

I heard today that the Sixth Street Sidewalk extension is on today's City Council Agenda. There is considerable opposition to this loss of parking and change in Lowertown's streetscape. There has never been a public hearing regarding this entire issue at a city level Commission. Below is a communication to the Planning Commission who voted against support of approval of these changes.

John Mannillo

The Transportation Committee of the Planning Commission this past Monday, 12/17/12, passed a motion to permanently extend the sidewalk on the North side of 6th Street opposite Mears Park. This was done without the benefit of opposing testimony and information. I had met on October 29th with Rich Lallier and John Maczko of Public Works and provided both with documentation as evidence that the Engineering Report of July 5, 2012 had incomplete and inaccurate information. They agreed that it looked like some revisions should be made and they would do so before the report would be used again. They also agreed to keep me apprised of the process as it moved forward. Although I continued to stay in contact with John Maczko, those of us in opposition to the concrete permanent sidewalk expansion were never made aware of the original report until after its completion. Furthermore it appears that no revisions were made to the incomplete and inaccurate report before the hearing at the Transportation Committee. Most importantly, the organizations, businesses, residents, and other property owners who oppose this permanent expansion apparently were not notified of the Transportation Committee hearing.

As chairperson of the Development Review Committee of the Capitol River Council (District 17), I held an evening meeting of affected Downtown residents in December of 2009. There was a sharp divide between supporters and opponents. I proposed a compromise trial extension design that could be used for outside dining about 4 months of the year. If this turned out to be a popular and attractive solution, while not negatively affecting residents, parking, or traffic flow, this design could be continued in future years.

Saint Paul was not the only city looking to improve urban streetscapes. A cost effective, more attractive and flexible system of sidewalk or pop-up cafes, parklets, and temporary/seasonal cafes have since been designed and installed in most major cities in this country, Canada, and Europe. I personally helped design and install a prototype for 5 days in September 2010. (a benefits analysis is attached)

Since I or any of the other residents, businesses, and organizations are now unable to testify before the Planning Commission Board this Friday, I request this communication and following information be presented as correction and clarification to the initial Engineering Report.

- The Engineering Report (Report) said that the District Council supported the concrete expansion in 2010 and that *some parties* desired a temporary installation and opposed the permanent widening. **Fact:** The District Council first heard of the temporary/seasonal option at the same 2010 Board meeting. At

that point, the Board approved both options and urged building owners to consider the seasonal/temporary solution and meet with John Mannillo. Since that meeting the Development Review Committee of the District Council on May 19th 2012, strongly supported **only** the temporary/pop-up expansion. The full Board then later decided not to either support or oppose either option. That made the position to support the temporary/ seasonal expansion (of the Development Review Committee) as the last Board or Committee official position taken by a group of District 17. (The Board was one vote short of supporting the temp. option, outright).

- The report left blank, information to any “Planning References”. **Fact:** The Greater Lowertown Master Plan (comprehensive plan) strongly encourages the temporary/seasonal/pop-up cafés in the Lowertown District. Summary of the Master Plan stated: “Encourage the use of temporary and experimental pop-up installations within the District as a way to activate buildings and spaces without disrupting the well preserved assets (the street grid pattern is also identified as an important asset). The Full Master Plan stated: “Expand the use of temporary/seasonal cafes and plazas. Seasonal cafes are an effective and efficient way to improve the public realm and pedestrian experience. They should be **strongly** encouraged throughout Lowertown, **but especially in the restaurant/retail cluster around Mears Park and the Depot**” (my emphasis). A picture of my prototype café at this location appears next to this statement. Both comprehensive reports have numerous recommendations regarding support of temporary cafes, preservation of the historic street grid pattern, and maximization of on-street parking.
- The Report states as an “Adverse Effect” loss of annual parking revenue from on-street parking meters. The 6 meters on the north side would lose \$8000 and the 16 meters on the South side would lose \$17,500. **Fact:** With the new rates, electronic meters and additional hours required of pay parking, revenue loss would be at a minimum \$55,000 every year (parking meter revenue loss analysis attached). It would be even higher if the City projections offered to justify the recent purchase and installation of new electronic meters are used. This is one of the most occupied on-street parking blocks in Downtown.

State law for “compact and contiguous” regarding liquor sales limits such seating to the area directly in front of any particular liquor establishment. This will effectively limit seating along with traffic restrictions to only about 15% of the entire block face. Then subtract 60% or more each year when outside dining is even used. Along with the 500 daily busses passing immediately next to the north expansion, this would be a shortsighted change to the most successful district of the City, Lowertown.

A permanent concrete expansion of the Sixth Street 10 ft. wide sidewalk in the distinct heart of Lowertown will permanently change the historic district’s character, in place since the 1870’s. All totaled, the irreversible concrete expansion will cost five to ten

times more than a temporary/seasonal café, plus the loss of Downtown's most valuable parking (on-street), and the loss of \$55,000 in revenue each year from now on.

John Mannillo

December 22, 2012

Annual Sixth Street Parking Meter Revenue Projection

22 meters x *48.5 hrs./week x \$1.75/hr. = \$1865.25/wk. per meter. (maximum potential revenue per meter)

9 hrs. for 5 days = 45 hrs.

3.5 hrs. for 1 day = 3.5 hrs.

* 48.5 hrs./wk. per meter

\$1867.25 x 51 wks.(adjusted for holidays) = \$95,229.75 Maximum annual potential revenue

Value of parking not included above:

- Fines
- Override from new electronic meters
- Evening and weekend use
- Future rate increases
- **Provision for disabled parkers

Adjustment for 20% projected vacancy:

.80 x 95,229.75 = **\$76,183.80 annual revenue loss to city**

Annual Revenue loss to City if 6 meters are removed for bike lane:

\$3462.90/meter per year x 6 meters = \$20,777.40

\$76,183.80

(less) 20,777.40

\$55,406.40 Minimum annual parking revenue lost to City

**Actual past audits from exiting meters do not reflect potential revenue due to government employee placard and disabled parking. Eliminating these meters will only relocate those parkers to other metered parking.

Temporary/Seasonal Sidewalk Café as compared to permanent concrete extension

December 22, 2012

- Cost of the entire block face seasonal extension is less than \$100,000. A smaller section of the block can be converted if desired. This price includes planters, railings and borders encasing the extension. While the permanent concrete sidewalk “estimate” which does not include utility work under the sidewalk, filling of the areaways or the railing and other changes requested by the HPC. This could easily come to a total of more than \$500,000.
- Such a financial burden will fall either to the Building owners or the restaurants or other building tenants, none of which tend to last as long as a fifty year sidewalk.
- Total cost of seasonal sidewalk is known up-front.
- Loss of on-street parking with the seasonal extension is minimized (about 65% less).
- Loss of on-street parking revenue is 65% less as well. The entire purchase and installation of the seasonal sidewalk could be paid off in less than two years with the parking revenue not lost to the permanent extension.
- Seasonal sidewalk extension is reversible if for any reason tenants change, traffic flow or loss of parking becomes a problem. This is an important consideration for the Lowertown Historic District.
- The seasonal extension can be delivered and installed within weeks from an order being placed.
- It can be installed by local contractors and even volunteers as has been done many times in San Francisco, most other U.S., Canadian, and European Cities.
- No special assessment is necessary. This is leasehold, not a capital improvement. No added delay for the assessment process.
- Extension can be installed without closing off traffic.
- Purchase and installation can also be directly financed by the owner.
- Owner can sell this at a later time to be reused elsewhere if necessary. It can also be used in the winter for other applications, of various shapes and sizes.
- City can retain ownership and generate additional revenue through rentals.
- Maintenance, installation, removal, storage and temporary street striping can be assessed or provided for through agreement.
- The deck material stands up to salt and freezing weather.
- ADA Accessible.
- More attractive than concrete.
- One property owner may choose to install the extension while the other one can decide not to extend.
- More compatible (in Compliance to the Department of Interior standards) to the Historic status of the Historic District and specific buildings.
- Seasonal extension eliminates wasted space. There is no need for a 18 ft wide sidewalk for eight months of the year.
- A wooden deck helps reduce the summer heat island effect. It is warmer in cooler weather and cooler in hot weather.
- A seasonal extension can do anything a concrete extension can do.

John Mannillo

