



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
Mayor Melvin Carter

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Council President Brendmoen and Members of the City Council,

Thank you for your continued partnership as we work to support the many needs of our community amid this enduring public health and economic crisis. Our ongoing collaboration will be vital in managing the uncertainties that still lie ahead. Now more than ever, this means relentlessly prioritizing the essential needs, services and supports our residents, workers, businesses and visitors rely on us to provide.

Throughout this pandemic, efforts like our Saint Paul Bridge Fund, the Pay It Forward program, and license relief measures have provided critical support for our businesses and workers vulnerable to the economic impacts of COVID. Still, we know that many challenges remain, and that we have work to do to ensure no one is left behind. This work undoubtedly includes considering changes to policies, procedures, and ordinances that support neighborhood vitality and offer greater flexibility for businesses, particularly through the unprecedented circumstances presented by the current pandemic economy. My administration has championed these types of meaningful measures, while remaining intentional about meeting our sworn duty to thoroughly review and vet each proposal.

With this duty in mind, I write to you today regarding the proposed change to Section 409.06 of Ordinance 20-29, pertaining to distance restrictions for off-sale wine licenses. While I appreciate the time and work members of the City Council have invested, staff in our Department of Safety and Inspections must have an opportunity to research the proposed ordinance, lay out potential impacts and alternatives, and adequately address the myriad questions and concerns currently being voiced by neighbors and business owners, ranging from public safety issues to market impacts and uncertainty about changes in sales tax revenues.

I believe this conversation - and all the businesses and neighbors impacted by it citywide - would benefit from an expanded public process to engage, explore alternatives, and create strategies to mitigate potential unintended consequences that this policy proposal may produce. I respectfully ask you to consider laying over the proposed change to Section 409.06 of Ordinance 20-29, until such time when this review can be reasonably completed by our Department of Safety and Inspections. I cannot in good faith sign such significant policy change into law without a thorough review by the city staff who will ultimately be charged with administering it.

I look forward to working together to give this important proposal the time and consideration it rightly deserves, and ensure we are moving forward in a way that effectively provides the intended benefits to workers, businesses and neighbors across our entire community. As always, thank you for being a teammate in this work.

Sincerely,

Melvin Carter  
Mayor