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Russ Stark, Ward 4 Councilmember
City of Saint Paul
310-D City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd., West
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Dear Councilmember Russ,

Since my appointment by Mayor George Latimer to the Liquor License Task Force in the mid-1980's I have been involved in the development of parking standards for establishments that serve beer, wine and alcoholic beverages. This is an issue that has many impacts on both businesses and residents of Saint Paul. It always has been a difficult balancing act to attempt to encourage a vibrant business community while minimizing detrimental effects on residential neighborhoods.

The proposed standards provide an opportunity to help in creating this balance, however, it appears that the changes skew more towards the business community than neighborhoods. I would like to suggest a couple of changes to help create a more neutral impact on all stakeholders.

• **Change the definition of a *bar* to establishments open after 11:00pm.**

Midnight is far to late to allow spillover into residential neighborhoods. The amount of time it takes to clear an establishment, and the lag time for patrons to reach their vehicles will create untenable situations for families trying to sleep. 11:00pm is a reasonable time for true restaurants to close for the night.

• **Make *bars* a Conditional Use unless required parking is provided.**

This will address the large number of retail storefronts across the city that have little or no parking currently available. With the passing of this ordinance, all of these buildings will receive instant non-conforming status for their existing parking shortfalls without providing any additional parking. Conditional Use status would allow the particular conditions of each situation to be addressed. In cases where parking is particularly critical, added conditions will incentivize businesses to help solve the problems they are creating.

Some believe that business will act in their own best interest by providing adequate parking for their patrons. This has not held true, as many business owners pay more attention to the cost side of the ledger in these situations, especially when the problems can easily be pushed onto the surrounding neighborhood. Please consider these changes for a more balanced ordinance.

Gaius G. Nelson, Planning Commissioner



cc: Kathy Lantry, Council President; Chris Tolbert, Ward 3