

RE: Proposed Downtown Bike Loop

I am writing on behalf of 26 downtown building owners and 80 merchants along the path of the proposed downtown elevated Bike Loop. We all oppose this plan because it will cost us over 150 on street parking spaces.

Our group started out as the “Wabasha Street Partners” but we have now grown into a group that includes merchants, owners, and residents along Wabasha, Fourth Street, Tenth Street, and Jackson Street.

All of our members have said that they have nothing against bicycles in downtown. In fact, most members feel that a designated bike lane would be acceptable if done in the correct way.

However, an “elevated sidewalk height” bike lane taking the place of 150 parking stalls is not acceptable.

Bicycling may be an enjoyable activity but that is not the point. The question is: “Who wants to spend 18 million dollars to eliminate 150 parking spaces that our local merchants, building owners, and residents need for their daily business?”

At the end of the day I would hope that the City Council and the Mayor realize that there is a huge lack of support for this “elevated bike trail” project. St Paul needs healthy buildings and successful merchants. That should be our first priority.

FOURTH STREET PARKING SURVEY

We have now contacted most of the tenants and owners on Fourth Street. Here is what we have found:

FOURTH STREET EAST OF ROBERT

Everyone east of Robert has already lost their parking to the light rail

The buildings that have already lost their parking include Kellogg Square, First National Bank Bldg, & Pioneer Endicott Bldg

FOURTH STREET WEST OF ROBERT

There is still parking on Fourth Street West of Robert. The tenants and owners from Robert Street west to Wabasha all told us that they did not want to lose their parking.

FOURTH STREET BUILDING OWNERS

The owners on Fourth Street who did not want to lose parking include:

1. Commerce Bldg,
2. Degree of Honor Bldg,
3. Walsh & Gaertner Bldg,
4. St Paul Athletic Club

FOURTH STREET TENANTS

Tenants along the Fourth St route who did not want to lose parking included:

1. Kindercare Inc.
2. Walsh and Gaertner Attorneys
3. Skyway Barbers
4. Commerce Building apartments
5. Minnesota Building apartments
6. Minnesota Building Executive Offices
7. Subway
8. St Paul Athletic Club
9. Commonwealth Event Center
10. Midwest Realty Group
11. Friends of St Paul Library
12. Peter Erlinder Law Institute
13. Vanney Law Firm
14. Ron Kirkoff Law Firm
15. Citizen Observer . com
16. Five Star Field Service
17. Komnah Group
18. Spence, Ricke and Thurmer Law Firm
19. Public Strategies Group
20. Wilson Law Firm
21. Direct Benefits Inc.
22. Kress Law Firm
23. Evening Post Publishing
24. Gearin and Shelly Law Firm

We heard the following comments when we were doing the study:

“Kindercare has been on Fourth for 30 years. We have fifty cars a day letting off students. There is no way our parents could safely drop off their children if a bike path is in the way”

“We have handicapped people in our apartment building. How can they get to their apartments if there is not a drop off by the front door?”

“Many of our law clients park on the street. Fourth Street as well as Cedar are important on street parking areas for us” Not everyone likes to use the ramps for quick visits.”

“My barber shop is on the skyway but many of my clients park on the street.” It is tough already downtown. Why would they want to hurt my minority business? I don’t think Im going to get much business from bikers.

“St Paul says that street level business is important. So, why are they trying to destroy our business?”

TENTH STREET PARKING SURVEY

We have now contacted most of the tenants and owners on Tenth Street. Here is what we have found:

TENTH STREET TENANTS

Tenants along the Tenth Street route who did not want to lose parking included:

1. Lunds
2. Keys Restaurant
4. Equip Fitness Studio
5. Papa Johns
6. WDW
7. Sawadee
8. Camp
9. Tenth Street Coffee House
10. Condo owners at 10th
11. Liquor Vault
12. Gallery Towers. Most owners opposed
13. Airy Condominiums. Discussion at Board drew strong opposition

TENTH STREET TENANTS WHO HAVE CONCERNS;

1. Budget Car Rental
2. Embassy Suites. Manager has concerns and is talking to Corporate
3. Attorneys. On Ninth have concerns
4. Lunds . Manager has concerns and is talking to Corporate
5. Alanon. Hass concerns and will talk to board president.
6. Black Sheep. Manager has concerns and will talk to Owner
7. Tin Whiskers. Owner has concerns

We heard the following comments when we were doing the study:

“Our store is blessed with lots of off street parking. However, the on street parking is still important for our customers”

“We have a popular restaurant. Our customers park on Tenth as well as the side street”

“We run a fitness studio. Our customers would not come here without on street parking. “

“Our bar depends on the on street parking.”

JACKSON STREET PARKING SURVEY

We have now contacted most of the tenants and owners on Jackson Street. Here is what we have found:

JACKSON STREET BUILDING OWNERS

The building owners on Jackson Street who did not want to lose parking include:

1. Brooks Building
2. Cray Plaza
3. 375 Jackson Building
4. YMCA Building
5. Lather Swire Schultz CPA Building
6. Park Place Apartments
7. Aerie Condominiums

JACKSON STREET TENANTS

Tenants along the Jackson Street route who did not want to lose parking included:

1. Music Forest Cafe
2. AVIS
3. Lethert Skwira Schultz CPA's
4. YMCA
5. Nacel Open Door
6. Cray
7. Faces Restaurant
8. Minnesota Higher Education Board
9. National Indian Gaming Commission
10. Federal Highway Administration
11. IRS
12. Anytime Fitness
13. Jackson Credit Union
14. Anderson Law Firm

We heard the following comments when we were doing the study:

"I work in the Licensing and Inspections Department. We need the Jackson spaces for customer parking. These people are buying licenses and they need quick, short term parking.

"Our restaurant is on the east side of Cray Plaza, so we would not be hurt as much as others. However, any loss of onstreet parking does not help downtown businesses.

WABASHA STREET PARKING SURVEY

We have contacted all of the tenants and owners of buildings on Wabasha. Here is what we have found:

WABASHA BUILDING OWNERS

The owners of the following buildings on Wabasha did not want to lose their parking:

1. Lowry Hotel
2. Lowry Parking Ramp
3. St Paul Building
4. Geller Ramp
5. Walgreens Building
6. Church of Scientology
7. Alliance Bank Building
8. Seventh Place Apartment Building
9. Palace Theater Building

WABASHA MERCHANTS

The following merchants on Wabasha did not want to lose their parking:

1. Brueggers Bagels
2. Candyland
3. Church of Scientology
4. Crowne Plaza
5. Dunn brothers
6. Eclipse Records
7. Erbert and Gerberts
8. Lowry Apartments
9. Bookmakers Restaurant
10. American Burger Bar
11. Mailbox Etc
12. Modern Nails
13. Lowry Music Club
14. Northwest Opticians
15. Red Sea Market
16. Rivertown Market
17. Seventh Place Apartments
18. Subway
19. Walgreens
20. Adam and Eve Beauty Shop
21. Allegra Printing
22. Alliance Bank
23. American Cajun
24. Bars Bakery
25. Boost Mobile
26. Breeze
27. Caribou Coffee
28. Carrie's Popcorn
29. Christian Science Reading room

30. Leann Chin
31. Metropolitan Watchworks
32. Norwest Stylists
33. Pino's Pizzeria
34. Sew so Great
35. Spire Credit Union
36. The Nectary
37. Zantigo

COMMENTS

We heard the following comments when we were doing the study:

1. "The Lowey Hotel Building is undergoing a \$20 million dollar renovation and needs on street parking for tenant unloading and valet parking. An elevated bike trail would severely curtail access to the building, especially for handicapped customers"
2. "Wallgreens cannot exist on Wabasha without on street parking"
3. "Candyland cannot stay in business if we don't have deliveries at our front door"
4. "These bike consultants say that bikers will bring more business downtown. That's one of the most crazy economic theory's that I have ever heard"
5. "My tenants need a drop off zone so that they can move in and out of our apartments. An elevated bike trail will ruin our business."
6. I am handicapped. Why does the City give preference to bikers over handicapped people?"
7. I plan to invest in a new restaurant on Wabasha. However, if I can't get valet parking I may change my plans and go elsewhere."
8. "Everyone likes bicycles. Everyone likes puppies. That's not the point. Why should we spend 18 million dollars on an occasional biker? That is not visionary. Its not green. It is just crazy"
9. "I manage this large apartment building with subsidized tenants. They need front door access to our building. I am very against taking away my parking for some bike path scheme. Where is this strange idea coming from?"
10. "Is it true that we are spending \$450,000 of taxpayer dollars on a study for biking? Talk about a misuse of public money! Those consultants are just going to repeat back what the people who commissioned the study want to hear anyway"
11. "The City must be getting Obama money for this. What they are really doing is getting paid to wreck St Paul. When will we ever learn?"
12. I manage the Crowne Plaza. To be a success in downtown St Paul we need all of the businesses to be successful to create traffic. The loss of parking spots is not acceptable