

April 7, 2025

**delivered electronically*

Dear Chair Xiong and Senate Committee on State and Local Government Members:

We are writing to share perspective on SF 2162 (Dibble) on behalf of the City of Rochester. Rochester has a commitment to complete streets, active transportation, bridge replacement, and street reconstruction, in addition to facing major financial constraints due to the cost of maintaining and repairing the city's network of streets.

The bill could provide positive opportunities for upcoming projects in the City of Rochester to further council adopted goals related to pedestrian safety, safe routes to school, and alternative transportation identified in the city's Active Transportation Plan and strategic priorities. The City adopted an Active Transportation Plan in 2022 which includes various opportunities for multi-modal infrastructure that would transform active transportation into a primary mode of daily transportation for residents and visitors.

Although the city was not involved in the drafting of the bill, the potential outcomes of the legislation appear to align with the city council's adopted legislative priorities of support for "MNDOT programs such as Safe Routes to School and Transportation Alternatives that align with the city's active transportation plan, complete streets policy, and comprehensive plan."

For example, this bill would directly impact the design of the upcoming 6th Street Bridge, Roadway Safety, and Riverfront Improvement Project. The city streets involved in that project are State Aid routes and thus we are currently bound to follow the MnDOT state aid design standards. The state aid design standards for bicycle facilities were written into the Minnesota administrative code in 2017. MnDOT published a new bicycle facility design manual in October 2024, yet on 6th Street, the eight year old state aid standards apply instead of MnDOT's current manual which promotes national best practices. The same issue has come up surrounding the use of raised crosswalks for traffic calming in multiple areas. MnDOT is utilizing them on their own trunk highway project in Rochester while a design exception must be granted by State Aid to consider using them on State Aid Routes.

Funding for safe, viable, and convenient transportation options, including active transportation options, and networks could offer more appealing alternatives to single occupancy vehicle use and help meet citywide greenhouse gas reduction and vehicle miles traveled reduction targets, in addition to reducing housing and transportation cost burdens.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Minnesota,

Kim Norton
Mayor
KNorton@rochestermn.govRandy Schubring
Council President
RSchubring@rochestermn.govAlison Zelms
City Administrator
azelms@rochestermn.gov