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Council President Russ Stark
310-D City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

April 14, 2016

RE: Proposed Soccer Stadium
Snelling/University

Councilmember Stark:

I am writing, as a resident of St. Paul, to object to the proposed professional soccer stadium in Saint Paul (the "Stadium"). This project appears short sighted and ill-conceived from the City's standpoint – and ultimately, of questionable benefit to the City.

Minnesota United (the "Team") is demanding permanent property tax relief for the subject parcel. Additionally, the City of St. Paul has agreed to fund \$18.4 Million in infrastructure for the Stadium. But even that is not enough for the Team – it is additionally seeking T.I.F. for the surrounding area and a tax break on construction materials. Even *that* is not enough – the proposal requires the City as tenant on a \$29 Million dollar 52-year lease to the Met Council.

The Stadium proposal puts the City on the hook for a 52-year lease for the property - despite the fact that there is not a sports franchise in the **history** of Minnesota that has occupied a stadium/facility for more than 30 years. Metropolitan Stadium was occupied by the Vikings and the Twins from 1961 until 1982. The Minnesota Kicks (a professional soccer team) played at Metropolitan Stadium for merely 5 years, from 1976 until the team folded in 1981. The Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome was occupied by the Vikings from 1982 – 2013 and the Twins occupied that same facility from 1982 – 2009. The North Stars played at Met Center from 1967 - 1993 when Norm Green moved the franchise after he could not get a new stadium. The Minnesota Wild have played at Xcel since 2000. The St. Paul Saints played at Midway Stadium from 1993 -2014. The Timberwolves have been at Target Center since 1990. With all of this history against it, the City has seen fit to commit to a 52-year lease? This arrangement is extremely poor stewardship of citizen tax dollars.

The citizens of Saint Paul were pitched this new Stadium under the premise that it would be "100% financed by the Team." That too was grossly misrepresented to taxpayers. Subsequently the City has agreed to pay \$18.4 Million on infrastructure for the Stadium! The Team wants permanent tax relief which is, in fact, government financing of the project and is estimated to cost the City between \$4-5

Million. Further, the Team wants tax relief for construction materials and T.I.F. – all of which is taxpayer funded. The City and its citizens were sold a false bill of goods! How can the City continue down this road after the falsehoods are out in the open?

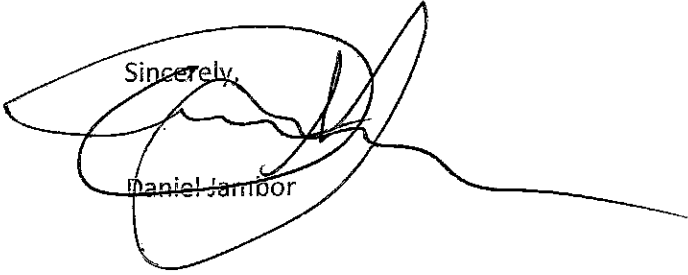
The answer for the old bus barn property is not the Stadium or nothing. The taxpayers of this State (and more specifically the citizens of Saint Paul) paid for the Green Line light rail as well as the soon to be operational Snelling Avenue Bus Rapid Transit. Both of these are of significant benefit to the subject property. That property has already benefitted from over \$1 Billion of taxpayer infrastructure. Why should that parcel benefit even more at taxpayer expense? Moreover, what is the benefit to the City and its citizenry that justifies such outrageous expense?

The parcel could certainly be developed as a mixed use commercial/retail/residential and be brought back onto the tax roll. This is the path that a *prudent* City Council should undertake. A comparison should be made to the proposed development of the former Ford Plant in Highland Park. The subject parcel for the Stadium is benefitted much more from its proximity to Highway 94, Snelling Avenue, the Green Line, and the Snelling Avenue Bus Rapid Transit. It should certainly merit the development interest shown in the Ford Plant. A mixed use development similar to the Ford Plant proposal or the newly developed Whole Foods property at Snelling/Selby would be a significantly higher use for the Stadium parcel – generating significant taxes in contrast with the tax money lost by the Stadium proposal.

It also merits mentioning that a common argument made by councilmembers and others is what an eyesore the parcel is at present. The irony of government officials noting this is in the fact that the government is the owner of the parcel! The government could certainly clean up its own property.

I strongly encourage you to reconsider your support of the Minnesota United Stadium proposal and to instead focus efforts on redevelopment of the parcel in an economically sound manner. The Saint Paul City Council has rushed this proposed Stadium through without thoughtful consideration. In fact, it has reached this point without any substantial plan for traffic, noise or parking – despite the obvious and significant nature of those concerns. Truly unbelievable! This Stadium is a bad deal for our neighborhood and our City. There are so many things wrong with this proposal – please put a stop to this boondoggle now – in the best interest of my neighborhood and our City.

Sincerely,



Daniel Jambor

I am writing to you as a nearby resident of the proposed Soccer Stadium in St. Paul and redevelopment of the RK Midway property.

I firmly support the proposed Soccer Stadium and the redevelopment of the RK Midway Property.

That site has been an eyesore for many years and the owners of that property have done little to revamp it or maintain it to an appropriate level. Approving the site plans for the redevelopment would mean a huge boost to the St. Paul economy, the surrounding neighborhood (25% of which are people of color and 51% of households make less than \$50,000/year). This neighborhood needs a resurgence in development to help spur local jobs, provide neighbors more green space, increase TOD along heavily built-up transit corridors (i.e. the Green Line and the Rapid Bus Line) and expand the business opportunities available to Hamline-Midway. There are little to no hotels, no movie theaters, limited restaurants, and minimal office space. All of which would greatly benefit our local community.

Thank you for being an advocate for our people along the green line.

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Kevin D. Marquardt

Hello Kady,

My name is Adam Jarvi and I live at 4xx Herschel Street, about 5 blocks (or a 7 minute walk) west of the stadium site. My wife and I purchased our home 3 yrs ago in hopes that the Green Line would help spur redevelopment and attract the type of investment that would turn Midway into the walkable, urban neighborhood it can and should be.

As homeowners who have made a significant investment in buying and renovating an old home in the neighborhood, we are thrilled at the prospect of a world class Major League Soccer venue just blocks from our front door. Some have been critical of a stadium's ability to attract additional investment and development, but as an architect I can tell you that I now have multiple prospective clients in the preliminary stages of planning new redevelopment/rehabilitation projects near the stadium. The stadium will - and already is - attracting new investment to the Midway. Without it, these projects simply do not happen.

Lastly, I think it's important to note that on the night of the public hearing, some 65,000+ people in the Twin Cities will be attending live soccer matches. Chelsea FC, a world famous club from London, will be taking on AC Milan at US Bank Stadium while Minnesota United will be playing a home game up in Blaine. I hope the fact that tens of thousands of stadium supporters and soccer fans will be unable to attend the hearing because they're out supporting the game they love is not lost on the council.

Please pass on this message of support for the stadium. We're at a critical point in our neighborhood's trajectory and cannot let it revert back to the the mindset that gave us drive-throughs and suburban style big box development.

Thank you,

Adam Jarvi

To whom it may concern:

I'm writing in regards to the meeting about the new soccer stadium on Snelling Avenue. While I will be unable to attend I wanted to offer my strong support for the stadium as a local resident.

I'm excited to see a new development revitalize our community in place of an emptied lot. To have well paid skilled workers employed in construction, and to facilitate the growth of employment opportunities both at the stadium and in potential new developments would be a boon to our community and economy.

Most of all, I hope to see the stadium facilitate greater opportunities for youth athletes, coaches and teams to train, grow and represent both the St Paul and wider Minnesota community.

Thank you for accepting comment from those who cannot attend.

Sincerely,
Ben MacKenzie
Grand Avenue

Good afternoon Kady,

I am writing you today because I will, unfortunately, be unable to attend the city council meeting tomorrow evening yet I would like for my voice to be heard in some way. I will be attending the match in Blaine to cheer on our team.

Without becoming too long winded, I would like to vocalize my complete support for the planned stadium at the midway location. As a nearby neighbor it is exciting to see renderings and design options for what is otherwise a neglected eyesore in the heart of the Twin Cities. As a fan of the team the potential of having them in Saint Paul, and in the top league in the country, is phenomenal. Being able to access the stadium and all the amenities that will make up a gameday experience, as well as non gamedays, via public transportation or on bicycle makes me jump for joy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope everything goes well.

-Rob Petterson

Good afternoon Kady,

I am not able to attend the City Council meeting on Wednesday. I would like to voice my support for the redevelopment plan for the Snelling-Midway area that includes the outdoor stadium for Minnesota United FC.

I support the plan for these reasons:

- It will bring needed redevelopment to a plot of land which is an eye sore today (the bus barn yard)
- People coming to the area for soccer matches will provide a boost to nearby businesses via increased traffic on match day
- It will bring renewed interest in the area for folks outside of St. Paul that may look to relocate near the area (there was an article in the Pioneer Press about this back in April)
- Soccer is a growing sport in the Twin Cities area. HGRA has over 1,400 adults and kids playing soccer in its various leagues. As awareness of the dangers of American football grows in our society, more families will turn to sports such as soccer as a safer alternative. In my view, soccer will be one of the most popular sports in the next generation or two. An MLS presence will promote the adoption of soccer in our community, as well as instill civic pride amongst the residents.
- In terms of transportation, the site is well-served by public transit with the Green Line and newly-debuted A-Line. The traffic impact won't be as severe as it would be for the Xcel Center, as an example, because of the proximity of stops to the stadium site.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bryan Haza

17xx Juliet Ave

