

406 Wacouta Street
St Paul, MN 55101
January 11, 2013

David Thune
Ward 2 - City Council
15 West Kellogg Blvd
Sat Paul MN 55102

Dear David,

As a resident in your district, I am writing to protest this further assault on the Sixth Street roadway by your consideration of the sidewalk expansion which was so vigorously opposed last year. I am advocating a withdrawal of any and all considerations of such changes to Sixth Street.

There are many reasons for denying an expansion:

- 1) no one walks on Sixth Street as there is nothing of interest and the street leads nowhere; even Macy's is moving on. There are only a few doorways open to the public and two of them are bar/restaurants who have received great amounts of money to open up their venues in Lowertown; this has not resulted in any improvement to the area. Other access merely leads to skyway access, hardly advantageous to street traffic. The real estate on the four sides of Mears Park create a citadel, a fortress denying any access except to the bar/restaurants. Compare to the openness of Grand Avenue where businesses of all sorts and sizes invite street traffic.
- 2) Previous drawings and presentations from last year more honestly included the negative impact on the 2 additional blocks: from Wall to Wacouta, and from Sibley west; alterations would also need to be made to accommodate reducing traffic lanes and then enlarging them again as traffic moves west up Sixth from Sibley. As of last year's proposal, property owners would bear the expense of their sidewalk/street alteration. And although it is promised that the real estate owners would pay for their alterations and sidewalks, there is no assurance that taxpayers would not be forced to pick up the default, should Brooks and/or Crockarell (Park Square Court) pull out, thus leaving it up to the city and its taxpayers to foot the bill. Moving Brooks electric supply from under the sidewalk will be a considerable expense. Will David Brooks then pass this expense onto his tenants; has this increase been presented to those tenants? Last time I walked through his buildings, there were more vacancies than tenants.
- 3) As has been previously noted:
 - A) Sixth Street is an exit for I-35; why cram it up with traffic lane reduction? And with the newly proposed BallPark being served by traffic off I-35? Where is the sense of reduced traffic lanes on Sixth?

B) The loss of parking spaces, notably meters, in an area already lacking sufficient metered spaces, is a real loss. And the City's allowing food trucks around Mears Park has further diminished the number of spaces. This relates not only to the number of metered spaces but also loss of City revenue now generated by these meters.

C) The Sixth street residences at River Park Lofts and The Cosmopolitan would be disadvantaged by any reduction and/or elimination of traffic lanes adjoining their buildings by funneling traffic to a different pattern on Sixth between Wacouta and Sibley.

4) Bus traffic is essential along Sixth Street. Buses service many people of various incomes, and also make connections to Minneapolis buses, even locations which will not be reached by the new rail line. Buses service trips to Mall of America and MSP airport. A real service at bargain prices, especially considering taxi fares in the area. And moving bus stop again...after previous battles by residents at River Park Lofts to remove the stop from the corner of Wacouta and Sixth where noise and traffic directly affect the residents on that corner - this would be a renewed hardship.. The relocation to the middle of Sixth between Wacouta and Sibley greatly facilitated residents and riders as that block was already commercial and did not negatively impact private ownership. Reversal brings back the issue.

5) Already the competition with truck deliveries on both Wacouta and Sixth, servicing the 2 bar/restaurants, greatly affects traffic congestion at the corner of Sixth and Wacouta. Creating an obstacle to a right-hand turn from Wacouta onto Sixth is already a mess.

6) Previous plans(last year's proposal) also illustrated that the bar/restaurants outdoor seating would force pedestrians closer to the roadway as the bar/restaurant services need to be connected to their present indoor spaces. This statement is based upon last year's discussion and drawings of its proposals. The law states that liquor service be "compact and contiguous with store frontage"...or is it proposed that the law be changed?

7) The walkable area in Lowertown at present is the Farmers Market and the wonderful Mears Park- visitors always looking for places to park, these devotees now have the new railway to consider and twich which to compete - how much can you plan to cram into Lowertown? That these people should be encouraged to use Brooks ramps is insulting. The City giving up its source of revenue to the private sector - a gift.

8) Minnesota weather is not friendly to outdoor seating for the full year - in the summer it is too hot and humid, and in the winter it is only for the select few who prefer the cold outdoors which enable them to smoke. Even seasonal use of present level of outdoor seating offered by BullDog and Barrio is minimal at best- from my observation of the street throughout the years of my living there

9) And is the City allowing the USE of PUBLIC EASEMENTS for PRIVATE use? It appears to be what is proposed.

Have you considered temporarily blocking off the proposed area with concrete barriers, also including the reduction/expansion to the blocks adjoining Sixth between Wacouta and Sibley? I'm sure there would be an uproar. So why not temporarily put barriers up to take a reading, see the problems, etc? Do not delve into a venture of \$300K-\$500K (which may require UNDOING later at an even great expense) without trying out the footprint first on a temporary basis.

The resurgence of this expanded sidewalk issue, with little consideration for input besides the friends of the Mayor who own the bar/restaurant establishments, is a travesty. Your preliminary approval and advocacy for this project is inconsiderate of your residents. Mayor Coleman should carefully assess this proposal in terms of the upcoming re-election bid. He should stop advocating for his friends and start to listen to the residents of the city.

I understand that the planning Commission has already defeated the proposal; we await HPC's take on the issue. We also await the building owners Brooks' and Crockarell's decision on whether they choose to go along with the expansion which will cost them considerable out-of-pocket.

Sincerely,

Karen Caton
Lowertown resident