

From: Stephen Harm <steveharmuk@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2025 8:07 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Find a better compromise to 3rd/4th St Bike Lanes

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Council Members,

As a downtown building owner for over 30 years, I have watched a lot of changes in the downtown happen, some because they were needed, some because overzealous people pushed them through.

As someone who not only owns a downtown building but who works downtown at the LCC, I drive down 2nd Street every day. I have leased a parking spot in the Jay Street ramp for many of my years downtown, and I also street park, and park in the Riverside Ramp near the LCC when I work.

Adding the "bike lanes" (a term which sounds minor but in reality took up a significant amount of the street width and parking) to 2nd Street seemed like a poor idea from the start. Almost every time I drive down 2nd I see confused drivers driving their cars in the bike lanes (!) because it is so wide that it looks like an access lane for Radisson, 4 Sisters, etc. and a very small amount of bike traffic. Then from Nov-March its virtually no bikes, and the occasional confused car/truck.

Meanwhile in exchange for modifying this vehicular street into 1/3-1/4 bike lanes, most of the truck traffic seems to have switched from this extremely narrowed 2nd St to 4th Street, right through the heart of the historic district, past 140 year old brick buildings. The increase in heavy truck traffic is no doubt causing damage to these buildings, as the fully loaded trucks hit sewer covers and potholes, bouncing, loads tipping, shaking the buildings. Shifting those trucks from 2nd street, where almost none of the buildings are historic and the majority of the street is fronted by parking lots and new-build, to 3rd and 4th St, where the street goes right past the front doors of several blocks of historic architecture, was a poor idea. The heavy traffic is not only damaging buildings, it makes traversing the downtown more challenging for pedestrians.

I think adding a bike lane would be even worse than the increased truck traffic in the big picture. Here on 4th & Pearl, when the sidewalks were bricked, the handicapped parking spot across the street mysteriously disappeared. No handicap parking on either block of Pearl. Or Jay. Or Main. That makes doing business on Pearl difficult for older people, and collectively we have an aging population. I think this happened with handicap parking on other streets downtown as well.

Heavier truck traffic, no handicap parking... and now the idea is to take away half of the street parking, with the goal of helping people who want to come downtown, because they'll be riding bikes? With again, an aging population?

It seems like a very simplistic way to "solve" bike traffic, just throwing bike lanes on the 2 busiest arteries through the downtown, and then say its no big deal because there is "too much open parking in the ramps". Talk to any business owner downtown, especially in the cold months of Nov-Mar, about how important street parking is and how their customers do not want to walk from the 3rd floor of a ramp to get a lightbulb at Kroners, or to get a coffee at Jules, etc. Without street parking they'll just drive to Menards

and park in front, then go to Dunkin Donuts next door for the coffee without having to leave their car, while the business owners downtown get to watch zero bikes pull up to their businesses in the Winter months.

It just seems like a poorly thought out "solution". Perhaps getting the yes/no vote from the building owners along 3rd and 4th, and the business owners as well would give better direction.

Getting rid of half the parking on 3rd and 4th Streets should, at the very least if it has to happen, also be paired with banning (or seriously reducing) trucks on those streets in favor of West Avenue et al. That would help the bike situation downtown—semis side by side on 3rd and 4th run very close to each other and the parked cars.

I think there should be a lot more thought put into this to find a logical compromise, plus elimination of the claim that this is "forward thinking" or that we have 3000 "surplus" parking spaces. We do NOT have 3000 **convenient** parking spaces, but we do have convenient parking spaces already being used all day and night, 365, on 3rd and 4th, that this plan eliminates.

My two cents. Thanks for the read.

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