

From: Kari Rihm <kari.rihm@rihmkenworth.com>

Date: March 19, 2013, 9:58:09 AM CDT

To: <russ.stark@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Sidewalk Proposal

Dear Mr. Stark:

Thank you for returning my call yesterday. I'm sorry to have missed you. A busy schedule for both of us means I'll use email to convey my thoughts on the sidewalk in-fill project proposed for our area. I'd prefer a personal interaction.

I am unable to attend the City Council Meeting [tomorrow evening](#) due to a planned business trip. I did attend the 2/28/13 meeting on the sidewalk in-fill project for the West Midway held at Rock Tenn. Let me reiterate to you the positions I presented there on behalf of Rihm Kenworth, and what I have learned since then about how our business would be effected by the sidewalk proposed adjacent to our property.

1) We use the west side of Transfer Road year round to access our truck storage lot. In the winter, we snow blow a path for our own use. I inquired with the people who normally follow that path and none thought a sidewalk would alter anything we do to access the property. They have no problem operating status quo. None observed "others" using the west side for foot travel summer or winter - but that much foot traffic travels on the east side of Transfer Road.

It's my opinion that adding a sidewalk on the west side of Transfer Road would be a wasteful expenditure of public funds with no ROI for effected businesses and no particular benefit for pedestrians. Sidewalks would be much more useful in the area of the West Midway where people are actually going somewhere. The west side of Transfer Road does not take walkers anywhere to places walkers would need to access as consumers. It only leads to industrial sites. Further, some of the sidewalks proposed further into the industrial areas along Ellis and the roads leading north are also so industrial in nature that they're not, in my opinion, places pedestrians would or should walk. Is there no concept that some places are just unsafe for pedestrians period and therefore that mode of travel should not be encouraged? I would encourage an extension of the sidewalk on the east side of Transfer Road to meet up with a cross walk at Ellis if necessary.

2) At the meeting, there were so many problems pointed out in the process of deciding on sidewalks that this proposal should not be passed by the City Council. Business owners' needs were not addressed, the potential impact on some businesses was not considered. The proposal should be declined and a proper process should be followed to involve all property owners in the effected area. Only people who would see a tax assessment were even notified. What about property owners who may want sidewalk? They have not been given an opportunity to express their need. This project needs a do-over, and as a steward of public funds, I encourage you to insist a proper process is followed.

3) Why is there no coordination with the streets department? Plans to connect Transfer Road to Vandalia area a few years off, and from the sound of things at the 2/28/13 meeting, the sidewalk and roads departments haven't talked. What is proposed to be solved by sidewalks could

probably be accomplished with road signs, pedestrian crosswalks and a whole lot less money. These two departments should have to communicate to avoid wasteful spending. Just because money is available for this project doesn't mean it has to be spent - not all of it. Some comments were made at the meeting that owners would only be assessed the first time the sidewalks are poured. Repairs would be on the City. It sounded to me like sidewalks were being proposed in areas where very heavy vehicles would be causing the need for frequent and repeated repair. Can bad decisions be sustained over the years with unlimited maintenance budgets?

This proposal must be stopped and sent back for reconsideration involving input from property owners. I hope you agree and ask the Council to reject this proposal at the 3/20/13 meeting. As my District Council Representative, I ask that you represent my concerns at the meeting. If you'd like to try to call me back, I'll be available for a short window of time this afternoon between [2-2:30](#) and again [tomorrow morning](#) between [8-10:30](#).

Best regards,

Kari Rihm
President, Rihm Kenworth