

Joe Soucheray: We don't have \$100M. Might as well add another \$12M?

[Joe Soucheray](#) June 4, 2023 at 12:45 p.m.

The Summit Avenue bicycle trail, lost trees and all, approved by the St. Paul City Council by a [6-1 vote](#) on May 24, still has a bit of a problem. There is no money to pay for it.

That little elephant has been in the room from the first day unelected bureaucrats dreamed of a bicycle freeway, magnificent architecture and history be damned.



It was always meant to be a tagalong project, not an afterthought, more like a might-as-well. There is no money to pay for rebuilding Summit end to end. That was already in the cards at a price of about \$100 million. The bike trail, the might-as-well, is another \$12 million or so that also doesn't exist.

In other words, the \$12 million that doesn't exist is to be tacked onto the \$100 million that doesn't exist.

So why build it?

Because we have placed in positions of authority a majority of modern DFLers — not your father's or Hubert Humphrey's DFL — who have no idea of financial reality, no sense of disciplined budgeting and no intention of ever answering for their multiplying fiduciary sins.

Hubert Humphrey worked at a real job. He was a pharmacist at his father's store,

Humphrey Drug in Huron, S.D. He filled prescriptions and ordered supplies and paid vendors. He cleaned up at night and locked the door. Then he did it again the next day.

Today's DFLers don't come out of drugstores. They are raised like hothouse flowers on an activist farm. Many of them cling tightly to their manifesto from the Democratic Socialists of America. Many of them hold capitalism in contempt, your hard work, and think nothing of spending money they don't have to bring to fruition their better intuitions. No money for a project simply means another new tax.

The Legislature just blew through an almost \$18 billion surplus and bloated the [state's budget](#) by 40 percent. That is irresponsibility on a scale we have never seen in Minnesota. They didn't save a nickel for a rainy day, and were never tempered in their lust by their ideological soul brother Tim Walz, who signed nearly every bill they put in front of him. Gov. Walz never said, "Wait a minute, let's slow down here." Well, he did accommodate the Mayo Clinic and Uber and Lyft, but much to the disappointment of the hothouse crowd.

To pay for the Summit Avenue reconstruction and the might-as-well bike trail, they could very well put a referendum on the ballot this November calling for a 1 percent increase in the city's sales tax. Makes you wonder where your property taxes go.

There is no specific statistical chart, but anecdotally it sounds like opponents of the new bike trail easily outnumbered the proponents. [They fought a good fight](#). They peppered the street with signs and showed up for public meetings. But it almost seemed like it was a done deal and that the city council entertained the great unwashed begrudgingly.

A resident of Summit Avenue who attended the final meeting and city council vote told me that council member Mitra Jalali, for example, spent most of the meeting

staring at her phone. Maybe she was working the numbers, trying to figure out how to pay for the new bike path without raising taxes.

Nah, Jalali is just like the rest of the hothouse class. They've all been in a drugstore, they just never worked in one.