

Blake-Horst, Meghan

From: TacoCat Creations [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 1:36 PM
To: Blake-Horst, Meghan; Verveer, Michael; [redacted]
Cc: Benford, Brian
Subject: Regarding the Proposed Changes to the 2023-2024 Mall Concourse Vending Map:

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To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Meagan Porter and I own TacoCat Creations. I have held a City of Madison arts and crafts street vending permit for three years. I am a lifelong Wisconsin resident, and I have been a resident of the city of Madison for 15 years, currently residing on Curtis Court in District 6. I am a voter, a taxpayer, and a business owner. My business is also located in District 6 at the Madison Enterprise Center on South Baldwin Street. My business is female owned and minority owned and operated as I am a member of the Oneida Nation of the Six Nations Reservation. My business provides employment for two full time people and three part time people. My business fully supports myself and my family.

I would like to register my opposition to the elimination of seven street vending locations on State Street and the West Mifflin intersection starting in 2023. The elimination of those spots would negatively affect the income of dozens of vendors, myself included.

The Madison Street Vending Program is the one thing that has made it possible for me to take my small business from a side hustle hobby to my full time job. As someone who generates my own income, I like to tell people that vending adjacent to the Dane County Farmers Market on Saturday mornings is the closest thing I have to a dependable weekly paycheck. In fact, street vending sales have accounted for 29% of my gross overall sales for this year alone.

Arts and crafts street vending on State Street is a tradition, not only during the Saturday Farmers Markets but it has become so popular with vendors and visitors that it has expanded to events such as the Madison Night Market and the Taste of Madison, just to name a few. The presence of artists and makers showing off and selling their creations makes our city vibrant and unique. Why then, when the program is flourishing and even growing, would you purposely choose to kneecap those business owners who make that vibrancy and tradition possible?

Shuffling all the vendors down State Street would only serve to create more vacant space on a street already suffering from empty storefronts and a lack of economic activity. It would break up the continuity of the vendors and dissuade those visiting the Farmer's Market from wandering down an empty street. This decision defies both consumer economics and common sense.

The reasons given for eliminating those vendor sites do not make sense. As a vendor, I have never heard visitors complain about crowding or that they don't have access to a visitors booth. In fact, as a vendor, I find myself answering a lot of questions for visitors and I am very happy to do so. As far as the bike boulevard goes, cyclists should expect that the downtown area is going to be congested on Saturday mornings, as it often is during similar events many other times of the year. Cyclists should be walking their bikes on that sidewalk

anyway; we don't need to make it easier for Spandexed Trek junkies who treat the bike path like their own personal Tour de France (we've all seen the ones I'm talking about) to collide into tourists and families with strollers at full speed. And Ian's Pizza doesn't even open until 11 am and can already have their full sidewalk cafe out after the arts and crafts vendors leave. It doesn't make sense then to disadvantage the four small business owners who set up by Ian's in favor of an already very successful national pizza chain with nine locations (only three locations in Madison). I don't think that having to wait three extra hours once a week to set up their sidewalk cafe is going to bankrupt them - they have a combined revenue of \$35 million and report that their revenue per employee is at an all time high, with profit margins of 12-20%. But for the four small business owners that you are proposing to be moved, it may very well be the difference between flourishing or dying.

In considering your vote on this proposed change, I encourage you to think about what kind of city you want Madison to be in the future. Is your aim to support and uplift small local business owners like myself? Or are you in favor of vacancy, empty spaces, and holding space for a national pizza chain to make a few extra bucks on a Saturday morning? Your decision could make all the difference for small local business owners like me.

Thank you for your time,
Meagan Porter

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