

Dear Mr. Bostrom, Ms. Brendmoen, Mr. Carter, Ms. Lantry, Mr. Tolbert, Mr. Stark, and Mr. Thune,

I am writing to strongly support welcoming Cupcake to Grand Avenue.

I live at 77 N. Milton St., and Mr. Carter is my councilperson. However, I want to tell each of you why I think Cupcake should be allowed to open on Grand.

Cupcake is a delicious destination for more than just cupcakes. Their breakfasts are amazing, and they are a great spot for food anytime. They have good coffee and, of course, the cupcakes are awesome. I go to their University Ave store often, and would love it if they had a location in my neighborhood.

Cupcake would add a great, local, independent food, coffee, and wine option to an ever growing sea of chains on Grand. Additionally, the existing Grand Ave bakeries close early- Woulet is not open on Sunday, Bread and Chocolate closes at 6 pm. We need a great place for treats and good food that is locally owned, and is open from breakfast through dinner.

I also wonder why there so much concern about how Cupcake will create parking tension on Grand. Cupcake has figured out how to accommodate parking needs. As a life long resident of the Grand Avenue area (I can remember when there was no turn lane!) I can personally attest to the fact that Grand is a busy, growing area that has seen the addition of *many* businesses and other economic developments over the years. Adding one more restaurant to an existing building is not going to tip the balance. People that park in the Grand Ave area to go to multiple businesses- adding Cupcake will only help the area.

And speaking of that building- if Cupcake isn't allowed to open there, who will you allow? The ground floor retail is empty now. If you create roadblocks for a real live businesses to open there, will it just sit empty? If you look around you will know that the answer is a resounding, depressing yes and this scenario doesn't help anyone. Cupcake, on the other hand, is a best case scenario for that space.

Please recall the 2009 decision when the St. Paul City Council showed its support for the well-being of the local economy by denying a Walgreens proposal. Snyders, a small, locally-based chain with less than 50 stores in a four-state area, employs 35 union workers at the Highland Park store. A Walgreens nearby probably would have attempted to drive Snyders and others out of business through the methods described above, leaving St. Paul with no overall net gain in jobs, and resulting in lower wages than were earned at the previously existing businesses.

Please also recall numerous studies which repeatedly show that more dollars spent at locally owned businesses stay in local economies than dollars spent at national chains and big-box retailers.

Finally, please ask yourselves what these large chains have done for our community. Cupcake has supported and sponsored breast cancer, the Minnesota Aliveness Project

(AIDS awareness and research), and community supported agriculture (CSA). If you allowed Chipotle to come to Grand, I would certainly hope you would roll out the welcome mat for a fantastic, high quality, local business with proven staying power like Cupcake.

Gillian Griffin

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