



ASANDC

Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood
Development Corporation

"To improve the social and economic well-being of the people we serve"

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March 15, 2021

City of Saint Paul
Attn: City Council Members
1400 City Hall Annex
25 West 4th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Re: Letter Not to Support for Alatus Development LLC Site Plan Proposal at 411-417 Lexington Parkway N

Dear Council Members:

I am writing on behalf of Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation (ASANDC) to express our concerns for the site plans for the Lexington Station Apartments. The coronavirus and the tragic death of George Floyd has created a heightened obligation for the city of Saint Paul to address the racial, economic, social, and housing issues in the Frogtown and Rondo neighborhoods. According to Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) there is a greater need to provide housing for households with incomes that are at or below 30% AMI which accounts for more than half of Minnesota's low-income renters (AAFCCOP, 2016). The surrounding neighborhoods in which this development would be located represent a community in which households earn less than \$35,000. Also, Rondo descendants have not forgotten the devastation of a neighborhood and this development perpetuates gentrification.

Community members insist that the Comprehensive Plan be followed, which makes it clear that the city is committed to equitable and affordable housing. Also, the Lexington Station Area plan was developed with community and city input. As the city and the community knows when the Greenline was being built it called for large parcels to be divided, because large buildings on these sites would not be walkable or have an "urban grid" or neighborhood feel. However, the Wilder Foundation insists on selling the two lots as one, creating an incredibly high cost for community development organizations to purchase and develop affordable housing.

Furthermore, last month, members of the City Planning Commission listened to the community and voted NO on the Alatus site plan. It is deeply disturbing to hear that city staff are seeking ways to undermine the vote and push this project through. Too many lives are at jeopardy and city officials may not understand the heighten emergency for racial, economic, social, and housing justice. As a community agency we know the pulse of the community and we believe this project is not what the Rondo and Frogtown community wants or needs.

Therefore, ASANDC requests that city council members vote "no" on the appeal submitted by Alatus.

Sincerely,

Deborah Mitchell, PhD
Executive Director