

From: [Lisa M. Burke](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: In Support of the DID
Date: Friday, July 19, 2024 2:44:42 PM

I attended the City Council meeting on Wednesday, in support of the expansion of the DID, and was pleased to see so many corporate leaders and downtown residents give the proposal their emphatic support as well.

The three people who spoke in opposition to the DID expansion appeared, in my opinion, to not understand the purpose and goals of expanding the district. Had I been more courageous I would have spoken to their concerns and assured them that the DID ambassadors are not security guards who will be persecuting homeless and BIPOC people, but well-trained individuals who are building relationships with residents in downtown St. Paul, including the homeless.

I have had a number of conversations with an ambassador who can frequently be found in Rice Park. He now knows well over 100 homeless, unwell and potentially problematic individuals who frequent the downtown area by name. As an example of the value of his relationships with these people a fellow recently came charging across Rice Park, in obvious distress, screaming and scaring those present in the area. This ambassador approached him, addressed him by name, asked him what was going on that day and invited him to sit on a bench with him; he offered the fellow a bottle of water and had a conversation with him. The fellow, who is mentally ill, was having a particularly rough day, but calmed with this caring attention. The ambassador reminded him that Listening House serves lunch and encouraged him to go get a good meal. When the fellow left he was calm and, doubtless, felt heard by someone who cares about his wellbeing.

I and my neighbors at 9th Street Lofts on Wacouta Commons look forward to seeing the ambassadors in our neighborhood and getting to know them.

Thank you.

Lisa Burke

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