

June 11, 2012



REAP WHAT WE GROW

To Whom It May Concern;

The St. Paul Growers' Association has major concerns about the pending decision to put outside seating along Sixth Street in 2013.

The Farmers' Market has gone through many challenges over the last three years. The light rail construction project has caused major road construction challenges as well as the loss of parking for our customers. Now with the added highway 52 bridgework this year we have lost additional parking spaces. What used to be our largest lot for parking is now being used as a staging area for both projects. We have doubled our advertising budget to try and keep our customers coming to the market but still we have seen a twenty-five percent drop over this time period. This is equal to about 150,000 customers on a yearly basis that are no longer visiting St. Paul's Lowertown area. Through surveys we have conducted, parking is the number one reason customers are staying away.

As we look ahead we are faced with another challenge when the work begins on the Saints Stadium. This will take out another of our parking lots. We are doing our best to adjust and make changes but we are running out of ideas on how to keep the St. Paul Farmers' Market one of the top five Farmers' Markets in the U.S.

We have 140 area farmers/growers, 35 of whom live within the City of St. Paul. These folks have been hit hard with the loss of income. This not only hurts them but also other area businesses around the market. You may think that the loss of 22 parking meters is not much, but to us it is huge. With the average turn over time these 22 spaces equal about 220 customers which equals the loss of between \$4,400 and \$5,500 per day at the market.

After meeting with the Board of Directors we are asking you to **please delay** this project until all major work, including the St. Paul Saints Stadium is complete. We believe we can all benefit from the changes that are occurring in Lowertown but we must work together. Please don't make a decision that will make one businesses gain be the loss of business to many others.

Sincerely,

Jack Gerten, Manager
St. Paul Growers' Assoc.
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