

January 7 2013

Although I'm currently on, and have been a long-time member of the Dayton's Bluff District Council, I'm writing to you as a 30-year resident of 729 East 6th Street. I strongly support a proposal to close East 6th Street between Mounds Boulevard and Maria Avenue, adjacent to Metropolitan State University.

This is not a new idea to those of us who live along 6th Street, where we've suggested it in the past as a traffic-calming measure. But with Metropolitan State University's planned expansion to the other side of 6th Street for their new Science Building, it makes even more sense. An open, pedestrian mall would really present the picture of a true college campus. Plus, the fantastic views of downtown St. Paul, would be open to anyone traversing that area and even encourage people to sit outside for a while, as opposed to the few moments they would be passing through a skyway before entering another building.

Yes, the omission of a skyway across 6th Street would indeed make us residents happy. None of us wants to lose the opportunity to step outside our homes and see this sight, or no longer have that grand view as we drive down toward the City. Besides taking away this view, a skyway would only serve to cut off the college from the residential community.

Furthermore, when concerns are expressed about student safety crossing 6th Street, it doesn't fall on deaf ears. We have the same concerns when we pass our kids waiting on the corners of 6th Street, waiting for a chance to make a successful crossing. A closure at Mounds Boulevard and its subsequent impact on traffic would make 6th Street a safer street for all.

I understand there would be an impact to such a closure. Surely traffic studies would need to be done to determine the effect on East 7th Street and East 3rd Street. However, we shouldn't forget that 7th Street is exactly where we, particularly our local businesses, want traffic to go. A million dollars is being invested in 7th Street as part of the "Make It Happen on East 7th Street Initiative" project. Surely this would be a great opportunity to further that program, by exposing our business district to many more travelers through our neighborhood.

Please consider this proposal to close this block of 6th Street and research it as a serious possibility. I look forward to hearing more about this process.

Thank you.
Jean Comstock