

Western Village

VH Business Consulting, TC Home Health Services, TC Adult Day Care center, H'Mong Elite Home Care, Asian Deli & Restaurant, , and Metro Medical Supply

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St. Paul City Council Members
City Hall Annex
25 W. 4th Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Proposed "No Parking" Ban
On Western Avenue

Dear Council Members:

Please consider this statement as the joint statement by the above listed businesses, located inside Western Village building, to oppose the "Parking" Ban on the west side of Western Avenue from St. Anthony to University Avenue West, St. Paul, MN 55103.

My name is Nkajlo Vangh. I am the owner of Western Village Building. I am a member of the Hmong community and have been in and around St. Paul's Frogtown for over 30 years. My wife and I own and co-own the businesses located inside Western Village. We do rent out the adult day care area for religious, family, and community uses during weekends. We employ close to a total of 100 employees within and around the City of St. Paul. We consider ourselves a big employer in the City. The establishment of Western Village and these businesses on Western Avenue also help to reduce crimes and drug trafficking in the area. A number of our reasons to oppose the proposed parking ban are:

1. The parking ban will have negative impacts on our businesses, particularly the restaurant / deli, the rental hall business, and our employee parking when our parking lot is full.

Our Deli's customers need both sides of Western Ave to park when our regular parking lot is full, or when they drive a pick-up truck with a trailer behind, or some time when they drive a school bus. We also rarely mail out employee payroll during pay day, so many are using both sides of the Western Avenue for parking to pick up their check. They also park there to report works and turn in time cards.

Customer access is vital to these businesses.

2. As a business owner on the targeted Western Avenue, I noticed that the bike program had a station next to the Gospel Union church until late last year. I observed on a daily basis that the service was rarely used. When there was a use, the user or bicyclist was not from Frogtown area where many minority communities are. Most users then used either sidewalk of Western Avenue.
3. I don't see any investment reasons that would help the joblessness and poverty of residents in the affected area. The benefit gained from my existing businesses outweigh the bike tracks. Criminals no longer have empty space or vacant building to conduct their drug activities.

I have been in and around the area since January, 1979, when the Gospel Union building was the Boys Club building. Residents in the area rarely ride bicycles because of safety reasons. They walk, drive, or ride buses. Riding safety was, is, and will continue to be a safety issue in Frogtown and on the west side of Western Ave.

4. I see the proposal as a discriminatory practice in nature by the Mayor and his head of the Department of Public Works, Rich Lallier. When the bike program was stationed next to the Gospel Union building, the City DIDN'T care about making a special trail on Western because the potential users would likely be members of minority communities. Now that the bike program will be serving the majority WHITE community on the Summit Avenue area, then the City wants to create a special trail as a privileged accommodation to the privileged riders at the expense of minority businesses and communities.

Currently, there are two existing No Parking signs on the east side of Western Avenue from St. Anthony Ave to University Ave. One is next to the west side of the Gospel Union church. The other is next to the west side of Western Village, my building. These two signs already impose hardship on the restaurant and rental Hall businesses inside Western Village. I had repeatedly requested for their removal in vain.

5. I believe that there are alternated reasonable routes, with much less pain, from the University Ave to the community on the Summit Hill, but absolutely NOT through Western Avenue from St. Anthony to University Avenue West. The proposed "No Parking" ban will do more harm than good to minority businesses and people in the targeted area.

Western Village and its business tenants employ close to 100 people from within and around St. Paul. They also generate taxes and revenue to the City. The bike tracks may force a couple of these businesses to relocate away from the City. Please, the anti-business climate of the City must stop here at the City Council Chamber by your vote "No" to the proposed parking ban on the west side of Western Avenue (at least from St. Anthony to University Ave).

A "Yes" vote will encourage further discriminatory practices by City officials.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Nkajlo V. S. H. 3/17/2014

Nkajlo Vangh
For Western Village and
Its Business Tenants.