

# PETITION TO QUASH THE PROPOSED ONE-SIDED PARKING RESTRICTION ON 27<sup>TH</sup> STREET FROM CARPENTER AVENUE TO FOREST AVENUE

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We, the undersigned call upon the Des Moines City Council to deny the proposed change to the parking scheme on 27<sup>th</sup> Street between Carpenter Avenue to Forest Avenue which would permanently ban parking on the east side of the street. The proposal should be denied for the following reasons:

1. **THE COMMUNITY DEPENDS UPON THE STREET FOR PARKING:** This street is heavily used by the community at Drake on a daily basis for the exact thing that this ban is trying to take away --- parking. Such a ban would be a hardship on a significant number of the community.
2. **SNOW EMERGENCIES CAN ADEQUATELY ADDRESS SNOW/ICE SAFETY CONCERNS:** While we acknowledge the power of the City to regulate snow routes, under §321.236 of the Iowa Code, a complete ban on parking is overbroad. Creating a Snow Route, similar to most other areas of the city would allow the city to adequately clear the street and still allow parking.
3. **27<sup>th</sup> IS CURRENTLY ACCESSIBLE TO EMERGENCY VEHICLES WHICH CAN AND HAVE USED THIS STREET SINCE THE TWO-SIDED PARKING HAS BEEN IN EFFECT:** 27<sup>th</sup> Street is slightly over 30 feet wide (wider than the average urban residential street). With cars parked on both sides, the average distance between the cars is 15 feet. The body of the largest Des Moines ladder truck is only 8'3" wide (slightly under 10' if you include the mirrors). Des Moines Firefighters have indicated that if they can make the turn they would be able to proceed down the street as they have done so in the past. Further, they indicated ambulances don't have difficulties traversing these areas as they are not as wide or long.
4. **THE STREET IS SAFE:** The regular heavy usage of 27<sup>th</sup> Street by the community is evidence of its safety. If students, staff, or visitors feared damage to their property in this area, they would naturally choose an alternative. The mere fact that there is parking on both sides slows the traffic pattern as many cars are looking for a space available on the street. There have been no reported incidents of pedestrians being struck crossing this street, let alone any attributable to the two-sided parking scheme. Contrarily, taking away parking on 27<sup>th</sup> Street actually makes students feel less safe. With the proposed parking ban, students will no longer be able to park close to the Jewett residence hall, undergraduate library, and law school library. These facilities are usually used by students spending late nights studying. Parking on 27<sup>th</sup> Street provides a safe and close alternative to parking further away.
5. **THE PROPOSED CHANGE IS ILL-ADVISED AND INCONSISTENT WITH ITS REASONING:** This proposal suggests that removal of the east side parking would make it easier for emergency vehicles to traverse the street. However, Des Moines firefighters have noted that emergency vehicles take wide turns and therefore parking on the west side would actually be a greater impediment to such vehicles entering onto the street. Moreover, access to the street's only fire hydrant will hardly be improved as it is on the west side. Further the east side has more parking spots to offer.

6. **THERE IS NO EQUIVALENT SUBSTITUTE:** 27<sup>th</sup> Street is heavily utilized by the Drake community and its visitors for its safe, convenient, and free parking. There is no equivalent substitute.
- a. Parking Lots – Despite Drake’s indication that they have expanded parking around campus, they fail to mention two important points. First, the expansion of parking spots was due to the outcry by those with parking passes who could not find parking in the lots they were permitted to park, not to relieve street parking. Second, parking in these lots is not free and therefore fails to meet one of the key elements offered by 27<sup>th</sup> Street. This creates a notable hardship on students who may not have the disposable income to pay for the privilege of Drake owned lot parking. Moreover, these lots fail to provide convenience as there is no lot within several blocks of 27<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - b. City Streets – Other city streets in close proximity include parking limitations which significantly limit their convenience, a significant positive element of 27<sup>th</sup> Street. Strict enforcement of the parking on neighboring streets requires students, staff, and visitors to regularly return to their vehicles to move them lest they be ticketed—and likely towed. Such a situation is inconsistent with an institution of learning where studies or long presentations can lead one to forget that it is time to move their vehicle.
  - c. Drake neighborhood Streets – The only alternative streets offering free parking— those in the neighborhood south of Drake—lack both convenience and safety. Students are forced to walk a much further distance—sometimes alone at night— off campus where Drake security does not regularly patrol. Such a walk is exasperated in the winter months when students have to trudge their way through the elements, crossing a busy University Avenue, to reach streets off-campus.
7. **A MAJORITY OF RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY THE PARKING BAN WERE NOT INFORMED OF THE POTENTIAL BAN:** Usually, before a parking ban is put in place on a public street, a petition is sent to directly-affected property owners to put them on notice of the requested ban. This allows residents affected by the potential ban to voice their opinion. Although a letter of request for the restriction was submitted by Drake faculty member Victoria Payseur and the private property owner on 27<sup>th</sup> Street—Floyd Seward—the 160 residents of Jewett Residence Hall received no voice in the decision. Drake University failed to receive approval—or even inform the residents of Jewett who consider Drake their home—that their ability to park on 27<sup>th</sup> would be restricted. The parking lot for Jewett only contains 28 spots. Therefore, many of the Jewett residents are very upset over this parking ban, as evidenced by the attached petition; the first 83 signatures are from Jewett residents. Furthermore, several other Drake students use 27<sup>th</sup> Street on a daily basis and should have been allowed the opportunity to voice their opinion. Without an open dialogue about this issue, hundreds of students, faculty, and visitors will be negatively affected.

For the reasons stated above as well as for other reasons not enumerated herein, we respectfully request the Des Moines City Council deny the Amendment to the Municipal Code banning parking on the east side of 27<sup>th</sup> Street:

The Undersigned Community.