

Dear Mayor Coleman,

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the conduct of the City in planning for the new Saint Paul Saints Ballpark on the Diamond Products site.

I find it unconscionable that the City has moved forward with the taking of private property through eminent domain without first providing a plan for the replacement of that property. Parking is already at a premium in the neighborhood and the increased traffic will make my neighborhood unlivable without dedicated, nearby and safe parking for MarketHouse Condominium. My property value has already taken a terrible hit in the economic downturn through no fault of my own. I think it is reprehensible that the City will add salt to that wound by taking value from my property and further reducing my property value. The owners at MarketHouse Condominium worked for 12 years to secure parking for the Building. We did it because there was a need. Without parking, our building becomes much less desirable.

Furthermore, the elimination of more than 300 parking spaces overall in Lowertown will further exacerbate the problem. On event days, without dedicated parking for MarketHouse, it will be impossible for us to park.

I understand that there is an alternate plan proposed for the reuse of the Diamond Products building that would provide plenty of parking for MarketHouse, neighborhood businesses and visitors to Lowertown. In reading the Greater Lowertown Area Masterplan adopted by the City last year, I notice that many of the principles laid out in the guidelines for the development of Lowertown support reuse of the Diamond Products building. I am concerned that in the rush to demolish the Diamond Products building, these principles are not being applied.

Many aspects of the alternative plan to reuse the Diamond Products building such as year-round use, improved traffic circulation, functional parking for the Farmer's Market, will enhance the livability of the neighborhood, increase property values and broaden and improve the tax base.

Please reconsider the decision to demolish the Diamond Products building. The City should do due diligence to study the possibility of reuse, before expending the exorbitant cost of demolishing such a well built structure. The amount of soil mitigation due to the brown field conditions would also be avoided. A minimal expenditure of design dollars could be used to verify the viability of the alternate plan and help MarketHouse and Lowertown remain a vital, livable neighborhood which so many of us have worked years to build.

Regardless of what is done with the Diamond Products building, there needs to be a parking solution for MarketHouse Condominium that is dedicated and safe. Please bring all resources to bear on this issue.

Sincerely,

Tim Heitman
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(owner and resident since 1991).

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