

Chad and Andrea Schwinghammer
5513 Valley Lane
Edina, MN 55439

February 14, 2009

Edina City Council

Mayor James Hovland
Council Member Joni Bennett
Council Member Mary Brindle
Council Member Scot Housh
Council Member Ann Swenson
Edina City Hall, 4801 W. 50th Street, Edina, MN 55424

Dear Council Members:

My wife and I chose this home to raise our two sons in part because of the wonderful stretch of Nine Mile Creek that runs behind our home. It is a natural habitat for a number of birds and animals, and we enjoy the quiet privacy that is provided by living along the creek. We were therefore devastated to see the news that there are plans to put a bike path along Nine Mile Creek, directly behind our home. Our concerns motivated me to attend the open house on Wednesday, February 11th to learn more about the proposed route and design of the bike path. Sadly, the feedback I received at the open house served only to elevate my strong opposition to the bike path route.

We have a number of serious concerns regarding the proposed bike path along Nine Mile Creek:

1. Safety and Security: Valley Lane is a very busy street with car and pedestrian traffic throughout the day. Due to the traffic and the constant presence of strangers passing by our home on the busy sidewalk, we ask our sons to play in the privacy of the back yard. Putting a bike path along the Creek eliminates any place in our own yard where our kids can feel safe. Kelly Grissman (of the Three Rivers Park District) responded to those of us expressing concern about crime and personal safety by suggesting that we "build a fence". We chose this neighborhood because we didn't need to build a fence. Her response is an admission that the trail will negatively impact the safety and security of the local residents.

I was made aware of another safety concern at the open house. When completed, the proposed trail will be connected to the Three Rivers Park District's regional trail network, which currently has more than 90 miles of trail. It will run past Creek Valley Elementary, Valley View Middle School, and Edina High School. Bringing a

large number of people a day into such close proximity to schools would be a safety concern for many of us who have children attending those schools.

2. Environmental Concerns: To destroy this natural animal habitat with a 16' wide bike trail (ten feet paved, three feet of easement on each side) would surely put an end to the Creek as a refuge for the wide variety of wildlife we've seen. How can any wildlife coexist with a busy bike path?

Another environmental concern is the seasonal flooding we have in our section of the creek. Ms. Grissman's response to this was that the bike path may be built on stilts in a boardwalk style, elevating it off the ground. Not only does that sound cost prohibitive and environmentally invasive, it would also be an aesthetic eyesore.

3. Financial Concerns: Today's current financial climate hardly seems the appropriate time to be spending precious financial resources on such an undertaking. Cities are making cuts to services all over the Metro. The construction and ongoing maintenance of a bike trail does not fall into the "need-to-have" category as we face difficult financial and budgetary choices. Street-based routings would be more cost effective to build and to maintain in the long-run.
4. Alternatives Exist: Please consider an alternate location, such as putting it along the road on Valley Lane, where there is adequate width to add a designated bike trail. At least then we could preserve one side of our home as a place for our kids to play in relative protection, and it would not have a negative impact on the natural habitat along the creek.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our concerns and for all the work you've done to help make this such a great place to raise our family. It is our passionate desire that you act to keep it that way for years to come.

Sincerely,

Chad and Andrea Schwinghammer