

Julie Kaupa (W3): Please postpone Ford site vote until new mayor is sworn in, or oppose zoning. Must listen to citizens

Dear City Council Thao,

The city planners need to rethink the priorities as expressed in the draft Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan, particularly related to the number of dwelling units and parking spaces.

The planners tout this to be concentrated urban development where people live, work and play, yet they are open to the possibility of having more than 10,000 additional vehicles in the 122-acre site given the number of proposed dwelling units and the mixed use development on the parcel.

The draft document also states the possibility of developers suggesting amendments when drawing up the final plans.

The Multimodal Transportation Study and Report for the site also glosses over the potential problems of congestion in an already congested area. It downplays the external trips generated to and from the Ford site. People who live in condos/apartments and like to bike and hike do not necessarily give up their vehicles, particularly in areas known for sub-zero temperatures.

I wonder if the planners are expecting to have new jobs/offices move to the Ford site, or they are expecting jobs/offices to move from other parts of the Twin Cities? Chances of the latter being the case are disproportionately high, and in that case one can only surmise the number of workers who'll be driving back and forth.

The Highland Park area already suffers from a traffic congestion problem, which can only become much more acute given the proposed development at the Ford site. It'll also severely lower the quality of life in Highland Park. Also, the proposed density at the Ford site potentially can add to urban crime in our neighborhood. The incidence of violent crime per square mile rise rather than fall with population density. Imagine its impact on the property values in the neighborhood?

I've read in newspapers that the draft plan was approved in a rush and that the St. Paul City Council is only concerned about expanding its tax base, and lining the pockets of developers in the process with total disregard to the wishes of the people who call Highland Park home.

I ask the St. Paul City Council members to show this is not the case and that they not approve the Planning Commission's report. The council should ask the commission to rethink its position.

We are not against development, but it should take into account what's feasible and is in the long-term interest of the area and the city. If the neighborhood becomes unlivable, people aren't going to stay here. We should limit the number of dwellings to less than 2000.

I wonder if we can ask the Ford Co. to donate the land to the city and get a tax write-off, allowing the city to avoid the temptation to maximize density in the proposed development.

Let the development of the Ford site be an opportunity for this council to leave a lasting legacy.

Thanks

Regards

Pratik Joshi

16XX Beechwood Ave.

Dear Councilmember Thao,

My name is Susan Heegaard and I have lived in Highland for more than 20 years with my husband and 2 kids - we chose to live in St. Paul (I am from a many generation Minneapolis family) after moving back to MN. Please consider voting yes on the Ford site plan. I have concerns and worries (mostly about density and traffic) but am more for than against the plan. It is a starting point and we will be in a better bargaining position with a plan prior to the sale. I worry that a delay will open us up to a big stall. The criticism of Chris Tolbert and fuzzy facts presented by the opponents of the plan are troubling I also think that there a a few opponents who behave as if their voice and view matters more than the rest of the neighborhood. We all live here and Councilmemeber speaks for me and my family as well as many neighbors and friends. We are not the island of Highland, we are part of the the city and county too. I want a viable and welcoming city for years to come. Please vote yes.

Thank you, Respectfully, Susan Heegaard

Dear Council Member Thao,

I am a resident in the Highland/Macalester Groveland neighborhood and I **OPPOSE** the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan and you want the City Council to delay the vote until the new Mayor is sworn into office in January.

Please understand that I live in Highland/Mac Groveland and have purchased my home paid taxes for over 20 years. The proposed Ford Site plan would make the site too densely population so that it would drastically affect our neighborhood traffic, infrastructure and air quality and culture of the neighborhood. This development is not appropriate for its location which is a mile off the highway and at a beautiful river front area. Please do not urbanize Highland. We need green space and a variety of

housing, but not several apartment/condo buildings over 3 or 4 stories. The neighborhood cannot support the increase in population. This is not what Highland is or stands for and we demand that the council listen to its citizens.

Thank you.

Julie Kaupa

17XX Juliet Ave.

St. Paul, MN 55105

Councilmember Thao,

On behalf of numerous organizations and community members who believe that a sustainable community is one that finds strength in the changes that come with time, we urge you to support the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan. As neighbors invested in the future livability and sustainability of our city, we support the Ford Plan.

In our attached letter, we describe how the Ford Site can improve our community. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

--

Russ Adams

Executive Director

Honorable City Councilmember Dai Thao
310-A City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd W.
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Councilmember Thao,

On behalf of numerous organizations and community members who believe that a sustainable community is one that finds strength in the changes that come with time, we urge you to support the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan. As neighbors invested in the future livability and sustainability of our city, we support the Ford Plan because:

The Ford Site represents an opportunity for St. Paul to be a national and global leader in environmentally sustainable neighborhood planning. The plan provides responsible protection of natural resources along the riverfront, additional green space, and the opportunity to explore alternative forms of energy. Good land use planning, which includes density and transit-oriented development, is necessary for our city and state to do our part to address climate change. By integrating the site with our transit system, community members can choose to live in the city with minimal reliance on automobile travel. By designing buildings that are energy efficient with renewable sources, residents will benefit from improved air quality and low energy bills, and communities can attract economic growth by supporting adding housing options on a near net-zero energy site.

Our growing city requires development that integrates transit, bicycling, and walking projects that help people get to where they need to go affordably and in healthy, sustainable ways. Beyond reduced pollution, transit-oriented development saves money, builds upon existing corridors, and will allow residents, employees, and visitors multiple modes for traveling to and from Highland. The extension of the existing street grid pattern will allow traffic to flow more smoothly through the entire neighborhood, and will connect existing neighborhoods to the river. As St. Paul continues to grow, transit and traffic will continue to be critical issues, but they needn't prevent the City from moving forward with the Ford Plan in its current form.

The Ford Plan deserves the City Council's support because it reflects St. Paul's changing housing needs, while also expanding fair and affordable housing opportunities. Increasing and preserving access to affordable housing-especially in areas where few affordable options exist-is central to jobs and growing local economies. St. Paul's aging housing stock requires innovative and proactive strategies to create the additional housing units needed to provide choices for current residents, as well as to support continued growth. We support a housing strategy with a range of affordable rental and homeownership options, including housing for seniors hoping to downsize, and young people and families facing challenging conditions in employment and housing markets.

The ways in which people move in and out of neighborhoods are not accidental-residential patterns reflect segregation and differing access to opportunity by race and ethnicity. If the City is truly committed to furthering fair housing, housing choice, and economic opportunity, community development investments must be made through a lens of fair housing and racial equality. Investment in construction of new affordable housing should prioritize expanding affordability within areas where there are currently fewer affordable options, such as Highland. The City has a responsibility to guide land use and community investments to meet the needs of our changing demographics, while also

working to overcome historical discriminatory housing practices that have limited housing opportunities for communities of color.

The proposed density, environmental features, and transit-oriented development all make the Ford Site an exciting opportunity that will attract additional residents and businesses to revitalize St. Paul's tax base through job creation and increased property tax revenues. An accessible, inclusive, net-zero energy, forward-looking development is one of the best ways St. Paul can ensure prosperity for future generations. Our City's transit, environmental, and housing needs are urgent-it is time to move forward with the Ford Plan so that we can face these challenges head-on, rather than continuing to study and discuss proposals. We appreciate the time and energy the City has invested in planning for this site, and urge you to move forward with the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan. Thank you for your consideration and service to St. Paul.

Sincerely,



Hello Dao:

Just thought I would send you a quick note concerning my opposition to the current plan for the Ford land.

Please read over the email below and let me know your thoughts on my comments concerning my opposition to the current Ford Plan being pushed/forced on the Ward 3 constituents.

There should be no multiple story buildings. No apartment buildings. No more than 50 Single family homes. The homes would consist of 3,500 or more square feet per home. These homes should be situated right on the river bluff. 90% of the land should be dedicated to "Active" recreation. An "active" recreation area with an Amphitheater, fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, cross country skiing trails, bike trails, ice skating, ice hockey & sled hockey rinks, football, tennis courts, pickle ball, basketball courts, archery.

A minimum of 15 acres should be used for farming - local residents can grow vegetables, raise chickens.....

Plant many pine trees, maple trees, oak trees. The active recreation area would be a year round destination area.

The current plan is being forced on the people. The constituents will not accept the current Ford plan. It needs to be scaled to provide active recreation for young and the not so young minds and bodies. We need to build an area that will provide sustained healthy active life styles for all.

Thank you for your attention. Good luck in all your efforts to support the constituents. Not an easy job as you well know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Tom Traxler
17XX Scheffer Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55116

Dai Thao,

I am writing in support of the current Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

I am an Old Lady in my 70s.

I LOVE Mass Transit.

I LOVE Walking.

I LOVE having shopping options accessible by transit or feet.

I LOVE a neighborhood that has Affordable Housing AS WELL AS other kinds of housing for all income levels.

I am an Environmental Activist.

I have lived in Saint Paul most of my adult life, near Como, near Marshall & Lex, in the Upper Landing, I LOVE SAINT PAUL! I have lived in Highland for the past 4 years, moving here to be nearer my grandchildren.

PLEASE approve the plan so that I can continue to live near family and still live a full life.

Thank you!
Elena Sunland
18XX Scheffer Ave

City Councilmembers,

I am a Highland Park resident opposed to the current plan to redevelop the Ford site. The density proposed is unprecedented and quite frankly more of a social experiment than a thoughtful redevelopment of an existing urban neighborhood. I am equally concerned that council members from other wards are in favor of this plan in direct opposition to the majority of us that live here. This has not been the tradition in the past and represents a very alarming change in city leadership. Likewise, approving this plan 6-weeks before a Mayoral election that changes the administration is an unforced error in judgement. Therefore, I ask that you vote against the plan at the upcoming City Council meeting or at a minimum delay the vote until the new administration is in office.

“There is power in public opinion in this county – and I thank God for it: for it is the most honest and best of all powers – which will not tolerate an incompetent or unworthy man to hold in his weak or wicked hands the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens” – Martin Van Buren (8th President of the Unites States and founder of the Democratic Party)

Suzette Bielinski
20XX Bordner Place
Saint Paul, MN 55116

Hi,

I am living in 22XX Scheffer Ave, Saint Paul, MN

I am serious concern about the development of ford site in current plan.

Please understand what the big concern the neighborhood has: Traffic and Culture.

By the way, the community is losing the trustee to City and the Council.

City and the Council need to earn the trustee back from the residences in this area in order to make the project moving forward. And this needs time.

Please postpone the timeline, rebuild the trustee, rethink the plan, and lower the density.

Dai Thao,

I am writing in support of the current Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

I affirm my support for the current Ford Site plan which proposes environmental, community and fiscal sustainability.

The current plan provides responsible protection of natural resources, adequate green space, and an opportunity to explore alternative forms of energy.

It also proposes medium and high density housing options which allow aging in place, equitable living opportunities, and expansion of a diverse population.

In addition, the current plan expands Ward 3 and St. Paul's tax base and will enhance commercial and economic opportunity in Ward 3 and the greater city of St. Paul.

Finally, the current plan has been available to the public over the past three years. It is a responsible plan that has been vetted and approved by the City of St. Paul.

Please #SayYesStPaul and vote to adopt the current St. Paul Ford Site plan.

Thank you.

#SayYesStPaul

Rachel Shands
13XX Lincoln Ave
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105

Council Members, I live at 19XX Fairmount Avenue in the Mac Groveland neighborhood and do much of my shopping and errand running in Highland Village. I strongly SUPPORT the Ford Plan. We need more high density and affordable housing in St Paul. I also strongly support maximizing the use of renewable energy in the development.

On a personal note, the Stop the Ford Plan door hangers and lawn signs from my fellow citizens are disappointing and annoying.

Thank you for your public service.

Best Regards,

Karen Hudson
651-226-5482

Dai Thao,

I am writing in support of the current Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

It's the only plan that makes sense. We can hash out the height and density issues later - when there is a developer.

It's time for St Paul to do the right thing.

Invest in our future and our infrastructure.

#SayYesStPaul

Kevin Flynn
21XX Pinehurst Ave
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55116

Hello Mr. Thao,

I had a great opportunity to meet you last week during the public hearing on the Ford Site Master Plan and wanted to thank you for taking the time to talk. I had some more questions about affordable housing and this site:

-I'm a bit confused with how TIF would work here... since TIF loans are given by the city to developers of land, and the Ford Site is selling this land parcel, wouldn't TIF loans be going to new, individual housing developers?

-I arrived a bit after the public hearing began, maybe about a half hour to 45 minutes in. Therefore, I didn't hear any residents bring up the issue of real affordable housing, that is, housing that is equitable

and accessible to low and extremely-low income individuals and families from across the metro. Perhaps the issue of real affordability came up early on?

-On that note, have citizens approached you and the City Council about real affordability and access regarding these new units on the Ford Site? You and I had a great talk on this, but I'm curious if this has been addressed by other citizens of St. Paul?

-It appears that St. Paul relies heavily on TIF loans for developments, including housing. However, real affordability and access seems to be low for most people compared to the high rate of luxury and "market-rate" homes and apartments being built. Do you think the city could be implementing other policies to encourage more affordable housing on developments outside of TIF?

Thanks for taking the time to reply,

Forrester Pack

I hope you folks will read this, and actually count it as received. I know there has been some past accounting problems with letters that didn't fit your plan.

A. Will the tax generation exceed the amount of TIF you give the developer? So, with TIF, the neighborhood gets socked for extra taxes?

B. It was never in your intention to keep the ball fields, was it? We have no money right now, do you really think we have enough money to make the Highland Nine into a massive athletic field complex AND put rinks or ball fields at the water tower site?

C. Is the large tall building plan because we don't want Ford to do more cleanup? Is there still some nasty stuff in there?

D. Riverview Corridor is way, way down the priority list with the Met Council. Are we promising stuff to Ford and their real estate company about it happening?

E. Because they will be receiving handouts in the form of TIF, does that mean that there will be low income housing?

F. What are your plans to handle the increased crime from the low income housing and density both in the new development and the rest of the neighborhood?

I don't think you have any idea of the future consequences that will happen with all this density.

I don't think your Utopian New Urbanist vision for this site is good for the neighborhood or the city .

Gary Fischbach

5XX S Saratoga St

St Paul MN 55116

Dear Mr. Thao,

As a constituent, resident and business owner in Highland Park I urge you to delay the vote on the Ford plant scheduled to take place on September 27th until a more sustainable option can be agreed upon. Although you have listened to the hopes, desires, and needs of the community for over 10 years, the current plan fails to meet our expectations for a 21st Century Community that respects the history and context of the neighborhood. Specifically, we believe this plan fails to meet three key elements of sustainability:

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY:

We do not believe that providing an option to leverage up to \$275 million in TIF Funding is necessary when developers have been “salivating” at the unique opportunity to purchase this unique property. This option significantly diminishes the economic benefit for the already strapped St. Paul taxpayers.

We are gravely concerned about the impact of the increased traffic on an already congested intersection of Ford Parkway and Cleveland. The current traffic studies, based on optimistic forecasts of driving behaviors, rate the level of service under the proposed plan to be a “D” during the evening hours. This is not acceptable.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Ford must NOT be allowed to leave Section C a toxic wasteland. The clean-up company is ready to begin work but has been told to stall for fear of what they may encounter if they “start opening things up”. I agree with the Friends of the Mississippi River conclusion:

Ford has a long history as a good corporate citizen in our community. Leaving a pile of industrial toxic waste, leaching contaminants into the Mississippi River and groundwater within a National Park would be a stain on the company's legacy that should be avoided by fully remediating Area C.

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Those who are in favor of this plan state that opponents must “embrace change” and that we “live in a city so we should accept the inevitable density.” I grew up in Two Harbors, attended Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, lived in Uptown while attending the U of MN, Macalaster Groveland and now Highland Park. Our family business has adapted to, and thrived during extensive periods of change over 61 years in Highland Park. We believe packing 4-7,000 people into this small area creates a density level on par with New York city boroughs rather than the vibrant Cathedral Hill neighborhood. This level of density, and the height of these buildings do not fit with either the history nor the context of this neighborhood.

The Moellers have lived and worked in Highland Park for over 60 years. We have built a business that has helped generations celebrate milestones and supported hundreds of families. In spite of the high taxes: we have chosen to live in this neighborhood, send our children to Highland Catholic, attend Lumen Christi Catholic Community, serve as leaders on the Highland District Council and Highland Business Association, and advocate for our vibrant community.

I believe we have the ability to integrate our values into a mixed-use plan that honors and extends this history by reducing the proposed density and building heights, increasing the amount of recommended greenspace and insisting that the current toxic Area C is fully remediated. The current plan does not align with the values of our community and those who have nurtured it from its infancy. Please delay this vote until we can reach a proper agreement centered upon sustainability.

Sincerely,

Linda Moeller

R.F. Moeller Jeweler in Highland Park since 1951

16XX Pinehurst Avenue a Moeller residence since 1996

Councilman Dai Thao

I AM OPPOSED TO THE FORD SITE ZONING AND PUBLIC REALM MASTER PLAN IN ITS PRESENT FORM. VOTE NO.

Decisions of this magnitude require more time for public debate, disclosure and a more thoughtful process.

More transparency in the decision-making process is required.

We the people of the community which is exposed to health risks cannot allow the responsibility for toxic materials

to be avoided by those who caused it.

The decisions on the Ford Site Zoning and the Public Realm Master Plan should not be made until after the the

elections. The new administration will be dealing with serious budget issues and the Ford Site Zoning and Public

Realm Master Plan must become part of that process. NO VOTE NOW. Allow the people to have input and choices.

Thank you for your service.

Jerry Brennan

VM 6 PM 9/19 – Tom, W3 resident. Read that Dai doesn't support Ford Site master plan because we need a more transparent effort. Do you have any idea how many people have been saying this for over a year. I don't understand what is sizzling in that brain, we've been talking about it for 10 years. I support the Ford site plan and Dai needs to get his act together instead of listening to the rich kids in Highland Park. I'm apoplectic.
