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May 26, 2021

Stating Objections to Proposal for Sale of Residential Parking Spaces

To the Editor:

The current proposal for selling parking spaces on our residential streets in order to add bike lanes to a major artery is a disaster. We urge Council to turn down this plan. Both components of the plan — bicycle lanes on a major road, and the sale of parking spaces on residential streets — will have catastrophic and far-reaching results.

Hamilton/Wiggins/Paul Robeson is a major artery in town that runs parallel to Nassau Street and serves as a connecting link to major highways in our county, our state, and beyond. It is misguided to think that this major crosstown artery is wide enough to accommodate bicycles as well as the heavy traffic and trucks that use this road on a normal traffic day. Bicycles are not meant to be part of a major network of heavily traveled highways.

Where are the traffic surveys that led to this plan? Consider this: during the past 15+ months of the COVID pandemic, traffic was anything but normal, much lighter, almost non-existent. Schools were closed and most office employees worked at home. No one was commuting to work! This will change as schools and businesses open again. Summer traffic is also light, with schools closed and people out of town, so any traffic surveys taken during the past 15+ months and including this summer must be incorrect. This is not the time to make major changes to any roads or traffic patterns.

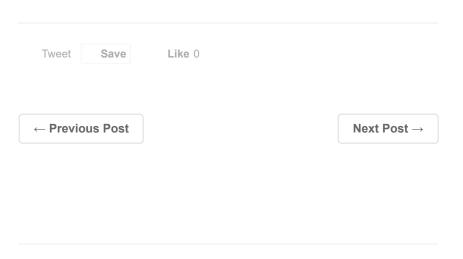
You may not be aware that students at Princeton High School are not allowed to drive to school until spring term of senior year. This is a Board of Education ruling that has been on the books for ages. Who are the "school parking spaces" reserved for?

The plan you put forth sounds rather complex, with multiple entities paying for permits at times and addresses which overlap. Who will benefit from this plan? How many cyclists?

It is not right to use residential neighborhoods for city parking. Residents of Princeton pay very high taxes, and adding the burden of commercial parking on our residential streets will result in unwanted traffic and destroy the tranquility and privacy of our neighborhoods. Right now we have quiet streets and sidewalks that are adequate for use by residents of the neighborhoods, guests, school children, neighbors walking dogs, or going for a run or a stroll. In other words, people enjoying the quality of life in a small town. We have a permit system that has been in place for many years that works well. The idea of a for-profit company selling parking spaces and providing surveillance of parked cars is an outrageous invasion of privacy and an added threat to the safety of our homes and families.

This plan has not been adequately thought out. It reeks of commercialism invading our neighborhoods. We urge Council to turn down this proposal.

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