

From: [David Boyce](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Objection to Assessment
Date: Monday, October 9, 2023 11:01:12 PM
Attachments: [Objection to assessment.docx](#)

Dear City Council,

I have attached a Word version of my written objection to assessment for the Annapolis Street reconstruction project.

Sincerely,

David Boyce
323 Annapolis Street W

Date: October 8, 2023

Objection to Assessment

Parcel ID # 07-28-22-34-0153

Property Address: 323 Annapolis Street W

The street and boulevard work done on Annapolis Street these past few months has not provided any special benefit to the property located at 323 Annapolis Street W. In fact, it has likely resulted in a diminution of value of the property.

An assessment is allowed for work, including street work, that results in a special benefit to the property located adjacent to the work. A special benefit is an increase in the value of the property affected. The work done on Annapolis Street has not resulted in any increase in value of the property at 323 W because it has not improved any aspect of the use of the property and has diminished the aesthetic value.

Prior to the work in 2023, and for the past 33 years that we have lived here, Annapolis Street was a perfectly functional street. There were a few potholes several years ago, but they were fixed by the overlay of the travel lanes that was previously done. The sanitary sewer always functioned without backup or smell. The storm sewer, curb and gutter always functioned as expected, and flooding of the street never happened. We had sufficient water pressure for all of our needs.

Prior to the work this year, we had sidewalks and mature trees on the boulevard. The sidewalks were functional, with slight elevation changes here and there. I walked them with my dogs at least twice a day and never tripped, fell or stumbled. The lighting was only provided by high lights on the utility poles that run down the street. I believe we had one light at each end of the block and one near the middle.

In summary, there was nothing broken about Annapolis Street that needed fixing. The projects that were completed did not create any improvement in function or value for our property. I will address each item in more detail below.

Paving: The paving had been given an overlay in the travel lanes a few years ago and it was perfectly fine for travel. The only likely outcome of a fresh asphalt roadway will be slightly increased vehicle speed, which has already occurred. The speed of traffic does not add to the value of our property but rather detracts from it. If the City thought that the pavement was subpar, a sealcoating, such as that which was just completed on Smith Avenue, would have made it more uniform. The street was not narrowed. The only change is that parking will be eliminated on our side of the street and a bike lane installed. This just serves to bring the traffic several feet closer to our property, reducing its value.

Sanitary sewer: The sanitary sewer had no issues before the work this year. While the presentation materials issued prior to this year's work gave the impression that the sanitary sewer lines would be replaced, we were informed that they would not be and that they would be lined instead, at no cost to residents.

Storm sewer, curb and gutter: As I mentioned, the storm sewer never clogged or flooded during our 33 years living here. Replacing the storm sewer therefore provides no increase in value to our property.

Water main: We have had the same water pressure since we moved in 33 years ago, including before and after the work this year. We had our lead water line replaced many years ago. If there were any problems with this line, they had no impact on how water was provided to our property.

Boulevard trees: Due to the construction this year, every single mature tree on our block was cut down and removed. As a replacement, the City has planted some very young trees which will not begin to replace the value of the removed trees until about 20 years have passed. This has definitely reduced the value of our property.

Sidewalk: None of our sidewalk sections were cracked, crumbling or tilted. Their replacement was entirely unnecessary. The new sidewalk is in the exact same spot as the old one, neither closer to the street or the house. However, as part of the project, the small sidewalk section that connected our house's sidewalk with the street was not replaced. This means that we do not have a convenient access for drop off and pick up of visitor, packages, etc. This reduces the value of our property. And curiously, this small sidewalk extension was included for just one home out of the five that originally had it on our block. (As a side note, I notice that every house that had one on the West Saint Paul side of the street is getting one installed).

Lighting: The inclusion of an assessment for lighting is an INSULT. The rest of our neighborhood had this style of street lighting installed MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO. When we inquired at that time why our street was not included, we were told that it was because we were an arterial street and we would never have it. What did all of our neighbors pay for this lighting? My guess is nothing, but I suggest that you check your records. And when they had this lighting installed, no trees were cut down, no streets were ripped up, nothing else was done.

The light fixtures that have been installed on our block are almost all within a few feet of the ugly utility poles that also line our street. These new lights will primarily be lighting the bases of these ugly poles while calling attention to the lack of mature trees. In that way these lights will devalue our property.

In summary, since the Annapolis Street construction project fixed that which was not broken and caused property devaluation through removal of trees, shifting traffic closer to the property, eliminating sidewalk access to the street and highlighting the undesirable and unaesthetic utility poles and wires, no assessment should be imposed on 323 Annapolis Street W as a result.

Respectfully submitted,

David Boyce
Homeowner