

From: Dean Baltes [mailto:dbaltes@sheldonduluth.com]

Sent: Sunday, September 27, 2015 9:49 AM

To: Council

Cc: kstokes@downtownduluth.com; dross@Duluthchamber.com (dross@Duluthchamber.com)

Subject: Bicycle lanes in downtown Duluth

Good day,

My name is Dean Baltes, and I am the owner of Shel/Don which is located at 124 East Superior Street. Shel/Don is a full service printing facility with a sister company called Shel/Don Business Solutions which is a regional distributor of Canon-Oce multifunctional copiers and related printing equipment. We own the building and employ 35 full time employees. Our main entrance is on Superior Street, and the freight and delivery entrance is on Michigan Street.

Accessible parking is crucial for Superior Street. The business would be adversely affected if the total amount of parking spaces in our neighborhood were reduced. Our clients currently park as far as two blocks away as we already have limited street parking. A further reduction would only spread the problem over a wider area. We are a manufacturing business with a considerable amount of daily walk-in traffic. From the moment we open at 8:00 am until our close at 5:00 pm, there is an almost constant flow of customers picking up and dropping off printed materials. We also receive freight at the Superior Street entrance. Our Superior Street entrance is finally seeing a return of good traffic again after our two plus years of battling the Last Place on Earth's clientele.

We have recently given up three parking spaces on Michigan Street that are now a designated loading zone during business hours. The reason for the loading zone is to move the semi trailers that deliver to our Michigan Street freight entrance closer to the curb as the entrance for I-35 North causes a narrowing of Michigan Street at the Second Avenue East corner. That move has made the street much safer due to the increased right of way to continue on Michigan Street. Splitting that space with a bicycle lane does seem to be a viable option, but there would need to be additional discussion to ensure deliveries have adequate space.

Saturday night Jeanette and I switched roles from business owner to consumers in our HART district. We had dinner with friends from Superior at the Pick Wick. We traveled Superior Street from the Pick Wick to the Radisson and observed a nearly 100% occupancy of the available parking. Every block has at least one restaurant or bar that depends on accessible parking. It was wonderful to see so much activity and people supporting our downtown businesses.

During the time of the original bricking of Superior Street many businesses did not survive because nearly all parking spaces were eliminated with the exception of parking between Third and Fourth Avenue West. It was not until parking was restored in 1999 that a resurgence of business was seen. For the last fifteen years, we have worked tirelessly to revitalize our Greater Downtown area with great success. To tamper with that success now is sobering for any business owner on Superior Street. In our tight knit business community, we feel if one business fails, we have all failed.

It is my option that Michigan Street bicycle lane past our business provides the least disruptive solution so that we can continue doing business in downtown Duluth. I will be attending the

Duluth City Council meeting on Monday. Please consider carefully the impact on our Downtown Businesses while making your decision.

Respectfully yours,
Dean Baltes
Shel/Don Group Inc
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