

From: [Patti Gmeiner](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#)
Subject: Hillcrest Master Plan: Vote to delay and support a better future
Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2022 11:36:07 AM

Dear Council Member,

I realise I am coming to this debate late. A lot of hard work has gone into the development of this plan. The momentum is in favor of going with what is being proposed and I would ask you to slow down to consider a bigger picture of what could serve the neighborhood better. Please consider a delay of approval.

As a founding member of St. Paul 350 I was aware of the development pre-pandemic and excited about the potential of what could be created as a model for a new way of creative development that considers what is best for both people and the planet. During the pandemic I took a break from St. Paul 350 as I had only limited bandwidth for Zoom. In catching up I see that they are enthusiastically supporting the plan. I am deeply divided as I know that their values and mine are aligned. So much of the plan is written in ways that give voice to my ideals but my heart sank when I saw the actual design. This is not somewhere I would want to live! From my perspective the plan takes new innovative ideals and squeezes them into an old model of light industrial buildings covering the majority of this beautiful land.

On May 14th I was at a Metropolitan State Expo to promote Hmong economic development on the east side. I was at a table promoting the idea that there is a possible green alternative to turning Hillcrest into a majority industrial park while still addressing all of the needs identified in the plan. Someone who lives within a block of the site shared that neighbors of his are fleeing the area concerned about what the new plan will do to disrupt the current residential neighborhood. He stated that he and others in the neighborhood have been sharing their concerns all along but have felt shut down in the process.

The Ford Site which was originally an industrial site offering good paying jobs is now being renovated into a beautiful and creative mix of new land use. I am glad to see this but I am aware that this is being done in an already prosperous area of St. Paul. Someone intimately involved in fighting for the site to continue to be used as a place for living wage industrial jobs shared that he was told don't worry we will be using Hillcrest for that development. I have to wonder if this is partly due to the makeup of the neighborhood and that it is less valued. Turning a beautiful neighborhood asset with potential to truly enhance the neighborhood in creative ways into basically an industrial park with housing and green space as add ons (my perspective) feels like taking advantage of a part of St. Paul that has less of a voice in what matters to them.

I sincerely believe that there are win/win options that can come out of slowing down the approval and inviting in more design options. I understand that there is a June 15th deadline for alternative plans to be submitted and will be joining forces with others similarly concerned about losing this jewel to see what we can deliver. The net zero carbon goal is outstanding and can be the centerpiece of a plan that does more to save the natural beauty of what is already there while providing housing, employment and community building in creative ways that will encourage a brighter future!

Please consider slowing down now to give time for a better outcome in the long run.

Thank you for your consideration,
Patti Gmeiner,
St. Paul resident
651-600-7663