

June 28, 2020

TO: Board of Zoning Appeals

FROM: Mathews Hollinshead, 2114 Pinehurst Ave, St. Paul 55116, 651-492-0645

RE: File 20-038544

I write in opposition to the variance that would waive eight carshare parking spaces among the 436 parking spaces proposed for the project. There is currently no plan to locate these elsewhere on the Ford Site.

Including car sharing by parcel is not ideological whimsey. Personally-owned vehicles cost on average \$9,300/year according to AAA, yet sit idle 95% of their life, requiring parking stalls or spaces that inflate the price of associated homes or apartments by thousands or tens of thousands of dollars. Retiring baby boomers on reduced, fixed income are peaking demand for affordable downsizing just as inventory is at a very low ebb. 2170 Ford is within minutes' walk of multiple transit lines — including the A Bus Rapid line — that connect to the Blue, Green and scores of other lines, of destinations and to both downtowns, offering financial freedom from owning an expensive, idle individual car. And, not incidentally, transportation is the number one climate change emissions source.

Car sharing at the Ford Site is a simple and quick way to make new housing there affordable. So Byzantine are normal channels to affordable housing that only three of the 2170 Ford Parkway units will be officially “affordable.” If car sharing were marketed as or made a condition of, say, just 30 units, those might all become affordable for those who otherwise could not afford them — without any of the complex incentives and regulations and subsidies and tax credits that make affordable housing otherwise much more complicated than it should be.

Perhaps you or someone in your family or among your wider circle recently went on a fixed retirement income that is a third of career high, wants to move, and needs the proceeds of the sale of a current family home for emergencies such as surprise billing by hospitals or clinics or, eventually, long-term assisted living or nursing care. Saving six or eight thousand dollars per year while still having a car available could be the financial path to living at 2170 Ford Parkway, or other addresses within the Ford Site.

HourCar is in a transition to all-electric vehicles and one-way trips. Ryan offers an electric scooter hub, but scooters are all too obviously no substitute. You cannot carry anything on a scooter. You cannot take a child or grandchild or friend or little sister on a scooter. You cannot — or should not — use it if you have disabilities, even some otherwise minor ones. Highland Village street traffic is not safe on a scooter so riders use the sidewalks — making the sidewalks unsafe for pedestrians.

Given urgent local concerns about traffic, city/county and state climate change plans, the baby-boomer bulge in real estate downsizing, reduced income of retiring seniors, the dual shocks of reduced government revenues and increased taxes stemming from Covid and recent small business destruction, I submit that a robust, immediate car sharing program. for the Ford Site is a top priority now, while infrastructure is still pending and sub-developers have yet to break ground. We literally cannot afford to wait.

Mr. Hollinshead is a member of the Transportation Advisory Board of the Metropolitan Council

Sent from my iPad