



**UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL**

1821 University Avenue, Suite 308, Saint Paul, MN 55104  
651.645.6887 | [info@unionparkdc.org](mailto:info@unionparkdc.org) | [www.unionparkdc.org](http://www.unionparkdc.org)  
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July 2020

Dear Councilmember Mitra Jalali and Councilmember Dai Thao,

We are concerned about the status of the tenants of Midway Center, where business losses due to COVID-19 have been compounded with losses due to the civil unrest and having to lose their place of business - some of whom have been there for many years.

We recommend that the owners of the property:

- Provide adequate compensation and time for the tenants who chose/were forced to relocate their business
- Provide adequate relocation expenses to the tenants such that they can get back in business, hopefully in the neighborhood
- Future developments in the Midway Center area include options for the dislocated tenants with reasonable rents/joint ownership
- We recommend that various funding sources such as the NUFC, Midway Chamber, and others coordinate investments in these businesses as they struggle to get back on their feet or face bankruptcy
- We recommend that the City of Saint Paul brings any proposal for public funding to the Midway Development, such as TIF, Met Council Grants, etc., to include strong community benefits and that such decisions include the UPDC.

**UPDC Statement on Current Developments in the Midway Area**

- We recommend that the City of Saint Paul and all funders, private, nonprofit, and public, address the needs of businesses within the Midway Area who have been negatively impacted by recent events and facilitate their recovery and growth. These businesses are dealing with property owners, insurance companies, DSI, and other entities and need assistance and support.
- We recommend that the City of Saint Paul adopt a policy on opportunity zone investments, as the area is a very attractive Opportunity Zone. Such a policy should include tangible community benefits in terms of jobs and business development and include a provision that 2 percent of the development costs be allocated to wealth building activities in the area surrounding the development, which includes and not be limited to, business development, job training and placing, financial asset building, affordable housing, affordable child care, community health clinics, strategies to close the achievement gap.
- We recommend that banks and financial institutions in the area make it a priority to invest in the economic development activities in the area with a priority for low income and minority communities who have been hit hard by the COVID 19 crisis and civil unrest and that they report investments made in the community.
- We recommend educational and health care institutions in the area prioritize closing the achievement and outcome gaps in education and health care for low-income and minority residents in the area.
- We recommend that progress towards these goals of inclusion be monitored by UPDC and reported back to the community, and we will strive to state more specifically how we will both monitor and report to the community.

Respectfully,

Abdulrahman Wako  
Executive Director  
Union Park District Council  
(651) 279-9441 / [wako@unionparkdc.org](mailto:wako@unionparkdc.org)