution as recommended by the Transportation committee of the MGCC:

"Whereas the St. Paul 2040 Plan consists of statements relating to developing nodes within walking distance (Policy LU #30) and "Vision Zero" program to achieve zero traffic fatalities and severe injuries (Policy T-5);

Whereas the St Paul Pedestrian Plan calls for "sparking a culture shift" to make St. Paul a safe and appealing place to walk, while also referencing "maximizing impact within existing capital investments," and pursuing low-cost and creative solutions (pg. 16);

Whereas the St Paul Pedestrian Plan calls for making walking safe for everyone" through a strategy of prioritizing pedestrian safety in street design (pg. 15);

Whereas common sense and federal DOT government documents such as the Resident's Guide for Creating Safer Communities for Walking and Biking state that a traffic signal is "A visual signal to control the flow of traffic. Pedestrian signals let pedestrians know when they can enter the street to start crossing;"

Whereas drivers are trained to watch for lights and signals, so at traffic lights with pedestrian crossings when the light is green but the pedestrian light is "Don't walk," is confusing to both drivers and pedestrians;

Whereas consistency around the metro area (including LPis) helps train pedestrians to cross with the signal and drivers to always look for pedestrians;

Therefore, be it resolved that MGCC requests the City of St. Paul re-examine the policy of unsynchronized pedestrian and driver traffic signals and synchronize the signals to help meet the current 2040 foci goals of safety, walkability, resiliency, and low-cost."

This resolution was passed with the following considerations:

- The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the need for synchronized pedestrian and driver traffic signals in order to eliminate the need for contact with pedestrian signal buttons.
- The potential cost saving benefits of removing necessary future maintenance on pedestrian signal buttons.
- The importance of consistency in signaling behavior between neighboring municipalities, such as Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Minneapolis has [recently reduced the need for pedestrians to push a button to get a walk signal](#).

In order to facilitate further conversation with city staff and address the issues laid out in the resolution above, the Transportation Committee has requested a working session with traffic signal staff in the Department of Public Works.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Alexa Golemo
Executive Director
Macalester-Groveland Community Council

cc (via email): Paul Kurtz, Interim Public Works Director & City Engineer
Randy Newton, City Traffic Engineer, Department of Public Works