

To the City Council and the Mayor of Saint Paul,

As a 36-year-residents of Saint Paul and eight-year residents of downtown Saint Paul, I am aghast at the idea of losing yet more parking places in order to enlarge the outside space of two bars in Lower Town.

Having lost over 100 parking places due to the construction of the light rail, the idea of losing almost two dozen more seems ridiculous. Among my acquaintances, the lack of parking places in downtown Saint Paul acts as a massive deterrant. The suggestion that someone will drive to Saint Paul, drive three or four floors up a parking ramp, and then pay for this experience is ludicrous. Many women view parking ramps as potentially dangerous places.

At least some people come to Saint Paul because it is charming and evokes history. Narrow streets and interesting architecture are part of that charm: the distinctive look of Saint Paul. The plan under discussion to remove 21 parking places in order to widen sidewalks for two bars is another distortion of the City's fabric, another loss.

And the loss of these parking spaces will only benefit the two bars in question for perhaps three months of the year. What happens to Christmas shoppers in December? What happens to visitors to the Farmer's Market? We need to keep the parking places we have, not expand sidewalks that provide a marginal benefit to two bars and no benefit to the public.

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