

Following is a compendium of comments received via email following publication of the public hearing notice for the Minnesota River Valley Strategic Plan (MRVSP). The public hearing notice was published on December 4, 2015. The vast majority of comments relate to the State Trail project.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a Twin Cities resident, concerned environmentalist, and avid cyclist about the issues I foresee with the plan to create a paved trail running adjacent to the unpaved single track trail along the Mississippi River bottoms. Being that these flood plains are a sensitive and important environment for Minnesota wildlife and a rare area where urban residents can immerse themselves in nature that is virtually untouched by the concrete jungle surrounding us, I am opposed to the construction of a paved path along the river. While I understand the desire to make nature more accessible to all types of people, this plan is not only a waste of money (due to the fact that the path will likely be flooded often and require constant upkeep), but also an unnecessary step in the continued taming of nature.

I ask you to take all this into consideration before clear cutting a large portion of sensitive ecology in the name of "progress," and urge you to realize that some places are meant to be kept wild. One local example is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, which I frequent. Would it be fair to ruin the experience of avid anglers and canoeists who think of the BWCA as their second home in the name of "progress"? I think not. That's why portages are kept natural and discreet and why motorized boats aren't allowed on most lakes. In the name of environmentalism and preservation of natural landscapes, I hope you reconsider your plans to pave the River bottoms.

Thanks for your time,

Renee Hoppe
Marketing Specialist
Soul Flower Eco-Friendly Clothing

My family and myself have been mountain bike riding and walking on the MN River trail for 20 plus years. This is one of the most beautiful trails in MN. Large trees, creeks, swamps and the river.

Please do not put a paved trail in this area.

Not sure why anyone would either. This area floods almost every year. Many areas are under water by 2 to 3ft. Not sure how a paved trail would make it.

This trail is also used in the winter by thousands.

Mike Anderson

I've been riding the river bottoms since 1994, because it's one of the few places, in the metro area, that feels "wild".

I love that the river floods and has its way with the landscape. It's an ever-changing trail system, and it keeps trail traffic relatively low. That's good for trail users and the critters that live in the area.

You have to know, in your hearts, that the choice to put in a paved trail is foolish, at best, for all the reasons that have been cited on the various forums discussing this issue.

I just thought I'd write to ask you to reconsider the plan and let logic prevail, before the environment is damaged and (more) money is wasted on this ego-driven boondoggle.

Thanks for the consideration.

Dave Gray

Dear Council Members,

I am a frequent user of the river bottoms trail, especially the section between Lyndale and Bloomington Ferry Road. Using the trail as part of my commute is the perfect way to prepare for a day at work and/or unwind from a hard day. On occasion I take the paved trail through Hyland Park Reserve as a different route option. That paved trail is nice in its' own right, but pales in comparison to the natural beauty and feeling of escape that the river trail offers. I think it truly is a gem that the Twin Cities has to offer and putting a paved trail down there will detract from the beauty and wild feeling. Altering the landscape down there will also have a negative impact on the ecosystem and natural environment.

In addition, and I am sure you have heard this more than you would like, the trail exists on a flood plain. 2 summers ago the water was as high as the swing bridge as far into the summer as June. The changes I saw once the water receded were amazing, but showed the immense power those floods possess. Any sort of paved trail would have been destroyed. Let's use the 12 million big ones to make an impact on the community that will be lasting and not require constant maintenance. Maybe some of the money could go towards creating a network of walking trails near the trail heads found along the current trail that exists. Also bathrooms and modern amenities could be added at these trailheads.

Thanks for your time and I hope you will take my wishes and those of many other users of the trail to heart.

Ben Jungbauer

Enginerd

As a supporter of fiscal responsibility and conservation, the proposal for a paved trail down a 100' clear-cut corridor in a flood plain at the cost of millions of dollars is a horribly irresponsible plan and should be voted down. Please do NOT support the plan to put a paved trail in the Minnesota River Valley between the Bloomington Ferry Bridge and the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge.

Respectfully,

Steve Gunther
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Bloomington City Council,

I'm writing to you to urge you not to build a paved trail in the Minnesota River Bottoms. I'm a Minneapolis resident, but this past summer and fall I have been introduced to biking on the current natural surface trail, and it's an experience I hope to repeat many times in summers to come. The Bloomington City Council should not approve a paved trail in the river bottoms for the following reasons:

1. A paved trail would be environmentally damaging. Building a paved trail would require removing acres of trees from the river bottoms, removing critical habitat for bald eagles, songbirds, white tailed deer and many other animals that make visiting the river bottoms so special now. Further, these trees are critical for preventing erosion and for holding the soil of the river bottoms in place. I was befuddled when I first learned that a paved trail was proposed in this wonderful, relatively undisturbed piece of urban nature. Why on earth would the DNR want to spend millions of dollars installing a paved trail when there are other paved, accessible trails nearby at Hyland Lake Park and Bush Lake Park? Doesn't this proposal run counter to the environmental stewardship the DNR purportedly stands for?

2. A paved trail would be economically unsustainable. The proposed paved trail would cost more than \$2 million dollars to build. Yet, the ground on which the proposed trail would be built floods at least every other year, simultaneously undermining the ground on which the pavement sits and piling feet of sediment and debris on top of the trail. The current natural surface trail is maintained by volunteers. A natural surface trail would be costly to maintain, and given the MN DNR's \$10 million maintenance deficit, these costs would either be paid for by Bloomington taxpayers or the trail would be ruined for lack of maintenance.

3. A paved trail would spoil the existing natural surface trail. In many areas of the river bottoms, there is not sufficient room for the existing natural surface trail and a paved trail to co-exist. Even where there is room for both trails to co-exist, the damage that a paved trail would do to the natural environment would be highly visible from the natural surface trail. The primary reason that the current trail is so great, and why it attracts so many hikers and mountainbikers, is that it runs through an unspoiled natural environment, largely free from artifacts of human development. A paved trail would ruin that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Emily Houser
[REDACTED]

Emily Houser
Program Educator
Midwest Food Connection
[REDACTED]

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a Bloomington resident and live 1 mile from the river trail off of auto club road. This is a wonderful, serene area that my family and I love! It is nice because you can ride/run/walk across the bridge on the paved trail or you can go on the single track dirt trail. We also love the use of Hyland Park for the wonderful paved trails. Being able to run and bike on the single-track dirt trail is amazing! I can appreciate the want to put pavement down there, but I feel there are so many trails throughout the city. It seems more years than not, we have a lot of flooding down near the river and usually are not able to run on the single track. If pavement is indeed is put down there, it will likely ruin after a view years and have to be redone more often than not. I think fiscally this may not be the most responsible use of money. Not to mention, the amount of natural environment that will be ruined with the big machines that will be needed to create the paved trail. I would ask that this be reconsidered. Please preserve the natural beauty that is so rare in today's world. Thank you for your time.

Julie Oerther

Sales Rep

Minnesota/Dakotas

Hello City Council,

I'd like to express my opposition to putting a paved bicycle trail along the river bottom. I do, however, support having a natural trail. If changes should be made I would prefer to see new restrooms, bridges, culverts and/or improvements to the existing trail. Please don't bring in equipment to put in a paved trail "alongside" the existing one.

There are currently orders of magnitude more paved places riders can enjoy than unpaved. Please don't pollute one of the few places for off-road trail riding an an attempt to produce more paved trails.

In addition to being the "right thing to do" for off-road trail riders and nature enthusiasts, leaving the trail as-is is also the fiscally responsible thing to do. In a flood plain the proposed paved trail would be a continuous financial cost. If you feel compelled to create a new paved trail, put it somewhere else so it can be used without costing so much to maintain (and at the same time leaving the existing trail natural).

Thanks for hearing my voice
Jason Titus
off-road biker/runner, hiker, and general nature enthusiast

Hello,

Regarding the river bottoms, I would just like to let it be known that building a black top trail, with a clear-cut corridor in a flood plain, at the cost of millions of dollars, is a horribly irresponsible plan and should be voted down.

Thanks,
Rich Wiitala

Council,

I just received this email below from one of my biking friends. My group enjoys all the paved and unpaved trails in the Metro and around the State and most of the trails are well thought out, practical and are multi-use trails. This paved trail along the River bottom just doesn't make sense in many different ways.

I am a resident of Minnetonka and not Bloomington but if I were a resident of the latter I would be hopping mad about spending money on this trail. As a citizen at large with just plain, old common sense, I want to preserve more natural and green spaces in Minnesota - and everywhere in the world, for that matter - so I think a paved trail along the River bottom would be ecologically unsound and financially impractical due to the high frequency of flooding along the River.

Thanks for reading this!

Mike Mehle

██████████

Hello!

I understand you're looking for feedback about the proposed plan for a paved trail in the Minnesota River Valley. I do not support the plan for a paved trail for many reasons. This beautifully natural and wild area will be destroyed when trees and plant life are uprooted, toxic bituminous material is introduced, and wildlife is disturbed.

I absolutely support ideas to give all residents access to this wonderful area, but I believe it can be done in a more sustainable way that doesn't compromise the very things that make this environment special.

Thank you,
Molly-Jo Smith

██████████

Bloomington City Council Members,

I've been a lifelong user of the Minnesota River Bottoms Trail in Bloomington, MN. I now reside in St. Louis Park but regularly use these trails for mountain biking...and I have since the '80s. I grew up in east Bloomington attending Riverside Elementary, Oak Grove Middle School, and then Kennedy High School. While schools changed, one constant was the access to and use of the River Bottoms trail which changed both seasonally and year to year based on weather conditions and flooding. While not necessarily the most physically challenging trail, nature would offer new twists and turns once things dried out each spring.

These trails have been long-enjoyed by non-cyclists for decades - hikers, runners, birders, ne'erdo well kids (I being one of them!), etc. Before diving into the build costs, contamination impact, unavoidable &

costly maintenance, etc. I think it is important to focus on the defined lack of "need" to lay down a semi-permanent tread surface in the area. Once the Old Cedar Bridge is refinished, there would be a clear path from St. Paul to West Bloomington along the Minnesota River that is perfectly enjoyable as-is by nearly all trail users. For those users who truly need a hard surface to travel on, plenty of trail already exists in similar and adjacent settings. The perceived or purported "benefit" of incremental hard surface mileage would be exponentially offset by the aforementioned and obvious negatives of build costs, contamination, and ongoing maintenance.

If capital is going to be invested in any semi-permanent upgrades I would suggest the following:

- Improved facilities at the Lyndale and Ferry Bridge lots - restrooms, drinking water/wells, picnic tables, grills, changing rooms, etc. Look at what Dakota County has done at Lebanon Hills as an example.
- A more permanent crossing of 9 Mile Creek - e.g. an elevated bridge structure with permanent posts and adjustable approaches on either side that can be modified seasonally as needed based on flood impact
- Put the balance of any committed capital into a sinking fund or similar to support the above as well as any future emergency and/or material maintenance needs to be completed by governmental agencies and/or approved third-parties such as Minnesota Off Road Cyclists (MORC) and other trail advocacy groups whose constituents have a regular presence in the River Bottoms for both recreation and support/trail work.

The River Bottoms are a unique jewel in the Twin Cities' recreational portfolio. The suggestion that we should clear cut any swath of land to lay down a blacktop trail is as disheartening as it is misguided and lacking in fiduciary responsibility.

There are simple and straightforward projects that could materially improve the user experience along the River Bottoms but more blacktop and fewer trees are not among them. Please Vote No and keep the River Bottoms natural.

Respectfully,
Sean Epp
Lifetime River Bottoms User
Kennedy '91
St. Louis Park, MN

Dear Members of the Bloomington City Council,

I'm writing to you to urge you not to build a paved trail in the Minnesota River Bottoms. I'm a Minneapolis resident, but I use the current natural surface trail multiple times per month, year round. The Bloomington City Council should not approve a paved trail in the river bottoms for the following reasons:

1. A paved trail would be economically unsustainable. The proposed paved trail would cost more than \$2 million dollars to build. Yet, the ground on which the proposed trail would be built floods at least every other year, simultaneously undermining the ground on which the pavement sits and piling feet of sediment and debris on top of the trail. The current natural surface trail is maintained by volunteers. A natural surface trail would be costly to maintain, and given the MN DNR's \$10 million maintenance deficit, these costs would either be paid for by Bloomington taxpayers or the trail be ruined for lack of maintenance.

2. A paved trail would be environmentally damaging. Building a paved trail would require removing acres of trees from the river bottoms, removing critical habitat for bald eagles, songbirds, white tailed

deer and many other animals that make visiting the river bottoms so special now. Further, these trees are critical for preventing erosion and for holding the soil of the river bottoms in place.

3. A paved trail would spoil the existing natural surface trail. In many areas of the river bottoms, there is not sufficient room for the existing natural surface trail and a paved trail to co-exist. Even where there is room for both trails to co-exist, the damage that a paved trail would do to the natural environment would be highly visible from the natural surface trail. The primary reason that the current trail is so great, and why it attracts so many hikers and mountainbikers, is that it runs through an unspoiled natural environment, largely free from artifacts of human development. A paved trail would ruin that.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Robert Hest

Master of Public Policy Candidate, 2017
Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Hello:

The proposed paved trail between the Bloomington Ferry Bridge and the Old Cedar Ave Bridge would be a complete disaster. First, it would destroy a beautiful and unique natural area that thousands of people cherish. This is one of the few places in the metro area where one can go to enjoy a natural setting of this caliber. Second, this would be a financial disaster. There is not enough funding to maintain such a trail, particularly given the fact that it would be located in a flood plain. The trail would soon fall into decay and disrepair, and would be a blight on this natural area as well as a major drain on the taxpayers.

Please do not be short-sighted. Some things cannot be improved upon.

Save the River Bottoms.

Sincerely,

Erik Beitzel

Hi,

Before voting on the MVSP, I encourage you all to visit the area, and see first hand the natural resource within our city. Last time I visited on Nov 28 and 29, all the parking spaces at the Ferry Bridge Trailhead were occupied, it's that popular.

I am against an urban bike corridor in the river valley. Nearby Hyland Park offers miles of bike trails.

We have existing east-west bike corridors, as city streets have been reconfigured with bike lanes.

I encourage you to enhance access for the disabled along the existing Nine Mile Creek path between Moir Park and the Minnesota River.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Tim Vitters

[REDACTED]
Bloomington, MN [REDACTED]

To Whom It May Concern -

Every route I follow to get into and out of the trails that encapsulate the Riverbottoms involves a steep, long hill. In each case, they're hills that seem eager to rocket me in, and reluctant to let me out. If this is indeed the case, I can assure those hills that I don't need any convincing about their intent; I want to get down there and stay just as bad as they want me to.

Whatever you're shouldering before dropping into The Riverbottoms lifts off and stays at street level, with the people, cars, and buildings, and the mediocrity and modernity that goes with it all. It's like having a collapsed lung become operational again, or regaining 20/20 vision after being blind. The Riverbottoms, for me, serve as an open air, all natural ER. Atypical wounds get treated and heal there. I know I'm not the only person that feels this way.

The Riverbottoms are unique, and something that make the Twin Cities different than many other densely populated regions I've visited. Although you may encounter bikers, runners, walkers, birders, and general gadabouts down there, there always exists, in every excursion, an opportunity to be quietly alone. Planes fly overhead, boats and barges float by on the river, and bridges drain down the deafening drone of highway traffic, but that is all relatively fleeting and easy to escape. Untouched beauty is everywhere along The Riverbottoms. If you've never gone there to witness it, you absolutely should.

While Minneapolis is indeed able to boast its "bestness" and continually squabble with cities like Portland and Boulder over superiority in bicycle friendliness, I really couldn't care less about any of that. Like any city, there is no shortage of drivers with bloodlust that are egged on by a mass populous that seems hell bent on a cyclist holocaust. And sure we have a massive network of bike paths, but if your thing is dodging out of control recumbents and over-turned baby trailers while "patheletes" with hands tied up on aerobars, far away from the safety of brake levers, scream "ON YOUR LEFT", have at it. I can't think of a better way to make driving a car sound like a better option. These are non-issues on The Riverbottoms.

There are times, however, throughout any year that travel through The Riverbottoms must be earned if it isn't straight up denied. Getting into that pickle is due to flooding, the evidence of which is everywhere down there. For those of us who retreat to the area, that is part of the charm - that The Riverbottoms are restless and in a constant state of change. They're not tidy and organized, and your needs might not be their primary concern.

I feel it's safe to speak for all of us, though - us being the riders who, for over more than two decades, have been relishing the solitude and celebrating the grandeur of The Riverbottoms - when I say we're not asking for riding down there to be easier. Use the almost 100 miles of paved bike paths in just Minneapolis alone for the kind of "easy" riding I mentioned earlier.

Currently, there seems to be a merciless push from some to put a paved trail through The Riverbottoms. That this is even on the table is inconceivable based solely on the fact that **The Riverbottoms flow through what is unquestionably, a flood plain.** At some point, whatever is put through there will be damaged. It will cost millions to build a trail in the first place, and it will continually cost to repair it.

It is unclear how many taxpaying residents in Bloomington even know of the trails, let alone that they'll be contributing to their construction, and in the future, their repair. Do they want a trail? I'm not sure. Have you read the comments in the newspapers when an article about more access for bicycles is written? Are the riders that this trail would be built for really there in large enough numbers to make ruining the area "worthwhile"? I'm not sure about that either. At a previous City Council Meeting, though, it was revealed that no study about the current user group has ever been done. Maybe the people that this trail is so important to don't care or even want to know. Are they part of this future group of riders that will be using the paved path? It doesn't seem likely as far as I can tell, but again, that's just speculation. There are a lot of unanswered questions.

I sure would like answers to all of these questions. They're hard to come by. I'd like assurance that every possible outcome of this proposed project has been thoroughly vetted and that going forward with it is an all around win for cycling and non-cycling taxpayers, and the land, river, and wildlife. I think that's fair.

This request isn't coming from one selfish person who is whining about his playground being threatened. As much as I, my loved ones, and the countless others who I see enjoying the area in its natural state want The Riverbottoms to remain as they are, this is also about full disclosure, consideration of everyone, and bringing attention to what it costs when a handful of people in power think that their agenda deserves a free pass simply because they're in power, and they believe that what they want is best for everyone. All I'm asking, before a shovel hits the dirt, is that putting a paved path through The Riverbottoms is given some honest thoughts, and the results of those thoughts are available for all to see.

I'd also suggest that the people in charge of this proposed path look north to the city of Duluth and ask if supporting mountain biking has been good for that city. Cycling infrastructure and the encouragement of healthy activities doesn't automatically require asphalt.

Thanks for reading,

Mark Sirek

Dear Blooming city council,

I ask that you reconsider the proposal to build a paved bike path along the MN River. Though I am not a Bloomington resident, I use the current trail all the time. It's beautiful. To have that wilderness oasis in the middle of our huge metropolitan area is a special privilege. I do not object to paved bike trails; I ride them all the time too. But not there along the river. Developing that area and removing the trees would substantially detract from its current beauty. And it's a flood plain. Each spring there are extended periods when I cannot ride there because of high water. A paved trail would require substantial maintenance. Don't do it!

Sincerely,

Mark D Seaburg

Hopkins, MN

I am opposed to a paved trail for several reasons. This trail is a great intermediate off-road trail. Due to continual flooding of the area a paved trail would require a lot of repair and maintenance

not to mention the initial cost of construction. This would be a huge waste of resources and would degrade the charm and history of the trail system there.

Dear Bloomington City Council Members,

As a resident of Bloomington and a regular user of the Minnesota River I would like to state my opposition to the plan for a developed trail system.

I'm advocating for the river bottom to remain an undeveloped wilderness area, the river bottom is one of the few remaining places of its kind and should be preserved as such. I find it remarkable this area still exists in a city the size of Bloomington. There are multiple options in the area for users looking for scenic parks with paved/managed trails. These include Hyland park reserve, the Moir park area, Lake Normandale, the City of Minneapolis lakes and Crosby Farm regional park in St Paul, just to name a few. The river bottom area in Bloomington is special because it doesn't have a developed trail system, yet there's plenty of access for anybody who wants to enjoy the beauty this area has to offer.

I have seen Representative Lenczewski's reasoning behind the proposed trail system, in part citing, the aging population of the city. This reasoning is short sighted as the demographics will change over time, what today is an aging population will be a younger population in the future. It is much more important to protect this area, keeping it undeveloped, for future generations to experience.

The river bottom has remained mostly unchanged in my lifetime and offers a truly unique experience for those who hike and bike the area. Development of a managed trail system will irreparably harm this natural wonder and gem of our city.

Sincerely,
Todd Lynch

Dear Bloomington City Council,

I just read this article: <http://www.startribune.com/decision-not-to-plow-the-gateway-trail-is-drawing-fire/361155451/> If the MN DNR does not have money to plow one of the busiest trails in MN. How does it have money to build, maintain or plow the proposed paved trail on the Minnesota river floor plain.

Please read the article, step back and ask yourself if the city of Bloomington could use the money they would spend on paving a trail on the floor plain to improving infrastructure or better outfitting our Police or Fire Departments.

Please vote, "No" on the 17th.
Thanks,

Ryan Heidcamp
A city of Bloomington Resident

I am emailing you to please vote "no" to the Minnesota River Valley Strategic Plan. Adding pavement to a natural setting seems like an unnecessary expense and one that could become more costly over time for upkeep.

Anessa Matthews
Bloomington resident

Hello,

I've never written to a city before, I apologize if I've selected the wrong email.

I just wanted to send a note urging the City Council to vote "no" on the Minnesota River Valley Strategic Plan on December 17th.

I'm sure you've already received emails on this matter, and many have hopefully shared their concerns. I just want to add myself to the list, and remind everyone involved of the impact of such a paved trail. Flooding! Oh boy.. does that area flood. That provides a serious amount of maintenance challenges (\$\$) on it's own.

Loss of character (and natural vegetation, those poor trees!). I love the River Bottoms trail, it is my **all time favorite trail** in the entire Twin Cities area! If it's paved, I'm out, I'll never use it again. I don't say that as a threat, I say it as a person that bikes daily and spends a lot of time on bike trails that prefers real trails over paved trails. I'm not driving 30 minutes to use the paved trail in the River Bottoms, there are plenty of paved trails already throughout the city.. there is a paved trail 50 feet from my front door! Wasteful spending of city money.

No demonstrated need. This is the big one! Nobody that uses this area and trail supports this.. that should speak volumes as to what your people want!

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

Jess

Hello,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about spending millions of dollars on paving a trail through a flood plain that is constantly changing on a year to year basis.

The river bottoms trail is a beautiful part of Bloomington and the surrounding communities as is. My family, friends and myself all love going there to bike and hike on the natural trail and love being in the outdoors.

Please reconsider and do not pave the river bottoms. It is fiscally irresponsible and it would ruin the trail for thousands of current bikers, hikers, bird watchers and nature seekers at the expense of tax payers. We already travel to Bloomington to use the trail. After using the trail we spend our money at establishments and restaurants in Bloomington. The natural trail is already bringing thousands of users from out of town. On the weekends the trail is bustling with activity.

Thank you for your time,
Concerned natural trail user

Thank you for your time.

Mr. Mayor and Council Member Carlson,

I am writing once again to share my concerns about paving the MN River Valley Trail. I am attaching an article that was in the Star and Tribune today. The DNR is not going to plow the Gateway trail anymore.

The Gateway Trail differs from the MN River Valley Trail in that it is NOT in a flood plain. The DNR does not have the funding, or the resources, to plow the paved Gateway trail. How will the DNR have the money to maintain a trail in a flood plain if they can't even secure the funding to plow it? Is the city of Bloomington going to pick up the cost? And at whose expense?

<http://www.startribune.com/decision-not-to-plow-the-gateway-trail-is-drawing-fire/361155451/>

I am also attaching the photos with descriptions again. They are all basically, before and afters (3 weeks after average flood).

Leaving the MN River Valley Trail in its natural state is the only fiscally responsible option.

Thank you for your time and I will be at the Dec. 17th meeting,
Stephanie Johnson

Bloomington City Council,

It is my understanding that you will be voting on paving the Minnesota River Bottoms trail at your City Council meeting next week. As a frequent user of the natural trail system for the past 18 years, I urge you to vote against paving the trail. I am an Eden Prairie resident who enjoys the River Bottoms year round. I am not an environmental engineer but bringing thousands of tons of oil based asphalt and cutting down thousands of trees will likely have a negative effect on what has been a wonderfully natural outdoor recreation area.

Thanks for considering a "no" vote.

Joe

Minneapolis, MN

Please Vote 'No' to the Minnesota River Valley Strategic Plan on December 17th. This is a well-loved trail in its natural state--do not turn it into a paved cycling "highway" along what is clearly a floodplain. It's really a senseless use of millions of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kaycee Reynolds

To whom it may concern,

It's no secret that the debate of paving the river bottoms is an heated one. Paved trails are nice. As an avid cyclist, I can in part see how paving the river bottoms is a help to the community. As an avid cyclist, it crushes my heart to think that the river bottoms may get paved.

Have you been out there? To take in the natural beauty it has to offer? Rumors of two trails is in the air- but riding down there frequently, it's hard to see how to make two trails. There isn't enough room. And what about the flooding? I ride along HWY 61 often. A section of it gets washed out EVERY year. Then the city closes the trail. Then the repair comes. Then it washes out AGAIN. Who is paying for all of this? Not paving the river bottoms would allow full year access without the need for the trail to be closed "due to washout repair" It'll save the city and the tax payers a ton of money. It'll save the beauty of river bottoms.

There are hundreds of paved trails for people to enjoy. Leave this one be, please.

Thank-you for you time.

Alicia