

KATE HEBEL
1301 Fairmount Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
651-690-3441

To: All members of the St. Paul City Council

Re: Snelling Avenue South Zoning Study
City Council Public Hearing, September 6, 2017

Date: September 5, 2017

Unfortunately I will not be able to be in attendance at the public hearing, but I would like to go on record:
I do NOT support T3 development along Snelling Avenue.

Please respect the homeowners along this corridor and vote NO to T3 zoning. Contrary to the city's recommendation I do feel that such development is detrimental to the existing character of the neighborhood and does endanger the public health, safety and general welfare of the local residents. These developments will impact the neighborhood for decades.

I have been a resident of Macalester Groveland since 1985 and used to patronize the commercial businesses along Snelling & Selby: O'Gara's, The Neighborhood Grill, Patina, but not after the recent development of that northeast corner. The traffic congestion going north and south on Snelling, and east on Selby is "an accident waiting to happen". Cars illegally turn on red or run the red lights. It's a nightmare if you're a pedestrian trying to cross the street. When Whole Foods was on Grand Avenue I was a weekly shopper. Now I can't safely turn east on Selby to go back to Hamline, so I don't bother. I do NOT want this type of chaos for the southern end of Snelling Avenue.

You can do all the studies you want, but it IS the people that create communities, and it is the existing residents of Macalester Groveland and Highland that have created the ambience, the value and character of their neighborhoods. These homeowners take pride in their communities; they maintain and improve their properties, support their schools and neighborhood businesses, and create businesses where they live. Now the city wants to create a Las Vegas strip up and down one of the main arteries of the area. This type of development does not create "neighborhoods". Developers are not invested in the surrounding neighborhoods; they are interested in making the most money for the footprint, which encourages requests for variances and conditional use permits. T3 allows a height of 55 feet; however, that limit can, and will be pushed to 90 feet by every developer if given the chance. Even the Uptown area of Minneapolis does not have 9 story buildings, as congested as it is. See photos attached.

T3 supposedly provides for mixed use, yet there is NO definition or stated requirements for "mixed use". Therefore developers will use this to their advantage, creating more rentals rather than commercial businesses to support the neighborhood.

Value

High density housing will affect all the homeowners in adjacent neighborhoods. When homeowners bought their properties they expected to be able to enjoy the sights and sounds of their existing neighborhood, complete with sunshine, sunsets, trees, and clouds. They didn't expect to look out their front or back window to see a 90 foot solid wall! This type of development will depreciate their home values.

Taxes

And please do not try to infer that high density housing will decrease my taxes. During the 32 years I've owned my home the population in Ramsey County has increased by 100,000. There has been plenty of new multi-family and high density housing, including Grand Avenue and Snelling. Never have my taxes decreased; in fact they have multiplied three fold.

Traffic

I know the master plan is to encourage mass transit use by the tenants of the high density developments; however, these tenants will still have cars and garages. Traffic at the major intersections is already problematic; adding vehicles trying to enter and exit buildings that are sitting so close to intersections will become a safety hazard, for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

One of the key reasons for the City takeover of trash hauling was to decrease the traffic on the alleys. With T3 high density housing the need for additional trucks on the alleys will definitely increase: maintenance, vendors, deliveries, as well as trash pick up. When tenants can't get out on the public streets they will use the alley as a short-cut. And this is not something that will be included in any traffic study!

Kate Hebel