

860 St Clair Ave
St Paul MN 55105



651.222.1222
SummitHillAssociation.org

December 4, 2020

To: Rebecca Noecker, City Council (rebecca.noecker@ci.stpaul.mn.us)
Taina Maki, Legislative Aide to CM Noecker (taina.maki@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

CC: Stephanie Harr, Legislative Aide to CM Prince (stephanie.harr@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

Re: Wine Store Ordinance

Our Zoning & Land Use Committee held a Public Meeting on 11/24/20 to discuss the Wine Store Ordinance proposed by CM Prince. The ordinance would amend Chapter 409 of the Legislative Code to reduce the minimum distance between off sale outlets selling wine only from ½ mile to ¼ mile.

- Stephanie Harr, Legislative Aide to CM Prince, presented to us.
- We also heard from Leslie Rosedahl, who represents the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA).
- We reviewed letters in the public record, including those from First Grand Ave. Liquors and Perrier Wines & Liquors.

Our District Council celebrates and supports our neighborhood's "Main Street" – Grand Avenue – and the vibrant mix of retail along it.

We acknowledge the concerns raised by existing liquor stores, including several stores on Grand Avenue, and the MLBA that relaxing the distance requirement could lead to the big box stores and large grocers forcing out locally owned, independent stores. We also acknowledge that there are public policy reasons for limiting the total density of off sale outlets in a neighborhood.

We feel that these concerns are substantially addressed by the ordinance as revised:

1. A store that can only sell wine serves a different market to a full-service liquor store. The degree of competitive overlap is limited. 'Wine' is defined by statute and excludes beer etc. Full service liquor stores would still be subject to the current 1/2 mile minimum.
2. The original proposal has been modified from 300ft to 1/4 mile (i.e. 1,320ft, a maximum of 1 store per two city blocks) specifically to accommodate the concerns raised by liquor stores.
3. A population-based cap on the total number of licensees city-wide will remain in place. The total number of outlets across the City will remain the same.
4. Few if any of the large retail sites necessary to accommodate the big box retail model are available in close proximity to existing independent retailers in Saint Paul.
5. While the existing large grocers are realistic competition to the independent stores, most already offer full service liquor stores on site.



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If the proposed ordinance is passed, a limited number of new wine-only businesses could be opened that would serve a substantially different market to existing full service liquor stores. This letter is sent in the spirit of supporting a retail mix that attracts more customers and benefits every business along Grand Avenue, and the City as a whole.

Recommendation: In principle, we support the proposal to reduce the minimum distance between wine-only outlets from 1/2 to 1/4 of a mile.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let us know if you have any further questions.

Kind regards,

Monica Haas
Executive Director

Simon Taghioff
Chair, Zoning & Land Use Committee