

From: [Kaitlin Ek](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Wheelock-Grotto Special Assessment
Date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 9:44:56 PM

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My name is Kaitlin Ek and I am an owner of 878 Parkview Avenue in Saint Paul. I am writing to object to the \$11,767 special assessment the City Council proposes to apply to my property in connection with the Wheelock-Grotto Street Reconstruction. Under Minnesota Statute § 429.051 and the Minnesota Constitution, a municipality may impose a special assessment on a property only if the property receives a special benefit from the improvement being constructed, and the amount of the assessment does not exceed the increase in property value resulting from the improvement.

I am objecting to the special assessment because I believe my property value will not increase, and may in fact decrease, as a result of the Wheelock-Grotto Street Reconstruction. My property value will not increase as a result of the sewer, water, and road updates because my property already has sewer and water service, as well as road access. The construction of a sidewalk will also result in a minimal--if any--increase in property value. Parkview Avenue is only a block long and has very little traffic. In fact, when our block has social events, we usually just bring lawn chairs right out to the middle of the street. To the extent a sidewalk benefits anyone, it benefits pedestrians who walk through the neighborhood, not the people who own property on Parkview Avenue.

Most importantly, the assessment does not account for the decrease in property values resulting from the city's removal of several mature boulevard trees as part of the Wheelock-Grotto Street Reconstruction. As you know, the residents of the neighborhood strongly objected to the removal of the trees, in part because mature trees can increase property values in a neighborhood significantly. Studies have shown that good tree canopy in proximity to a house can increase its value between 2% and 6%, conservatively. See Geoffrey H. Donovan & David T. Butry, *Trees in the city: Valuing street trees in Portland, Oregon*, Landscape and Urban Planning 77 (2010); Jonathan Dombrow, Mauricio Rodriguez & C. F. Sirmans, *The market value of mature trees in single-family housing markets*, 68 The Appraisal Journal, 39 (2000); Dominic J. Morales, *The Contribution of Trees to Residential Property Value*, 6(11) Journal of Arboriculture 305 (November 1980). The decrease in property value as a result of tree removal negates any potential increase in value resulting from the work to be done on the sewer, water, road, and sidewalk. As a result, no special assessment should be imposed.

Thank you,

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Kaitlin Ek
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