

**NEWTON STREET UNITED SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS**  
**1800-1900 NEWTON**  
**NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70114**

June 22, 2020

The Honorable Latoya Cantrell, Mayor  
City of New Orleans  
1300 Perdido Street, Room 2E04  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

Re: Newton Street Bike Lanes

Dear Mayor Cantrell:

On Wednesday June 17, 2020, several business owners met with Ms. Allison Cormier of your Office of Neighborhood Engagement to discuss the impact and negative effects of the newly installed bike lanes to the business owners in the 1800 block of Newton Street. Ms. Cormier was very respectful, attentive and engaging throughout the meeting. We explained, although we are not fully operating, we are already experiencing problems from the placement of these lanes. In many ways, the obtrusiveness of these lanes and their adverse impact on our businesses feels like a veiled attempt to force us out of business and subsequently out of our own neighborhood. As such, we need an immediate resolution.

We realize the benefits bike lanes bring to a community. They provide safety for those commuting on bikes, help promote a healthy and active lifestyle, help with business growth in the community, and help improve the overall lives of the residents in the community. However, the newly installed bike lanes in the 1800 block of Newton provide none of these benefits. The lanes present glaring safety concerns for the bike riders, car drivers, and pedestrians in the neighborhood. Cars exiting the side streets of Hendee, Sumner, and Wagner now must pull halfway into the street to see if there is oncoming traffic.

Individuals exiting their cars have very little time to safely do so because they are forced to park inches away from the cars driving on Newton Street. Recently one of our customer's vehicle was hit by a passing car as she was exiting her vehicle. Our senior and handicap drivers are now pushed closer to cars moving at a high rate of speed. These issues take away from the safety of the community and we believe they create an ongoing hazard.

The lanes also have taken away parking spots from our respective businesses. Every business in our block is predominately visited by individuals arriving by car, not via bicycle.

There is a mechanic shop/brake tag station, a lounge, 2 beauty salons, a barber shop, an event hall, and a law office. With half of the parking taken away by the bike lanes, we are now all competing for five parking spots. This has added an unnecessary burden to our businesses and our patrons. Customers are now forced to choose whether to navigate the potentially hazardous parking conditions or take their business elsewhere. As such, we believe that the lack of adequate and safe parking to be a detriment to our businesses.

Lastly, only one business owner was notified of the City's plan to install the bike lanes. Ms. Cormier explained that there were other means of communication. She admitted that no emails or letters were directly sent out us. Ninety-nine percent of the businesses did not receive one letter, email or other communication. We were never notified of not one meeting.

We believe a more concerted door to door effort would have been more appropriate given the level of disruption the addition of bike lanes was likely to cause. In sum, while we do recognize the value, safety and experience that bike lanes add to a community, we do not believe in this instance the lanes provide value or safety to our community. We believe the lanes decrease our respective businesses 'value and make parking in our community a potentially hazardous and/or dangerous enterprise for our residents, our businesses and our customers.

We know you have several major issues you are managing, but this is as "vital as a heartbeat to us" as it affects our lives and livelihoods. Therefore, we respectfully request a written response within seven (7) days of receiving this letter. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss our concerns and a potential solution to this matter.

Sincerely,

Patricia B. Tombar  
Olde Algiers Center

Olita Young  
Beauty Concepts

Atty. Freddie King, III  
The King Law Firm

Brian Pollar  
The B Spot

Darrin Brewer  
The Perfect Cut

Robert Thomas  
The New Terrance

Loy Cambal  
Madrigal Pop-up

Shelton Becnel, Sr.  
Becnel Automotive Services

NSUSBO:pbt

cc: Councilmember Kristen G. Palmer  
Ms. Allison Cormier  
Mr. R. J. Bolling