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To: #CI-StPaul_Ward7; #CI-StPaul_Ward1; #CI-StPaul_Ward2; #CI-StPaul_Ward3; #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_Ward5; #CI-StPaul_Ward6; Farrell, Jesse (CI-StPaul); Spong, Amy (CI-StPaul); Boulware, Christine (CI-StPaul)

Subject: 6th street sidewalk expansion

City Council President Lantry and Council Members,

In 2006, we moved from our home of 34 years in the Summit Hill neighborhood to our new home in River Park Lofts. We were among the first residents of RPL and very excited about once again being a bit of an urban pioneer to participate in creating another wonderful neighborhood in St. Paul. As a member of the Summit Hill Association board for 20 years, I am well aware of the challenge posed by the need for both commercial vibrancy and great residential areas: When done thoughtfully, there is terrific mutual benefit.

I was initially supportive of providing space for outside dining along 6th street across from Mears Park. Find me a Minnesotan who does not want to be outside every bit of the nice weather we have! However, I have since changed my mind.

There have been a lot of changes already to the Mears Park area since we arrived. There are more residents in new condos and lofts and more to come. Bulldog, Barrio, and Bin Wine Bar, food trucks, and other establishments, have provided options that we enjoy and patronize regularly and the Saints are on their way. By and large, I commend these businesses for being good neighbors. They have done a pretty good job of containing the potential negatives – noise, parking problems, drunk patrons, smoking, litter, etc. It is certainly on its way to being an incredibly vibrant street and has done so by balancing the diverse needs of both residents and commercial properties. Frankly, the disruption and expense of expanding the sidewalk to accommodate a few diners will contribute little to this very special area. There appears to be little bang for the buck when considered in the overall context of this special area. The free flow of pedestrian and vehicle movement is essential. The draw is the urban mix and the growth of new businesses.

Are you forgetting that there is a beautiful Park right across the street? I would much rather eat and drink indoors and then spill outside for a walk through the park. Spending a half million dollars for a few outside tables seems like a very bad investment. The potential negatives far outweigh the common good. Perhaps an ice cream truck might be better?