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From: Mike Maxim [mailto:mikepmjr@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, August 31, 2015 12:52 AM

To: Council

Subject: Tonight's agenda

My name is Mike Maxim. I am 35 years old and have owned and operated Dubh Linn Irish Brew Pub for the past 10 years. I am emailing you with some concerns I have with the Superior Street reconstruction project, specifically the bike lanes being proposed as part of the renovations. I am a big advocate for growth in downtown Duluth, and with my livelihood directly connected to its success, I pay a great deal of attention to the average consumers wants and needs. Downtown Duluth faces stiff competition from every area of the city and the region, as parking is extremely limited. We are a small city. In a business district the size of a downtown Minneapolis, you have hundreds of thousands of people living in an area where "on street" parking is not an option. If you want to leave downtown Minneapolis for food or entertainment, you need to drive 30 minutes to another area of the city, so people adapt their behaviors. They mold themselves to the understanding that they need to change their habits and find alternative parking, such as ramps, because it is their only realistic option. In a city the size of Duluth, where even if you're downtown you know it's only a 10 minute drive to anywhere in the city, it becomes much more challenging to convince people they should park and walk 2 blocks, instead of simply driving to a parking lot in canal park, or the mall area, where they can park right in front of the restaurant/retail store they want to go to. There are not very many people who live in downtown Duluth. As a downtown business I have to convince people to travel from their homes in Lakeside, West Duluth, Woodland, Piedmont, and the rest of the area to come to my doors. Duluth is a "line of site" city. If when you park, you can't see the place you are going to, it feels like too much work for most people. If I had a parking lot similar to Olive Garden outside my doors, I would do 50% more business every year, and am reminded of this by my customers on a regular basis. I like the plans I have seen for the Superior Street renovations, and support having bike lanes running through downtown Duluth to accommodate bikers and promote outdoor activities during the summer, but with the streets as narrow as they are, I do not see bike lanes as a viable option on Superior Street. Green space and parking are key to the downtowns success. Every parking spot that could be added to superior street is worth thousands of dollars a month to a business like mine. With taxes and fees increasing every year, along with minimum wage increases, it becomes a battle to stay open. I say that as a business owner with a young family, who has established himself and works 60 hours a week to keep the doors open. The amount of parking on the streets already restricts my ability to grow a successful business, and less parking would have a huge negative impact. I have been to almost every meeting involving the bike lane issue, and as a lifelong Duluth resident with thousands of acquaintances and friends in the area, I understand and have compassion for both sides of the issue. I think the Michigan street bike lane option is viable and effective in accomplishing a bike route through the downtown district. Losing any parking in the downtown area is hard for a business in my line of work. For every one customer who wants a bike lane on Superior Street, there are a hundred who complain to me that there is nowhere to park downtown. I spend tens of thousands of dollars a year to convince people it's "worth the effort" to come downtown. Because of the narrow street width, there are no perfect solutions. The Michigan street bike lane will push some parking onto Superior Street, which is not ideal, but a compromise that I understand and support as a reasonable alternative. I do think having a bike route through the downtown district is important, and I think the Michigan street route is a good option for all parties involved in order to have their primary needs met. Both the businesses and the bikers get what is most important to them, with a

small sacrifice to the other side. Unfortunately I am not able to attend Monday's meeting on the issue, but I wanted to be able to address my concerns with you directly. Thanks for your time, and let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

Mike Maxim  
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