

HILLCREST COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 17, 2021

Saint Paul Planning Commission:

On behalf of the Hillcrest Community Advisory Committee (CAC), we would like to convey the CAC's comments on the draft Hillcrest Master Plan being brought forward for your consideration. Our CAC consisted of 11 members appointed by Mayor Carter, including residents of both Saint Paul and Maplewood, and subject matter experts on housing, transportation, and business. Our membership is diverse and reflective of the area's demographics. Our responsibilities included connecting other people from the community in the process, providing constructive input, and raising issues and opportunities for the project. We met 18 times from October 2019 through December 2021, discussing the site background, community engagement, and other topics contained in the attached master plan. Early in the process we affirmed 20 community priorities to guide the plan, which came from careful evaluation of the community engagement results and study of the demographics and data provided to the CAC. On December 14, 2021, the CAC authorized this letter to be sent on their behalf.

Generally, we support the master plan's direction. In particular, we appreciate how the master plan:

- **Achieves the development goals of approximately 1,000 jobs and 1,000 households.** The master plan sets helpful priorities for affordable housing provision on the site, both rental and ownership. We are encouraged that many of the employment opportunities will provide low barrier to entry living wage jobs.
- **Takes community input into proper account.** Engagement was intentionally demographically representative of the area, aided by special events created to intentionally reach targeted groups. We adapted to the virtual environment during the pandemic.
- **Recognizes the site as a neighborhood node**, with a concentration of activity and destinations provided within walking distance of new and existing neighbors. This includes the new City park at the node, with good access to it from all directions.
- **Provides walkability to support public health** with its sidewalks and trails connecting through the site to and from the surrounding area. The walking network is well integrated into the neighborhood.
- **Has thoughtful transportation connections to the west**, with jogs at Howard Street to discourage cut-through traffic across the site.
- **Encourages community agriculture to provide healthy food.** Currently, the neighborhood is a healthy food desert.

Also, as the master plan suggests, we encourage Metro Transit to consider providing public transit to the site to take advantage of synergies with this transit-oriented development.

Our biggest concerns with the draft master plan are that:

- **There is too much range given for administrative modifications** to the plan, including but not limited to: land uses and trails, tree replacement, type of housing, and placement of all uses as presented in the master plan, which could be changed to a degree we are not comfortable with. We hope to see the actual development be reflective of what is in the plan.
- **Important plan aspects regarding sustainability and art are asterisked as being funding dependent.**
- **We will miss the site's high point and the trees, but recognize that the development will remove many of them due to the remediation of the site's pollution.**

We understand that this master plan could change through the Planning Commission and City Council public processes, but we feel confident that this letter is a reflection of our committee's position on the master plan.

Thank you for your consideration of our input.

Anne DeJoy

Anne DeJoy
Co-chair

Linda Martinez-Higgins

Linda Martinez-Higgins
Co-chair

Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 9:21 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Hillcrest public hearing testimony

To Hillcrest planning committee and all involved,

As a resident of the neighborhood just to the east of Hillcrest I strongly encourage you to reconsider your plan.

The current plan does not have enough park and open spaces. This is a golden opportunity for a really nice park for all new and existing residents to enjoy. Not some crappy 5 acre tiny park and a few swamps to meet the wetland codes.

There is plenty of medium and high density housing in this area. What is needed is more high end housing to make the area nicer. High end homes are in short supply and selling fast in our neighborhood.

There is a old closed mall just north of the crappy theater right by here. That site has never been utilized in the 15 years I've lived here. Why not fix that up before building a new industrial park in what could be a nice development and open space.

Connecting Montana and the other east west roads to our neighborhood is not wanted. We have no sidewalks and residents walk the streets currently and safely due to little traffic. Those new roads will increase traffic and destroy our ability to safely walk our neighborhood.

Maybe you should consider doing something more like what was done with tartan park and make a high end house area with a great park, nice restaurant and entertainment. There could be a small industry section even.

Certainly we do not want increased traffic. We do not want low income housing or high density housing. We do not want more concrete jungle crap that the area already has plenty of that is not being used.

I respectfully encourage you to consider a better plan.

Thanks,

Derek Dehn
2438 Arlington Ave E.
Maplewood, MN 55119

Sent: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 11:04 AM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Hillcrest project

I am a neighbor near the Hillcrest project and have participated in many of the meetings. My comment before the public hearing is how is the City moving forward with this 1000+ jobs plan when everything has changed since the start of the pandemic. Is anyone even considering the current employment market and how it has changed in the past two years? I just went onto INDEED.com and looked at jobs within 5 miles of the zip code 55109 – and there are countless jobs offering decent wages (low end starting wages at \$15 per hour – high end \$24.00 per hour) but most in the \$18 - \$20 range. Many of the employment ads state they are urgently hiring and offering incentives. My question/comment is how is the City/Port Authority just moving forward with their plan with no regard to the current situation which has changed drastically since this project started.

Thank you

Stacy Plaster (S)

Suppt Enforcement Agent 2 | Child Support Services Division

Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2022 9:05 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Public Hearing Comment

Good Morning Mr. Dermody,

I would like to offer comments regarding wetlands and roads at the Hillcrest Redevelopment site.

The draft Hillcrest Master Plan appears to require the filling/removal of several wetlands, specifically Wetlands B, E, I, F, and J. I encourage the City to avoid and minimize impacts wetlands as much as possible prior to replacement of the wetlands, in compliance with State Rule (8420.0520). This will not only avoid any project delays due to any changes required by rule, but will provide naturally occurring water features and animal habitat in neighborhood parks that will be more resilient and require less maintenance by Parks staff.

I support the plan to only provide two-lane roads in the redevelopment. This will provide a traffic calming effect for residential areas, as well as increasing the amount of space available for housing and businesses.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

All the Best,

Luke Martinkosky

1075 Dale St. N.

Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2022 8:50 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Development Draft Plan

I am a St. Paul resident who lives close to the three-way stop sign intersection of Old McKnight Road North and Maryland Avenue East. We receive a lot of traffic from Ivy traveling south on Old McKnight and then east on Maryland to access McKnight-Lakewood Drive. The roads at this intersection are often very icy in the winter, making it a hazard. The maps in the draft plan almost make it look like Ivy goes all the way through to McKnight/Lakewood Drive which is not the case. I would think that this is the time to plan a more direct route to McKnight/Lakewood for folks behind the former golf course.

Also, I think that if a person wants to go north on McKnight/Lakewood from the St. Paul side of the development, it would be safest to do so from an intersection with traffic lights. The only traffic lights we have on Lakewood/McKnight in the development area are at the Maryland and Larpenteur Avenues.

Is a traffic study planned to look at these and other traffic issues?

Thanks much

Brenda Anderson-Moser

2243 Maryland Avenue East

St. Paul, MN 55119

Sent: Tuesday, March 1, 2022 8:54 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Inquiry from Hillcrest Golf Course Master Plan

Importance: High

I will be on the Hillcrest Master Plan call this Friday. I have attended many of the meetings, I have connected with Nelsie Yang and it all feels like none of that time or energy or asking of questions has made any difference. I live at 2110 E. Arlington Avenue (5th house down from the golf course). My husband and I bought our house in 1984 and chose to stay. It's a wonderful home built in 1925 where we raised our two sons. It has been a quiet and peaceful neighborhood. After reading the master plan that will soon come to a halt. With through streets and light industrial at the end of my street and neighboring streets there will be increase in traffic and noise. I also am deeply saddened that there will be no single-family homes on the site. That has been a request and a passion for many at the meetings I have attended. We want to see pride in ownership and not rental properties that are miss managed and allowed to be run down. I don't believe that you have considered much of what the Hillcrest Advisory Council brought forward. Our existing neighborhoods are not going to be respected, the topography of the site or the history of the land is not being considered and there is very little green space in the plan. There also is way too much range given to modifications of the plan happening with no input from anyone in the surrounding neighborhoods. It feels like there were meetings set up to just check it off a list but not to really pay attention to what the existing neighborhoods want. Many of us have lived her for

over 30 years. We are invested. This master plan does not compliment the neighborhoods around it. We also had to have all our meetings and planning during a pandemic where it made it difficult to interact on a personal and connected level. There were canceled meetings and not always great communication in when meetings were happening or where. This process deserves more time!

Maureen McGee

2110 E. Arlington Avenue

St. Paul MN 55119

Sent: Tuesday, March 1, 2022 9:13 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject:

My name is Jessica Petersen. I am a resident of Saint Paul and the Hayden Heights Neighborhood (2024 Cottage Ave E). Upon reviewing the Hillcrest draft plan, I like the draft plan for the following reasons:

The thoughtfulness of the design and the approach to helping for the new space to fit into the neighborhood and provide the community what it lacks.

However, the organizers have not considered the legal ramifications and environmental harm from removal of habitat for the federally listed species, the rusty patched bumble bee. The rusty patched bumble bee has declined by 87 percent in the last 20 years. Every summer, I find rusty patched bumble bees in the neighborhood, likely because of the nice, undisturbed savanna habitat that the former gold course provides for nesting and overwintering. The Hillcrest area is currently in a high potential zone for rusty patched bumble bee. Removal of the habitat during certain times of the life cycle of the bumble bee is unlawful under the endangered species act. What are project proponents doing to consider the persistence of our state bee in this landscape?

What are project organizers doing to ensure that traffic in the neighborhood does not increase? The traffic in the neighborhood is a huge concern as there are children that walk in the street due to a lack of sidewalks.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my public comment. We look forward to seeing how our voices are incorporated into the plan, and appreciate your interest in a democratic process around a major development in our city.

Best regards,

Jessica Petersen

Sent: Tuesday, March 1, 2022 12:17 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Hillcrest Master Plan Concern

My name is Curtis Carlson. I am a resident of Saint Paul. Upon reviewing the Hillcrest draft master plan, I like the draft plan for the following reasons:

- 1.
- 2.

(I actually would prefer to see the entire area turned into open space)

However, I am also concerned that:

1. Not enough attention has been paid to public safety, crime concerns, etc. With the addition of more housing and higher housing density in my neighborhood, comes concerns about public safety, crimes (both serious crimes and quality-of-life crimes). Our city and our nation has seen a marked increase in crime and criminal activity in the past couple of years and I am concerned that not enough planning and thought has been applied to this concern in the Master Plan. In fact, searching for the words "Public Safety" or "Police" in the master plan yields only ONE LINE which states that an analysis will be done. With an increase in population and an increase in population density I'd like to see a comprehensive policing plan and some statistics as to how public safety will be maintained into the future with the planned growth in mind.

- 2.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my public comment. We look forward to seeing how our voices are incorporated into the plan, and appreciate your interest in a democratic process around a major development in our city.

Best regards,

(Resident name)

Curtis L. Carlson

Sent: Thursday, March 3, 2022 12:06 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Public Comment on Hillcrest Draft Master Plan

Hi Bill,

My name is David Ackos. We've met because of my work as a housing and business organizer with the Greater East Side Community Council. I am a resident of Saint Paul and live on the West Side. I'm very excited about the Hillcrest Development, and I like a lot of the master plan, but I have a few changes I'd like to see made.

I like that:

1. The plan involves mixed use housing and heavily uses T1, T2, and T3 zoning!
2. I really appreciate the thoughtful ways traffic is managed so there won't be quick cut-throughs in the neighborhoods
3. I am very glad the north end of the site, including some hills and high points, will be used for a neighborhood node with high density housing, mixed use development, and hopefully shared public space like a town square with lots of restaurants and walking area that is not heavily encroached-on by cars. I also appreciate that this creates serious potential for future transit lines out to Hillcrest and connecting Hillcrest to nearby fast transit.

However, I am also concerned that:

1. The neighborhood node, like the East Side more generally, gets short shrift. I think the port and the city need to think bigger. City council should earmark money for public space (a public square), aim for 1500-2000 units of housing rather than 1000 (at least 1/3 of which should be deeply affordable). Planning can make room for more city development by expanding room for the neighborhood node, and therefore making more room for city investment in the east side.
2. In more detail, the neighborhood node needs more room. I recognize the apparent need for light industrial because of the need for jobs and tax revenue, but mixed uses, housing, and transit-supported neighborhood nodes should produce at least as much in the way of jobs and tax revenue, and it seems the use of a huge amount of green space for the lowest investment, biggest return by the port is a sad waste of a ton of potential. I would strongly prefer (and would really like to see) an additional 15-20 acres at the north end of the industrial zoned areas turned over to be mixed use Neighborhood Node, zoned T3 and used to allow for a greater number of housing and commercial uses. This doesn't seem incompatible with the rest of the plan, and would avoid the strange dilemma of the neighborhood node being literally touched by light industrial zoning.
3. Turn over the north 10-20% of the Industrial zoning to the neighborhood node (which it currently abuts)!
4. More emphasis on transportation is needed in my opinion, and I would like to see the port commit to the creation of bus stops at the neighborhood node, and the city commit to pushing Met Transit to create a spur line that services the new 1000 units of housing and 1000 jobs.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my public comment. We look forward to seeing how our voices are incorporated into the plan, and appreciate your interest in a democratic process around a major development in our city.

Best regards,
David Lauer Ackos

Sent: Friday, March 4, 2022 10:29 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Property

Hi Bill and commissioners, I have been involved in the Hillcrest property meetings over the past couple years. I have to agree with many of the comments from local residents, plugging light industrial into a single family homes neighborhood is not desirable situation as a local resident. But it is rather apparent the city has made the decision to include light industrial and there is nothing that local residents can do to change that outcome.

Seems like there is an opportunity to include housing ownership as an option on the property. Having only rental options does not really promote home ownership or integrate well into the local single family home neighborhood.

I would like to see more effort made to save the trees on site in support of the green efforts. I also have concerns with the drastic change in landscape that is going to happen on the property. The current topography will drastically change to accommodate the new areas and it is difficult to comprehend how this may look in the end state. Would it be possible to provide a rendering of the property in the end state and how it fits into the current surroundings?

Out of all the plans I have seen to date, the plan presented on the 2/4 meeting is the most desirable from my point of view.

Thanks for listening.

Luke Schroeder

Local Maplewood resident (on East side directly adjacent to Hillcrest property)

2320 Hoyt Ave E

Sent: Friday, March 4, 2022 11:12 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Development

As someone who resides near the development my comment is about how the city is going to serve the additional 1000 housing units that are being proposed. An example I can think of is the St. Paul police department, the St. Paul Police Eastern District Station is located almost 5 miles away (approximately an 11 minute drive). In St. Paul there is a shortage of officers and this area that is located on the edge of the city limits is already very neglected and now add into that an additional 1000 housing units. Has there been any thought put into how to provide services to these additional 1000 housing units? Has there been a traffic study done in regards to the additional neighborhood traffic with the proposed businesses, the 1000 additional housing units and the school bus traffic that will added as there are no neighborhood schools for any students living in these 1000 housing units. It does not appear any of the

things I have mentioned that will affect the neighborhood years after these Port Authority plans are enacted are being considered.

Thank you for listening

Stacy Plaster (S)

Suppt Enforcement Agent 2 | Child Support Services Division

Sent: Saturday, March 5, 2022 1:03 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Development

This is Barb and Greg Rivet at 2129 Sherwood Avenue, St. Paul. We have been to meetings in person and On line. We are concerned that the development doesn't really address our concerns. We have lived at this address for 45 years. It has been a very quiet neighborhood. We don't see the need to put Winthrop all the way thru. This will add so much traffic to an otherwise quiet neighborhood. You originally talked about single family homes for purchase as there was a need and shortage of homes to purchase. Now they want to put units that have no yards or driveways with only street parking. As the song goes, you take paradise and put up a parking lot. It appears that all the concerns we shared at these meetings have been dismissed. The people making the decisions are only listening to what they want to hear. leave the trees alone, leave our roads alone, leave our neighborhood alone.

Greg & Barb Rivet

Sent: Saturday, March 5, 2022 2:14 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hilcrest Masterplan Comments

I am deeply disappointed in the housing section of the draft Hilcrest Master Plan. While I have no quarrel with the balance between industrial and housing uses, it is deeply immoral to restrict the amount of housing on almost 3/4 of the land devoted to housing. Setting aside 18 acres for low and medium density housing forfeits a unique opportunity to add to our desperately inadequate housing stock. All of the land reserved for housing should be zoned for high density construction so that the largest number of people can find a place to live. Moreover, the more extra supply we allow to be built, the more we help reduce housing costs for all of us.

I recently worked with a PCA who testified about her struggle to afford a \$1600 a month rent in St. Paul on an hourly wage of less than \$15.00 an hour. Low and moderate income people are being forced out of St. Paul by high housing costs. When you restrict areas of Hilcrest to low

and medium density housing, you say the people who can't afford such expensive options have no place in our community. Every bit of land should be used to build as much housing as people need. Especially since this can be done at no cost to the city. In fact, higher density housing will generate additional taxes and consume proportionately fewer services.

Finally, if anyone suggests that such high-density housing is out of character with the surrounding community, I suggest we use this opportunity to upzone the existing neighborhoods to a higher density level. Of course, some local residents want the city to artificially inflate their real estate investment, but such selfish considerations have no place in public policy.

Rick Varco

2265 Youngman Ave. #208

St. Paul, MN 55116

Sent: Saturday, March 5, 2022 6:24 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest

Dear Mr Dermody,

As a Saint Paul resident, parent of Saint Paul kids and an employee of one of Saint Paul's biggest employers (Saint Paul Public Schools) I, like many, take notice when big changes and big opportunities face our city. The redevelopment of Hillcrest is one of those opportunities.

We live in a city and a time where we face numerous and unprecedented challenges. I truly believe that the redevelopment of Hillcrest gives us a local opportunity to take action on some of those challenges.

Now more than ever we are in a crisis of safe, affordable housing for individuals and families. The development of Hillcrest is a chance to address that problem and create homes and communities for our residents now and in the future.

In a time of economic uncertainty Hillcrest can be a source of good paying jobs for the people of Saint Paul. Through putting Saint Paul residents to work, Hillcrest can help feed families and grow communities.

Another challenge and risk the city (and world) faces is the growing climate crisis. While a global problem requires global action, that action starts on a local level. Again, Hillcrest gives us an opportunity to be a local leader in climate action.

To address the climate crisis we MUST develop a society that embraces healthy transportation. In the development of Hillcrest we could build a community that promotes walking, biking and transit. Hillcrest can show the larger City of Saint Paul how to create a clean transportation system.

To secure a healthy planet we MUST show how we can live, work, play AND reduce the use of fossil fuels. Hillcrest can make the mold on how to do that by designing homes focused on sustainability, create community level energy sources (solar, geothermal, etc) and in doing so help the City of Saint Paul meet its climate goals.

Simply put, this is a huge opportunity for our city and for our children's future. I strongly support a plan for Hillcrest development that will address those concerns I mentioned above. As someone involved in the planning of the Hillcrest development I sincerely hope you will take these ideas/issues into consideration as you continue your work.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Tom Lucy
Como Park Resident
1460 Huron Street
Saint Paul, MN

Sent: Sunday, March 6, 2022 2:10 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul) <chris.tolbert@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Hillcrest project comment

Mr Dermody:

The Hillcrest development has enormous value to the East Side but is absolutely a city-wide and regional project. I live in Macalester Groveland and appreciate and understand its scope of value to our entire community.

The potential to be one of the first zero carbon developments in the country cannot be minimized. Hillcrest could be a model for geothermal district heating and cooling as well as on-site solar, a model so needed to inspire and inform other projects across the country. Saint Paul has the capacity, and I believe the willingness, to rise to this opportunity in addressing the climate emergency. The city and the Port Authority should make every effort to stress this urgency in its public face. I commend the project's action to empower a citizen sustainability committee to fully participate in this process.

The ground beneath us has shifted. Everything about Hillcrest should be visionary, not status quo. The path forward is shared, multi-use, modular, compact, healing, inclusive, cooperative, human scale, zero-

carbon, transformative, relational, connected. I see some evidence of this but urge the planning process to push aggressively in initiatives such as cooperatively-owned solar. The multi-use design of housing mixed with jobs creates compact neighborhoods. So many features can make this a highly desired and future-focused location to live.

One of the most valuable outcomes of an aggressively sustainable plan is that it will help relieve the energy cost burden of households. As heat and cooling residential costs soar we will increasingly hear what echoes in our city now: "I cannot manage these bills." Car ownership is the second highest, and often unattainable, cost for households. Careful attention to transit, shared e-cars, bike and walk modes eases this pressure on families while promoting lifelong shifts in transportation. That Hillcrest can address these cost burdens so comprehensively is truly compelling.

The Saint Paul Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) is our best model to date for addressing the climate crisis. Although there are necessary actions at the federal and state levels, the opportunity not only to drive change but also to build a movement of committed action is at the local level. Our city council members recently declared a climate emergency and there is no room to step away from this urgency. The Hillcrest project can proudly be part of the solution.

Thank you for your attention to this.

Joan Pasiuk

1984 Jefferson

Sent: Sunday, March 6, 2022 10:07 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Master Plan Input

Bill,

Thank you for receiving this on behalf of the Planning Commission.

My main concerns with the plan that the commission is putting forward are:

1. There are no plans for R2 One Family Residential zoning for single family homes. It is frustrating that though the area is surrounded by single family homes, there are zero plans to incorporate this in the Hillcrest development. Single family homes that are reasonably priced allow for low income families to actually accumulate wealth as they build equity. There is a great need for this kind of opportunity. I like the idea of Habitat for Humanity being able to come in and work on something like that for the neighborhood.
2. It would be great if there could be a buffer of new single families homes that go between current single family homes and the proposed low, medium and high capacity homes. This seems to be a good compromise between the desires of the city and the desires of the neighborhood.

3. I know that trees are considered a renewable resource but it takes a LONG time to get mature trees. Taking down the beautiful trees within all of the golf course seems short sighted.
4. I am concerned that there is zero mention of the wildlife that will be displaced with all of this. We live right near the property and currently there are deer, fox, possum, coyote, woodchuck, etc that roam the area. The development that is being proposed will surely eliminate most of these.
5. We feel that the addition of all the through streets will have a significant impact on the traffic flow of the neighborhood. We know that there have been designs to minimize the effects, but it remains inevitable that it will make things much busier. It was suggested earlier that new housing developments would have cul-de-sacs that would go into the neighborhoods but not through from Winthrop to McKnight and Larpenteur to Ivy.

One of main objectives we were told is that the plan was to respect the quiet nature of the neighborhood and provide a mix of housing opportunities. I ask you to consider what part of the plan fulfills both of those objectives. It seems to me that if you put some R2 single family homes (which reflect the neighborhood) as a buffer and streets that don't go through you can achieve more of that goal.

Thank you for your time,

Julie Harms

2100 Idaho Ave E

St Paul, MN 55119

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 9:09 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Inquiry from Hillcrest Golf Course Master Plan

I thought I'd get one last email in. I believe I have been present at majority of meetings and discussions regarding Hillcrest. I have connected with Nelsie Yang and sent emails to the Port Authority. I sat on the public hearing call last Friday as well. I was pleased to see Kathy Posus quoted in the Star Tribune article. The biggest disappointment of that call last Friday is when folks that are supporting the Master Plan don't live in the neighborhood. None of what happens at that site will have any impact on them. We, those of us in the neighborhood, those of us that have lived here for decades and those of us that stand to lose the quiet and existing beauty of mature trees and green space are the ones that feel our voices are not being listened to. We feel that our neighborhood will become industrial alley and a whole topography that will be lost. It is not about not wanting affordable housing or even light industry. We want our neighborhood to be buffered from what we might have to look at for decades to come. One of the individuals that spoke talked about where the neighborhood node/park was located and that it is directly

up from where Hayden Heights Park is. There is no park on the south side. Hayden Heights is also in significant need of an upgrade. We stated repeatedly at meetings that we want to see single family homes. That isn't apart of this plan. Chris Coleman bringing up Habitat for Humanity is a welcomed idea. We, those of us in the immediate neighborhood do not want the skyline to change with large buildings going up and large trees and hills be bulldozed to the ground. Traffic is a huge concern with most of our streets being extended.

I recognize the need for moving forward. I just want to feel like those that bear the greatest impact of the change are being heard. If it was your neighborhood, would you be pushing to move this forward. I also am hugely disappointed in Lisa T. from District 2. I don't believe District 2 has put a stamp of approval on the Master Plan.

Maureen McGee

2110 E. Arlington Avenue

Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2022 9:53 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Master Plan draft

I am Merritt Linzie, 2034 Iowa Ave E, St. Paul, MN 55119. I have reviewed the draft Master Plan online and was impressed with the complete and detailed study. I liked the storm water plan, the sidewalks & trails, the balance of light industry and residential. The roads and connections to existing roads appear practical and not significantly intrusive to existing neighborhoods. The connection of Idaho Ave to McKinght Road appears too close to the Larpenteur- McKnight intersection. And I am satisfied that the Furness trail is not interrupted with any more road crossings.

I am impressed and satisfied with the overall plan. I think this was a job well done!

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 12:13 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Golf Course

Hello Bill, Kendall here from Kendall's Ace Hardware on Payne Avenue.

We are very excited to see some great Plans going into the Hillcrest Golf Course.

We've seen first hand at our Store the Positive impacts from these kind of Neighborhood Developments. It's always scary at first, but when you see how little impact these old places have on everyone in the neighborhood, it's a no brainer.

We also appreciate all of the attention to detail that goes into these Projects. The Ordinary Person has a hard time seeing everything, but can have confidence in the Planners, knowing that they truly are thinking of us in the Neighborhood and how to make things even better for us and the Future.

Because of these kind of Projects, our Store is striving. Better than I've ever imagined.

I am in full support of the Hillcrest Project. Can't wait to see the Future of it. Thank you, Kendall Crosby, Kendall's Ace Hardware, Saint Paul Home Owner.

Kendalls Ace Hardware
East Side-Bolt Tough

840 Payne Ave

Sent: Sunday, March 6, 2022 3:48 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest development master plan

Mr. Dermody,

I live in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul. The Hillcrest development matters to me because we need more communities that are designed with walking, biking, and rolling in mind rather than as an afterthought, so we don't have to be dependent on cars.

We need to elevate climate action in addition to affordable housing and family-supporting jobs: The Hillcrest draft Master Plan was released in January 2022, the same month the Saint Paul City Council unanimously passed a resolution declaring a climate emergency. As the comment period on the draft Hillcrest Master Plan closes, the IPCC released its latest report, which warns that increasingly severe effects of climate change are already outpacing the ability to adapt in some regions. The City of Saint Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan should be included as part of the Regulatory Framework. The Hillcrest Master Plan fulfills many CARP goals and is an opportunity to raise the profile of this important document and demonstrate concrete applications of its policies.

I strongly support the site-wide Carbon-Neutrality Policies listed on pg. 38, many of which directly meet goals in the City of Saint Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

Given the urgent need for affordable housing, living wage jobs, and climate action, I urge the City to ensure that affordable housing and advanced energy infrastructure needs are fully funded, not only for the sake of future Hillcrest residents and workers, but also for the sake of the surrounding communities and the entire city.

Katherine DuGarm

1142 Norbert Lane

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 12:54 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Supporting the Hillcrest Master Plan

Hi Bill,

My name is Luke Hanson, and I live in the Highland neighborhood. I'm writing to express my overall support for the Hillcrest Master Plan.

By and large, I think the plan has been thoughtfully designed, and balances the community's key priorities. I am glad that the Port Authority has proposed to preserve the three largest wetlands on the site and several of the mature trees; and I also think it is absolutely appropriate to cut down other trees, remove contaminated topsoil, and alter the topography of the landscape to accommodate residential and light industrial uses. I am impressed with the care that was put into designing the streets and bike-ped paths through the Site, and to create gentle transitions between residential and light industrial areas (e.g. linear district stormwater, trees, etc.). I am excited about the planned Neighborhood Node area near the north end of the site.

My main critique is that I am skeptical the plan would actually result in 1,000 units of housing, despite the estimates provided in the Master Plan draft. I would like to see more of the Site dedicated to housing, and less to Light Industrial (perhaps the northernmost area of the Site slated for Light Industry, adjacent to the high-density residential area).

I also want to urge and encourage the Port Authority and the City to continue pursuing ambitious sustainability plans for the Site (e.g. district energy, community solar on all the Light Industrial buildings, etc.). Likewise, I hope to see the Port Authority follow through on a Community Benefits Agreement for the Site, including concrete plans to ensure that many/most of the jobs on the Site are filled by St. Paul residents.

In general, I enthusiastically support this Plan, and appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Luke Hanson

1423 Eleanor Avenue

Sent: Saturday, March 5, 2022 2:45 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Hillcrest public hearing testimony

The whole development is horrible. My neighbors and family which have lived in the area since the 1950's and came to St. Paul from Quebec in 1860's, are appalled at the lack of listening from the City Council and the Port Authority. Furthermore, this land is sacred Dakota land. Do what's right and return the land to native tribes. My neighbor from 1993ish. Told me there was a dig off Montana where an arrow point was found My grandfather told me there used to be Dakota on the hill (back in the day). Building on holy land of the Dakota is a horrible miscarriage of justice. More artifacts will be found. Look up the rate of homelessness to the rate of empty houses. We clearly don't need a new "Ghetto on the

golf course" as my neighbor calls it. I'm a bleeding heart liberal who believes in the golden rule, but this development is tragic. Every single person I've spoken to wants a park. This goes hand in hand with returning the land to the Dakota. No one lives on the golf course. For once do what's right for the people who live in Hillcrest now. Instead of bringing a working class neighborhood down by increasing taxes and traffic and destroying desperately needed green space why not lift us up!? Lift. Us. Up.

Justin Berthiaume

1890 Montana Ave E

Saint Paul, MN 55119

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 1:18 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Ben Werner Hillcrest Public Comment

Mr. Dermody,

My name is Ben Werner. I am a resident of Saint Paul who lives at 136 Western Ave N. Upon reviewing the Hillcrest draft master plan, I like the draft plan for the following reasons:

1. Adding 1000 units of housing is an important step towards addressing the area's shortage of affordable housing.
2. The East Side is in need of living wage jobs, and the goal of 1000 jobs will make a difference in the community.
3. I like that the plan creates avenues for community agriculture. Organizations such as Urban Roots that might use that land are able to both empower youth, and encourage healthy eating.
4. I like that the plan lays out ways in which transportation might be connected to the site. It is paramount that we reduce our dependence on cars. Car centered planning is outdated, and bad for the environment.

However, I am also concerned that:

1. The number of people engaged around the plan is limited when compared to the number of residents on the Greater East Side and in Maplewood. From reviewing the published documents on the city's website, **only 700 or so people were engaged**, many of whom might have been repeat engagements and few of which were BIPOC or renters. The population of the Greater East Side is roughly 31,000 people, and Maplewood's population is roughly 40,000. Meaning **fewer than 1%** of the people impacted by the development were engaged in the development process.
2. When doing engagement, I am of the opinion that there was heavy "steering" towards the Port Authority's preferred plans. To me, the process did not feel democratic, and rather sought to mitigate community concerns while ultimately prioritizing corporate interests through pre-established deals that the Port Authority had made. While I am sympathetic to the need for an increased tax base, corporations have continued to harm and exploit workers throughout history. I don't see a clear path towards cooperatives and

small businesses utilizing this site, as it clears swaths of land for large industrial corporations.

3. I believe that there should be a guarantee of the number of jobs for East Siders. East Siders are in critical need of living wage jobs. **It is my opinion that at least half of the jobs at the Hillcrest site are mandated to go to local community members.**
4. I am not sold on the notion that the wetlands and trees have to be shifted or destroyed. I believe there are creative ways to preserve those assets and the current plan doesn't really try to preserve those environmental features. What is the value of an ancient tree compared to an industrial building? To me, one cannot compare the two, and exchanging one for the other seems a short sighted investment when we could have both.
5. We are 11,000 or more units short of deeply affordable housing in Ramsey county. The draft housing plan only calls for 100 or so deeply affordable units to be created. This is unacceptable when we have such a large need.
6. Ultimately, one of the best ways to address all of the above is through an enforceable Community Benefits Agreement. I believe that the city, Port Authority, district council, and local community organizations work together with the community to create an enforceable Community Benefits Agreement.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my public comment. We look forward to seeing how our voices are incorporated into the plan, and appreciate your interest in a democratic process around a major development in our city.

Best regards,
Ben Werner

--

Best regards,
Ben Werner

Housing Justice Program Director

East Side Freedom Library

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 1:53 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Comment on Hillcrest

Dear Bill,

My name is Jim Doyle and I live at 1403 Laurel Ave in St. Paul (Union Park). I also volunteer with St. Paul 350. I wish to comment on my support for the Master Plan for the Hillcrest Development.

The Hillcrest development is an important issue for all residents of St. Paul. Hillcrest is a rare opportunity to implement a net zero urban development that can also

provide good jobs and affordable housing. These goals are not incompatible, and in fact support one another if done in a thoughtful way. St. Paul can be on the cutting edge of a new urban sensibility that optimizes the quality of life for residents but which also includes aggressive action on climate change and resiliency.

From the open meetings I understand that the high fraction of land area devoted to light industrial is controversial. But if these facilities provide living wage and entry level jobs for local residents, and if housing prices are kept reasonable and within the budgets of local residents who work at these facilities, we have a win-win situation, with the added bonus that the light industrial buildings provide ample roof space for solar gardens to accomplish the sustainability goals. Indeed, cooperatively-owned solar gardens on the site can also contribute to lowering the energy burden of local residents by allowing residents to subscribe with no up-front costs and result in immediate savings on energy bills. Geothermal district heating will also lower operational cost for heating and cooling for residents.

Thanks to all who worked hard on the vision for Hillcrest. This project has the potential to be a model development for the 21st century, a fact that all St. Paul residents can take pride in. I look forward to following the implementation of the Master Plan.

best,

Jim

--

James R. Doyle (he/him/his)
Department of Physics and Astronomy
Macalester College
1600 Grand Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55105

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 3:02 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: Prince, Jane (CI-StPaul) <Jane.Prince@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Yang, Nelsie (CI-StPaul) <Nelsie.Yang@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Comments on Hillcrest Master Plan

Mr. Dermody,

Hello, I'm Jean Comstock and I live at 729 6th Street East in Dayton's Bluff on the East Side of St. Paul. I'm a founding member of the grassroots, climate action group St. Paul 350 but I'm making my comments as an individual speaking only for myself.

So . . . one hundred and twelve acres, inside a strong and vibrant city. This is an opportunity that doesn't and won't come along often.

I've been involved in community engagement on the Hillcrest development site for at least the last two years. I applaud the City and Port Authority for their efforts to get neighborhood feedback on the Hillcrest plan.

At this point, the most exciting aspect of this plan to me is the Sustainability section. If fully implemented, this plan for sustainability and resilience would put St. Paul firmly among world-class leaders. Let's make sure the rest of the plan reaches the same level.

It appears aspects still in need of conversation and detail are housing and industrial usage. Happily, the sustainability goals dovetail beautifully with affordable housing. High efficiency housing and commercial buildings, a geothermal district heating and cooling system, and supplemental solar power could result in the lowest energy costs in the city.

[Note: When I spoke at last Friday's public hearing, I intended the list below to be heard primarily by the community members speaking against the plan and demanding an extension to the timeframe. But I continue to think they're useful for anyone engaging with disgruntled citizens.] So this is what I ask of all the parties still working on housing and industrial usage:

- Listen to each other,
- Respect each other, and
- Compromise with each other.

We don't have time to waste. In January, the St. Paul City Council passed a resolution declaring a climate emergency in the City of St. Paul.

- Not a climate *watch*.
- Not a climate *warning*.
- But a climate **emergency**.

So, please, don't unnecessarily extend the Hillcrest timeline. Do everything you can to keep the schedule on track. Let's get this development started!

That was the end of my public statement last Friday, but I'd like to say a little bit more regarding the neighbors and other community members who were strong opponents of the current plan. I understand their positions; I feel for them; and I have *been* them.

I had lived in my home around 30 years when the commercial laundry on the northern half of my block was torn down. All I could tell you about it is that it was a low building with gray

walls that were covered most of the year by greenery from trees and bushes. It didn't bother me at all.

It sat empty for some time as nasty cleaning chemicals were removed from the lot, then longer while the City looked for a developer. The first plans we as neighbors heard about were for a combination of low, medium, and high density housing—maybe a few single family detached houses, some duplexes, and definitely a high density apartment building, at least five stories tall. We went wild!

The negative comments I heard last Friday sounded very much like us—that's why I get where they're coming from. Our picture of our neighborhood was perfect the way it was (quiet, close-knit, etc.) and any changes they made would make it the very worst we could imagine (noisy, crowded, overrun with strangers, etc.).

Luckily we had an amazing City Council member who sat through endless meetings mediating between us and two prospective developers (one housing, one commercial). But even then, there had to eventually be a stern meeting in which we were told the City of St. Paul was not going to let a huge piece of land sit empty, not bringing in much-needed property taxes, while we argued about what we wanted. We knew then we had to get serious and we did.

When I look out my kitchen window now, I see a four-story, senior-living rental property whose design we got to make a few suggestions on. The exterior continues to look good and personally I've had no problems with its residents or management at all. Quite frankly, I don't pay much attention to it anymore.

On the other corner, I see a wonderful food coop that has brought so much benefit to the neighborhood. A smaller group of us residents also worked with them to come to agreement on the earliest that supply trucks would arrive, special parking-lot lighting that made for significantly less light pollution impacting nearby neighbors, cancelation of a plan to create an outdoor employee smoking/eating area immediately next to and above residences, and a joint effort to design the boundary fence, retaining wall, and landscaping. Yay, Mississippi Market!

I wish I could assure the people worried about Hillcrest that many parts of this plan will become advantageous to them, particularly if they're willing to continue working with compromise in mind rather than just demands. And that it's unrealistic to believe nothing around your home is ever going to change. The world changes and we adapt. Honestly, I never think about that half of my block being any different than it is now.

I guess I say this to encourage you to continue to move ahead with the Hillcrest development, even as you continue to talk with the community. But keep in mind: We have seen too much procrastination on climate action and Hillcrest can make tremendous strides in this area with its sustainability plan. Please do everything you can to stay on track!

Thanks for your efforts.

Jean Comstock

East Side Resident and Member of St. Paul 350

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 3:14 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: Yang, Nelsie (CI-StPaul) <Nelsie.Yang@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest

Mr Dermody,

I am writing as a small business owner (licensed by the city of St. Paul), member of StPaul350 and an east side resident of 35+ years. I ran a group home just off White Bear and Maryland when I first moved to Saint Paul. I have been following the Hillcrest project for a number of years, and I encourage you to move forward. I am also Vice President of the Payne-Phalen Community Council, although all views expressed here are my own and do not reflect the boards views.

I am excited about leading the way on a zero carbon development; I want to see these lowered energy costs benefitting community members. The conflicts between a for-profit energy supplier and that impact on the energy cost burdens for those 'rate-payers' least able to afford must be addressed. Hillcrest is a good place to challenge the way we've been required to determine solar capacity to benefit Xcel's interests. I know there are laws in place - Xcel could choose to make exception. This would be a good step in community based solar that benefits our *community*.

My biggest concern with the project now is the unfolding of the housing portion. It is imperative that this process be guided with **truly** affordable housing options at the site. It is true that **the East Side has been underfunded for years, and deserves every effort be made**. I hope this all will lead to some real consideration to addressing the Hafner site, which is an embarrassment and a reason some eastsiders are dragging their feet on supporting Hillcrest.

Regards,

Patricia Enstad

984 Hyacinth Ave E

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 3:20 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest site

I believe that the greenest use of the land is the best use. To reconfigure a natural wetland to the extent you propose is short sighted.

Shannon Friberg

498 Jessamine Ave E 55130

HILLCREST GOLF COURSE REDEVELOPMENT

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE NEXT TO?



Large light industrial buildings, a mix of housing, a tiny neighborhood node for food trucks and a city park. Ignores local needs, profits a few companies, buildings not future proof.

A walkable urban village, entrepreneurial hub, with variety of housing and job opportunities, services, community, and natural spaces. More balanced, adaptable and sustainable.

The Saint Paul Planning Commission wants to know what YOU think would be the best way to redevelop Hillcrest Golf Course. It's a huge property (112 acres), and an opportunity that will have a lasting impact on the whole city. Both mitigate any contamination and create equal number of jobs and housing. Only one will actually benefit the neighborhood. Spread the word. Make your voice heard. For more information web-search: Saint Paul Planning Department.

Email your comments Today by 4PM, March 7, 2022, to Bill.Dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 4:29 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Hillcrest Master Plan comments

My name is Raquel Barrientos. I am a resident of Saint Paul and homeowner of 2066 Arlington Ave E. Upon reviewing the Hillcrest draft master plan, I like the draft plan for the following reasons:

1. It offers more housing in St. Paul.
2. It offers more jobs on the East side.

However, I am also concerned that:

1. I have heard our mayor, Melvin Carter reference a city that "truly works for all of us." This Master Plan does NOT work for all of us. It barely even seems to work for some of us that live right next door. It most certainly doesn't work for the majority of us living adjacent to Hillcrest, look at the Engagement Details, the feedback is being ignored.

2. According to US census data used for the Master Plan report, the "Hillcrest Adjacent" community is basically 60% White, so I ask where is the input and feedback from the other 40% of the neighborhood? The community engagement has relied heavily on the White majority and most definitely has not engaged a majority of the "Hillcrest Adjacent" community.

3. Anyone can look at the Engagement Details and see those of us in the community who have actually been able to engage in this process CONSISTENTLY push for less traffic to have safe, quiet streets and the City continues to ignore us.

4. The City says we can't have another park, there is no capacity to maintain and service another park and yet, again, those of us in the community who have actually been able to engage in this process CONSISTENTLY push for more trails, access to green space, more parks and this Master Plan does not deliver on that. Why are you asking us to share our wants and needs, only to categorically deny us? Have you looked around this part of the City, why can't we have nice things too? You're going to build 1,000 plus housing UNITS, but with this influx of residents, we can't have a new park?!?

5. People love to say, "children are our future," and yet, where is there any feedback from the kids who live adjacent to Hillcrest?

6. Jan Leadholm has created an excellent alternative plan for the Hillcrest site. Now I know it's not going to be adopted as is, but I believe it can be incorporated into a new Master Pkan that actually reflects the feedback and input from the community.

7. I am frustrated that the community feedback is being ignored. The community priorities are not being reflected by the City in this Master Plan

Twenty priorities have been listed per feedback from the community. Nearly half of them have been ignored. It feels as if they don't exist. It feels as if they don't exist because there is no obvious evidence that the Hilltop plan or Job Focus plan were created with those priorities in mind. Did the City think we would be happy just because they made a list of what we need and desire, and may I respectfully say, deserve? Well I thank them for taking notes, but I do not thank them for disregarding our priorities. If those priorities were actually honored and meaningfully incorporated into their development plan we could enrich and brighten this oft forgot and neglected corner of the city.

The first priority states:

New development should respect the quiet nature of the existing neighborhood. Whereas we recognize that new development may “open up” our neighborhood, we value our trees, quiet streets, access to nature, and sense of neighborhood. New development should not eliminate these qualities.

-The Hilltop proposal places industrial and medium density housing adjacent to a significant part of the neighborhood, which in no way aligns with the community's #1 priority of maintaining our quiet neighborhood, access to nature, etc. The Job Focus plan doesn't do much better since the housing slated adjacent to the neighborhood could be 3 stories high. I did not choose to buy a home in a neighborhood next to apartment buildings or a townhouse complex, those scenarios mostly definitely do not match the feel of our neighborhood, nor the desire of our community to maintain its quietness. What we need is some middle ground, areas that bridge and connect the two neighborhoods. Examples of this would be #1, to place a trail along Winthrop (would be great to continue over to Ivy and connect to Beaver Lake, there is no sidewalk or "safe" walking/biking path over the RR tracks over to [the bus stop @Maryland & McKNight] Beaver Lake) to buffer our neighborhood from the new development and provide green space both neighborhoods could enjoy #2, to place community gardens, park space, open green space, again as a buffer for our neighborhood from the new development and to provide communal green space both neighborhoods could enjoy #3, to place a new community center, or/AND playground, library, pool, splash pad, public art, ETC which would provide communal spaces for both neighborhoods to enjoy and again, give our neighborhood a buffer between the new development.

The second priority states:

Neighborhoods should be walkable with connections to nearby parks, schools, public transportation and other amenities.

-This is neither CLEARLY nor DIRECTLY addressed in the information available online nor in the mtg/presentation March 16th. This priority is basically a further, detailed, explanation of a physical manifestation if priority #1 was actually taken seriously.

The seventh priority states:

Industrial/manufacturing building types should integrate with the neighborhood's character and be located on the edges of the site near higher volume streets like Larpenteur and McKnight.

-The Hilltop plan most definitely does NOT honor this priority as it places Industrial plots all along Winthrop and the Job Focus Plan places some low density housing between the Industrial lots and our neighborhood, none of us decided we wanted to live in a neighborhood right across the street from a giant Warner's Stellan warehouse, bakery, etc. Energy Park Drive and Phalen Blvd have been mentioned as examples of light industrial development, do you see any houses, neighborhoods, kids playing right across the street from those businesses???

The ninth priority states:

Extend trails into the site, creating a pedestrian and recreational connection that allows people from the neighborhood to access the site, public spaces, and businesses.

-Again, this is neither CLEARLY nor DIRECTLY addressed in the information available online nor in the mtg/presentation March 16th. This priority is basically a further, detailed, explanation of a physical manifestation if priority #1 was actually taken seriously.

The twelfth priority states:

The development should have ample green space, open space, and park space to support the needs of the people who will be living and working there and meet the City's green space and park requirements. These spaces should be connected to surrounding neighborhoods and Beaver Lake with multi-use trails and sidewalks

-This directly relates back to priorities 9, 2, and 1, and my comments there. Our community has expressly identified several ways to meet our needs, to bridge the two neighborhoods, and yet the City has not respectfully and specifically responded.

The thirteenth priority states:

The site should have ample community spaces for people to gather and get to know each other and break down barriers – community center, swimming pool, picnic space, splash pad and playground for young families, natural reserve for kids to explore, dog park and other public or semipublic elements that help create community. Also places for activities like community/educational gardens and a farmers market, and programming such as art in the park and community murals

-Again, a prime example of what we have already said we need, but the City has ignored. Here is more to consider. How about a new library, the one at the corner of Arlington and White Bear is dreadfully small and with the goal of 1,000+ housing UNITS, not people, units, there is no way the current library site could provide adequate space and programming, it certainly didn't before.....What about a new Rec Center, my comments about library services and space applies to this as well. The Greater East Side really gets the short end of the stick and here we have repeatedly voiced our desires and needs only to be ignored.

The seventeenth priority states:

Provide a mix of housing options on the Hillcrest site that blends into the existing community and allows people to both stay on the East Side and choose to live on the East Side. This may include smaller single family homes including two-three bedrooms for young families, cottages, twin and town homes, duplexes, live/work homes, homes that are affordable to many incomes and family types, senior options (assisted and independent living cottages), and starter homes, all with yards and green space a priority.

-I think the operative word here is BLENDS. We don't want to live next to industrial lots, apartment buildings, towering town home complexes. We want more of the same, more quiet streets, more trees, and more of that quiet neighborhood feel. All three of my examples in the comments after priority #1, apply here. We very seriously want and desire a blending of the neighborhoods, that should not be a contentious point of view or priority, you would want the same if you lived here too.

The twentieth priority states:

Limit connections to the west and south that carry fast and high volumes of vehicular traffic. Connections into the site from the west and south should be carefully designed so as to avoid excess traffic flow through the neighborhood. Many neighborhood streets do not have sidewalks, so pedestrian safety is a priority. If traffic is increased, provide sidewalks.

-No, no traffic increases and no sidewalks. I wonder if that was actually a detail offered through community input or added later. Do you know how often I brag about not having a sidewalk or an alley in the city? I don't want my lawn torn up for a sidewalk, I don't want the extra construction noise of sidewalks being laid down in the neighborhood, I don't want to have to look at the ugly swaths of grassless paths up and down the street until the grass grows in all because the City refused to maintain our quiet streets and opened them up to through traffic. We already get speeders and reckless drivers down the street, we don't need more traffic, certainly not people rushing through to get to work on time, and I do not want to personally maintain a sidewalk in front of my home or pay for sidewalk maintenance. Just imaging a sidewalk down my street makes me shudder, losing more trees, flowers, landscaping so the City could provide us a "safe" sidewalk to accommodate the uptick in traffic, no thank you! I LOVED buying a home on a dead end street and I am certainly not excited to lose that. I would say traffic circles seem like a great idea for slowing down traffic in the neighborhood, but I can't believe anyone in our neighborhood would be happy opening the streets. To me, the only places other than Larpentuer and McKnight/Lakewood Dr for openings into the development that make sense would be on Ivy at Orange and Hawthorne, and maybe where Hoyt and Winthrop meet, but there's a sharp curve where Hoyt becomes Furness Pkwy north of Nebraska and that would require some kind of "traffic change" if Hoyt was to be opened and carry more traffic, not very pedestrian friendly as is and would be a disaster if not changed should traffic flow through there.

There are easily 400+ homes within 2 blocks bordering this development in the Hayden Heights neighborhood. I maintain that the City has not sincerely worked to fully engage the community and I ask why? Is it "too hard," "too much work," there are no available staff to communicate about this site and its development in the manner, language, and location that various community members prefer? I wonder what do all the non-English speakers think, what do they desire and envision for their neighborhood? What about our community members who are not on facebook or using email or even the internet in general, they are not afforded a say, does the City not care about their input? I've said it before, and I'll say it again. The City HAS NOT and IS NOT genuinely interested in our feedback, if they were, this would not be a rush job, a majority of the immediate Hillcrest adjacent community would be consulted, and our priorities would be honored.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my public comment. We look forward to seeing how our voices are incorporated into the plan, and appreciate your interest in a democratic process around a major development in our city.

Raquel Barrientos

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 11:32 AM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Master Plan

Dear Mr. Dermody,

I live in the Union Park neighborhood for the past 24 years. I came to St. Paul in 1991 to work as a family physician on the East Side. Currently I work with the Pipefitters Local 455 and other plumbers and pipefitters unions. I am immensely excited about the Hillcrest master plan and I write to you to explain why I support it.

I first heard about the proposed development as a member of St. Paul 350, an environmental group working for access to safe, sustainable and affordable energy for everyone in St. Paul. We heard a presentation about it last summer. I have read the Master Plan, and participated in the hearing on Friday 3/4/22.

I support this development most urgently because of the climate crisis. This area can be one of the first ever LEED Platinum community projects. The impact for the East Side of St. Paul is impressive - and can provide inspiration and an example for other communities in St. Paul and our entire region. I live near Marshall and Snelling Avenues where apartment buildings are going up every 20 feet - They should ALL be zero-carbon, and this project will show that it can be done!

These are things I like about the plan:

- Geothermal district heating. I toured Local 455 and learned about geothermal. Of course I am excited that much of the work to build this system would likely go to St. Paul Pipefitters local 455.

- I am impressed with the depth of the work going into this, with creativity and inclusion, technical skill and wide imagination. The idea of 54 acres of light industrial land use initially sounds ugly and off-putting - and I am sure this is what many of the neighbors are picturing at first. But the Master Plan makes clear that with public art; trees, vegetation and landscaping; and creative spacing and design, these areas can be functional AND attractive.

- Low-income and middle-income communities need and deserve the public health benefits and affordability of all-electric appliances and energy-efficient housing. The energy cost burden will be much lower for residents in this development. And they will avoid the risks that come from piping and burning fossil gas in their homes. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/01/27/gas-stoves-kitchens-pose-risk-public-health-planet-research-finds/> and

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2020/10/gas-stoves-are-bad-you-and-environment/616700/>

I urge this:

- Rooftop solar to provide additional energy to both industrial and residential buildings. This should be community-owned, distributed solar power. Hire people from the East Side to install the panels and be trained as solar installers.
- Be sure the housing units and industrial sites use all-electric power - with induction electric stoves, electric dryers and electric hot water heaters (ideally hybrid heat-pump electric). This can avoid the costs of bringing ANY gas lines into the development. Provide the option for *every* unit to plug in electric cars.
- Continue to work for equity and inclusion in housing and in jobs (both the on-going jobs and building the development).
- For the close-by neighbors who are concerned about the project: How they can feel they are part of the new place, the new project? Can they be contribute to the art? Do they like the bike paths? What would they like to see in the neighborhood hub? How can they welcome the new neighbors?
- I think a skate part could be a great part of the City park.

St. Paul needs to supply housing and we need good jobs close to where we live. This is a plan that supports EACH of the ten Core Values in St. Paul's 2040 Comprehensive Plan. (Equity and opportunity, Building on our assets. Resiliency and sustainability, Celebrating parks, Innovation, People-centered, Health, Welcoming and safe, Growth and prosperity through density, Integration and coordination.) Additionally, it is a powerful leader in meeting the goals of our Climate Action and Resilience Plan.

I strongly urge the City of St. Paul to adopt the Hillcrest Master Plan and to move ahead without delay.

Sincerely,

Amy Gilbert

--

Amy Gilbert (she/her)
1608 Hague Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 4:47 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Hillcrest Master Plan Feedback

Dear Bill Dermody and members of the Hillcrest Master Plan Committee,

My name is Jesse Harms, and my family lives at the NW corner of the Hillcrest Site (2100 Idaho Ave E. Saint Paul, MN 55119). Thank you for being willing to hear my feedback throughout this planning process. I have appreciated the hours of work that you have put into this project so far.

I like the draft plan for the following reasons:

1. Industrial is located along the east side off of Mcknight Ave.
2. I like the trail that connects the Furness Trail to the new city park.

However, I'm concerned that:

1. I am concerned about the medium density housing proposed next to our home right in our backyard just north of the St. Paul reservoir. To help with the transition of existing single family homes like ours that are next to the site, I would much rather like to see new single family homes (instead of medium density homes) with some sort of passive green space as a buffer.
2. Has the planning committee considered making part of the area between our home and the St. Paul reservoir wetlands (next to the proposed new trail that connects to the Furness Trail)? Right now the master plan has all of the wetland development only located on the east side off of McKnight Ave. The land between our home and the reservoir is already part of the lowest elevation on the site and floods every spring. The wetlands would also help preserve some of the nature in that area and help beautify the transition between the trails.

Grateful for your time!

Jesse Harms

To: billdermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Date: Mon, 7 Mar 2022 15:55:07 -0600

Subject: Hillcrest

Dear Mr. Dermody,

As a twenty plus year resident of Ward 4 in St Paul and as a retired building scientist, small businessman, and longtime environmentalist, I wish to share my excitement in the possibilities of the Hillcrest development, and my hope that it can live up to the possibilities and hopes its concept has engendered.

Having recently had to replace my natural gas water heater with a hybrid electric heat pump water heater, and having toured Pipefitters local 455 facility and learned about their groundwater heat pump systems, I have become very excited about the combined benefits of these near zero carbon emissions systems, and their multi-systems usage.

There are even heat pump non-venting dryers available now.

It is my hope that the Port Authority and the Hillcrest developers pursue the objective of a zero carbon development. The combination of rooftop solar and district groundwater systems for heating, cooling, hot water, and possibly more, is tantalizing.

Well insulated and sealed buildings along with green fast payback energy systems offers the possibilities of affordable housing and addressing inequities in the housing and job markets.

In addition, having light industrial business in the community, parks, greenways, bike and walking paths, art creates a community and village of sorts.

Thank you for the great efforts that have been made to invite input and comments on the Hillcrest Development, and the aim for a project that will be consistent with the climate emergency the City has declared and its goals of equity and justice.

Sincerely, Robert Worth Frank

1608 Hague Avenue, 55104

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 1:22 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest "Your Voice Matters" Flyer

Given all the attention the Ford (Highland) site received for market research, engineering, unit mix as it relates to density by land mass etc... Why not bookend Saint Paul municipality with the same or similar type of impactful product and scope. Even the layout of these two sites has similarities (see attached).

Also given the rich cultures the east side possesses' the architecture for housing, industrial and retail should be drivers to showcase these attributes. An east site overall cultural theme is something to seriously consider the village be zoned and designed for.

- A Hmong slaughterhouse is a must for this site as an agricultural component 20 acres+/-
- Building heights should be unrestricted to allow for development creativity and a tool to keep greenspace ratio high.
- Develop entirely net zero as an environmental focus. I think this is something the Highlands project simply missed out on.
- Senior & 55+ components of the residential will be a highly sought after housing stock that when combined could help influence the housing programming.

All the above - I could go on, and be happy to do so if afforded more time.

For those CC'd on this correspondence, please respond in kind as well to Bill and Jan to have a robust response by end of day today as it relates to your opinion on the two plans outlined in the project flyer below.

Thank you All



TJ Hammerstrom

657 5th St E #A 55106



Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 3:57 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Feedback

Hi Bill,

There are some cultural questions that have come up regarding the Hillcrest site and I wanted to get these to you prior to today's public feedback deadline.

The questions:

As the Dakota Nation once had this area as their homeland, was an environmental study done for archaeological remains? Or is one planned? And what else has been done to recognize and dignify the cultural aspect of the land?

Also, I want to thank you for reaching out for assistance and feedback. We are hopeful that the insights you receive will inform the process and decisions made.

Please reach out if there is anything further AIFC can do to assist.

Miigwech,

Kristin Kinney

Executive Director

American Indian Family Center

579 Wells Street

Saint Paul, MN 55130

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 3:58 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Supporting Hillcrest Master Plan

Hi Bill,

My name is Jessa Anderson-Reitz, and I live at 1423 Eleanor Avenue in the Highland neighborhood. I'm writing to express my overall support for the Hillcrest Master Plan.

I think the plan has been thoughtfully designed, and balances the community's key priorities. I am glad that the Port Authority has proposed to preserve the three largest wetlands on the site and several of the mature trees; and I also think it is absolutely appropriate to cut down other trees, remove contaminated topsoil, and alter the topography of the landscape to accommodate residential and light industrial uses. I am impressed with the care that was put into designing the streets and bike-ped paths through the Site, and to create gentle transitions between residential and light industrial areas (e.g. linear district stormwater, trees, etc.). I am excited about the planned neighborhood node area near the north end of the site.

My main critique is that I am skeptical the plan would actually result in 1,000 units of housing, despite the estimates provided in the Master Plan draft. I would like to see more of the Site dedicated to housing, and less to Light Industrial (perhaps the northernmost area of the Site slated for Light Industry, adjacent to the high-density residential area). The city of Saint Paul badly needs those 1,000 units of housing, and allocating more of the Site to housing would help us achieve that goal.

I also want to urge the Port Authority and the City to continue pursuing ambitious sustainability plans for the Site (e.g. district energy, community solar on all the Light Industrial buildings, etc.). Likewise, I hope to see the Port Authority follow through on a Community Benefits Agreement for the Site, including concrete plans to ensure that many/most of the jobs on the Site are filled by St. Paul residents.

Overall, I enthusiastically support this Plan, and appreciate the opportunity to share my comments.

Sincerely,

Jessa Anderson-Reitz

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 3:13 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest Redevelopment Comments

What's the "Highest Best Use" for Hillcrest? We don't know. Only one option, with variations, has been explored.

Now is the time to explore more choices — Ones that follow the 2040 Comp plan and Community Priorities instead of ignoring them. Do the math. Everything is still on paper.

You have time. If construction started today on the current plan, it will take at least 6 years to clear the land and be compact enough to build on.

Whatever choice is made will define the area for decades, just like the golf course did 100+ years ago.

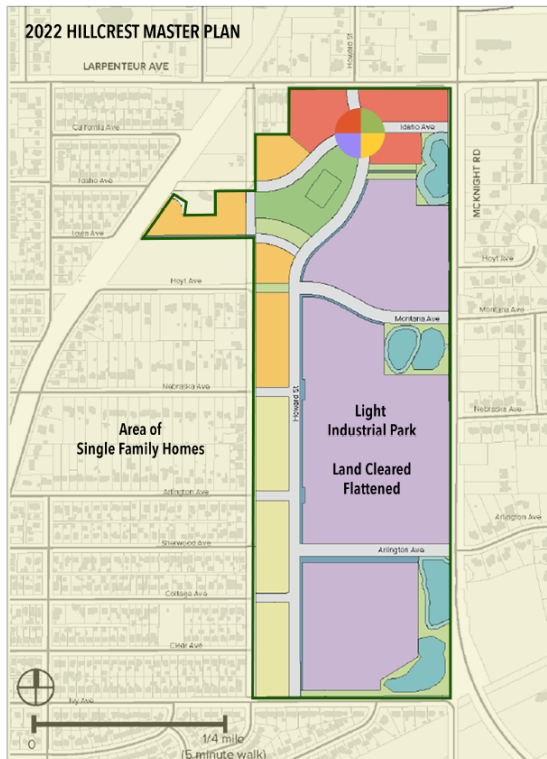
Please take the time to do this right. Say "No" to zoning changes until you know what will profit the neighborhood and the city most. Seek a balanced solution — one that is scaled for people, benefits the community, stays true to the 2040 Comp plans, and honors Hillcrest's uniqueness.

Best Regards,

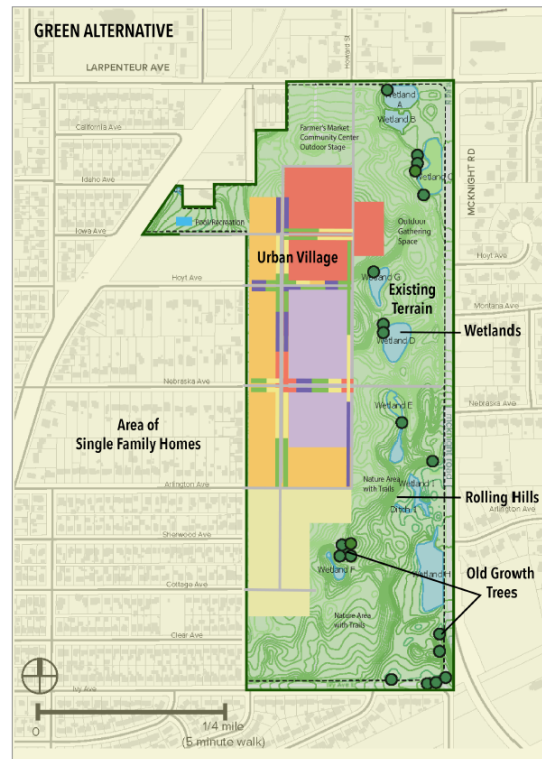
Jan Leadholm

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE NEXT TO?



Large light industrial buildings, a mix of housing, a tiny neighborhood node for food trucks and a city park. Ignores local needs, profits a few companies, buildings not future proof.



A walkable urban village, entrepreneurial hub, with variety of housing and job opportunities, services, community, and natural spaces. More balanced, adaptable and sustainable.

HILLCREST REDEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- The current plan radically changes the topography – Part of a huge flood plain already prone to flooding.
- Wetlands, old growth trees, and endangered species help fight climate change.
- SPPA has a very broad portfolio, but has chosen only one type that flattens the land and takes up most the space.
- How adaptable are those industrial buildings? What happens when companies move? Will they sit vacant for years?
- Both plans mitigate any contamination and create an equal number of jobs and housing.
- Current plan lacks strong community support. To be successful, people have to be excited about the plan.
- Dramatically devalues and changes the character of the area.
- Ask yourselves, when has an industrial park ever increased the value of a neighborhood.

Sent: Monday, March 7, 2022 4:03 PM

To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul) <bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Hillcrest comments

Hello Bill. Here are my comments regarding the Hillcrest Master Plan.

1. We need a community benefits agreement to ensure that jobs go to eastsiders including the construction as the site goes into groundbreaking and building. This agreement should also protect a variety of housing levels from deeply affordable to market rate housing. The agreement could also be used to ensure the greenspace remains an integral part of the master plan as well as the public art.
2. The site should have 2/3 housing to 1/3 light industrial.
3. The wetlands should be protected as a natural groundwater treatment system.
4. The neighborhood node should be an urban village and entrepreneurial hub with a variety of housing, jobs, and services.

Seanne Thomas, Broker

www.abcrealtytwincities.com





Greater East Side Community Council

02/24/22

To: Bill Dermody, City Planner
St Paul Planning Commission
Councilmembers Yang & Prince

The Greater East Side (District 2) Community Council on February 23 met to discuss and craft a position on the Hillcrest Master Plan. Overall, the board is very optimistic over this investment in our neighborhood and our city. The board voted to support the Master Plan and would like to also take this opportunity to express some concerns to be considered as the City and Port Authority move forward in the process and also emphasize some of our neighborhood priorities.

1. Affordability of the housing built as part of the development: Our neighborhood has one of the highest concentrations of poverty in Ramsey County. We are very excited to see that there will be multiple housing options included in the Master Plan. We would like to reinforce our position that the housing built should also include housing that is “truly” affordable to our residents. The average median income for the region according to HUD is over \$73,000 however the average median income of our neighborhood is less than \$53,000 annually. What is affordable at \$73,000 per year, is not affordable at \$53,000. We highly encourage the City and the Port Authority work with developers and make the needed investments (TIF, PHA) to ensure the housing built on this site is reflective of the neighborhood needs.

2. Emphasis on utilization of local contractors, local businesses and the hiring of local employees: Our local businesses were highly impacted by the pandemic and the economic challenges of the past few years. Due to a lack of opportunity and investment in our neighborhood, we hope that there will be a priority in utilizing our local contractors, local businesses as vendors and that local employees will be recruited to fill the 1000 jobs proposed. The neighborhood is encouraged by the partnership of the Port Authority with the East Side Employment Exchange and optimistic this partnership will further enhance the impact this development will have on the neighborhood.

3. Traffic study should go beyond the boundaries of the “Hillcrest Site”: As traffic speeds and accidents have increased in our neighborhood specifically on White Bear Avenue, we highly encourage any traffic studies to go beyond the immediate boundaries of the site but include the area south of the site to Maryland and west of the site to White Bear Avenue. White Bear has one of the highest numbers of accidents for a street that size within the city. Adding additional housing units and industry three blocks away will continue to exasperate and tax the current infrastructure. The neighborhood will happily work with the City and County to find solutions to not only make the streets passable by vehicles but also safe for pedestrians. The Port Authority and City are encouraged to work proactively with Metro Transit to ensure transit amenities such as “park and ride” facilities and shelters be researched as well as connections to the Gold Line and other existing and planned public transit infrastructure.

4. The Neighborhood Node: The neighborhood is excited about the inclusion of the neighborhood node at the north end of the development near the highest density of housing. This “town square” will bring others to the neighborhood and become a hub for pedestrian friendly development.

5. Other Resources to Support the Development: The neighborhood strongly encourages the City in working with the Port Authority to examine the current amenities and resources of the existing neighborhood. Our library, recreation centers, retail center and school buildings are aging rapidly and have not had the benefit of investment in decades. With these amenities barely servicing the needs of the current neighborhood, we encourage further investment in preparing them to serve potentially thousands of new residents and employees. We ask for improvements that will ensure public safety of the new and existing neighborhood and further resources allocated to adequately support the new development.

Finally, we ask that this process is allowed to continue to progress. The neighborhood has been a victim of delayed investment for too long.

We thank Bill Dermody, the Port Authority and the City for partnering with the neighborhood on engagement and throughout this exciting process. We commit to continue to work with you to bring this project to fruition.

Sincerely on behalf of the Greater East Side Community Council,

Lisa Theis, Executive Director

Mr. Dermody:

My name is Richard Dushaw and I live at 1080 Wilson Ave. As a Saint Paul resident, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts about the proposed Hillcrest Master Plan. You have my support for the following reason. We are in a housing crisis, and we need 1,000 new housing units sooner than later. And to bring good paying jobs to this project.

At the same time, I hope the following items will still be addressed in either the Master Plan or throughout the redevelopment process. Developers and Contractors will provide a safe job site, Along with good wages and benefits to their work force.

Thank you

Richard Dushaw

To: The City of St. Paul Planning Commission
c/o Bill Dermody at bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us

From: Kathleen Posus
2109 Sherwood Avenue E.
St. Paul, MN 55119

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Hillcrest Master Plan and Associated Actions. While I and most of my neighbors currently enjoy and value living in this area of St. Paul, we have several concerns with the current Master Plan presented, and we would like to address the following which are the top, major concerns. We would like to see these concerns addressed and changed in an acceptable manner in the Plan that is ultimately adopted. Summarized, they are:

- **the currently proposed changes to existing neighborhood streets**
- **the currently proposed re-zoning categories adjacent to the existing residential neighborhood**
- **the lack of incorporation of these previously voiced concerns above into the Master Plan**

We are not asking for an entire revamp of the Master Plan, but to simply have some changes made to evidence that we, the neighbors who currently live here and have worked very hard to create and maintain the good personality and reputation of this neighborhood making it a sought-after area in the City of St. Paul, and our concerns for the current quality of living in the Hillcrest neighborhood are valued, heard, respected and addressed in a manner acceptable to current Hillcrest neighborhood residents.

Specific details of neighborhood frustration and conflict are as follows:

WHAT WE, THE RESIDENTS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA, WERE TOLD:

- There will need to be a couple streets that will need to be continued/opened up into the new development.

PROBLEM/REALITY: Of the 9 currently quiet, residential neighborhood streets on the west side of the development, 6 are being opened up and will increase traffic significantly. (...so much for our quiet neighborhood and the priority to maintain that.) On none of the previous 4 potential plans provided last year for public input, did it show Winthrop being opened up as a through-street to the south; that just 'showed up' in the Master Plan. That alone, will increase the traffic in our neighborhood exponentially, not to mention the extension of the aforementioned east/west neighborhood streets...NOT part of the priorities (supposedly). This Master Plan's opening up of so many of our currently quiet residential streets and the increased traffic that will bring does not maintain, encourage or accomplish the #1 listed community priority:

1. New development should **respect the quiet nature** of the existing neighborhood. Whereas we recognize that new development may "open up" our neighborhood, we value our trees, quiet streets, access to nature, and sense of neighborhood. New development should not eliminate these qualities.

Potential solutions: Although we've been told it is opposed by city works, use cul-de-sac streets vs. extending into the new development for the residential streets on the west side of the development. Cul-de-sacs in residential neighborhoods are used successfully by many if not most municipalities. Leave Winthrop as a non-through street.

WHAT WE, THE RESIDENTS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA, WERE TOLD:

- There will most likely be some single-family residential homes as part of the development.

PROBLEM/REALITY: NO single-family residential homes are specifically designated in the Master Plan. In fact, at the "housing" meeting in July 2021 at the Hayden Heights Library, we were told by a representative of the Port Authority that in order to achieve their goals, there would be no single-family homes in the Master Plan, and that is indeed what we are seeing. People have purchased their homes and live in this neighborhood because of its personality - a working middle-class neighborhood with modest single-family homes and yards in a quiet neighborhood with low traffic volumes. That is who we are - - - the identity we wish to maintain and attract.

Potential solutions: While we appreciate the western side of the site where the current residential neighborhood exists being designated for the lower density residential, we would like to see the ambiguity of that zoning designation of T1M Lower Density Residential housing be changed to maintain the current specific designation of single-family residential (which I believe is R2: One-Family Residential), and partner with Habitat for Humanity to accomplish this housing.

WHAT WE, THE RESIDENTS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA, WERE TOLD:

- We want the existing neighbors' input. We will form a Hillcrest Community Advisory Committee ("CAC"). This CAC will establish community priorities to guide the Hillcrest master plan, and the CAC members will be the ones to develop the Master Plan.

PROBLEM/REALITY: Very few if any members of the appointed CAC actually lives in the immediate vicinity of the development (within a block or two). As a result, OUR identity as the Hillcrest neighborhood (working class, modest single-family homes with yards) and OUR priorities and concerns were NOT taken into consideration. We, the current Hillcrest neighborhood, are being dictated as to what we will have literally in our back yards and have to live with every single hour of every single day by others who will not. The published materials made it sound like the members of this CAC live in the Hillcrest neighborhood; they stated "*our neighborhood - - "we" value "our" trees, quiet streets, access to nature and sense of neighborhood, when in reality, they do not, as most of the CAC were/are NOT in the direct, adjacent neighborhood.*

In fact, when Hillcrest neighbors gave their input and it did not fit with what the CAC or those who appointed the CAC wanted to hear, they admittedly created special events to "intentionally reach targeted groups" - - groups that would give them the answers they wanted, which they

then presented as the neighborhood input. **NOTE:** In autumn 2019, a true neighborhood session was held at Hayden Heights (now “The Heights”) elementary school, the local elementary school in the area. That meeting was a true representation of the neighborhood as the school gymnasium was ‘standing room only’ when concerned neighbors showed up in force...many of whom walked there because they live in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Where is all the input that was gathered at that meeting?

Potential solutions: Prove that you do actually want, value and will incorporate the existing neighbors’ input by addressing the concerns and conflicts noted in this letter.

We also take offense to the fact that the Master Plan lists the need for proposed off-site modifications/“improvements” to the existing neighborhood...how will these modifications/“improvements” be funded? Our educated guess is that we, the existing neighborhood WHOSE INPUT IS NOT RECEIVING THE WEIGHT AND VALUE IT SHOULD, will be paying for those modifications/“improvements” of which we may be in direct opposition by an increase in OUR property taxes or assessments. We will be paying for things we do not want or support. (e.g. We do not need nor want our current neighborhood streets widened to accommodate increased traffic.)

Those planning this development and many providing “community” input will go home each night to their houses, not in this neighborhood, but in the neighborhoods they’ve chosen to live in. We’ve chosen to live here - - - buy houses and scratch to make our mortgage payments, establish our homes and raise families because of the quiet, low traffic nature of the neighborhood. The good reputation of this neighborhood, OUR neighborhood, exists because of our constant, hard work - - - OUR VOICES NEED TO BE HEARD AND RESPECTED.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Posus

To: The City of St. Paul Planning Commission
c/o Bill Dermody at bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us

From: Marcella Posus
2142 Arlington Avenue E.
St. Paul, MN 55119

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Hillcrest Master Plan and Associated Actions. While I and most of my neighbors currently enjoy and value living in this area of St. Paul, we have several concerns with the current Master Plan presented, and we would like to address the following which are the top, major concerns. We would like to see these concerns addressed and changed in an acceptable manner in the Plan that is ultimately adopted. Summarized, they are:

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We are not asking for an entire revamp of the Master Plan, but to simply have some changes made to evidence that we, the neighbors who currently live here and have worked very hard to create and maintain the good personality and reputation of this neighborhood making it a sought-after area in the City of St. Paul, and our concerns for the current quality of living in the Hillcrest neighborhood are valued, heard, respected and addressed in a manner acceptable to current Hillcrest neighborhood residents.

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Potential solutions: Although we've been told it is opposed by city works, use cul-de-sac streets vs. extending into the new development for the residential streets on the west side of the development. Cul-de-sacs in residential neighborhoods are used successfully by many if not most municipalities. Leave Winthrop as a non-through street.

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In fact, when Hillcrest neighbors gave their input and it did not fit with what the CAC or those who appointed the CAC wanted to hear, they admittedly created special events to "intentionally reach targeted groups" - - groups that would give them the answers they wanted, which they

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcella Posus

Dear Chair and Planning Commissioners,

My name is Jennifer George. I am a resident of Saint Paul. I live at 2139 Cottage Ave East. I am writing to you today regarding the Hillcrest development. I have attended planning meetings for the Hillcrest development and reviewed the draft master plan. I like some elements of the draft master plan such as the light industry being located along McKnight Road and the neighborhood node located near the intersection of McKnight Road and Larpenteur Avenue since there is already commercial property at that intersection. I also like the commitment to affordable housing but do not believe the plan supports deeply affordable housing.

The draft master plan falls short on meeting many identified community priorities. For example, the draft master plan does not respect the quiet nature of the existing neighborhood as shown by the location of all green space far from the existing Saint Paul neighborhood and the connection of many streets that are currently dead ends. Nor does the draft master plan encourage pride in ownership as it relates to housing since its housing priority one is rental housing. You cannot close the racial wealth gap without changing home ownership as that is the number one way families build their wealth. The current home ownership of the neighborhood is 75% and the draft master plan has no plan to develop near that proportion. I am concerned that the active park space in the draft master plan is located in the part of the new Hillcrest development that is closest to our neighborhood's existing active park. I would like to see park space created closer to the existing neighborhood area without an active park.

In regards to street additions, the plan states that the new addition of Winthrop Street will be narrower or moved east from the existing Winthrop Street. I am concerned a narrowing of the street will reduce sidewalks and available parking for current residents because new residents will require new additional parking spaces. Also, Nebraska Ave, Arlington Ave and Cottage Ave, that are being extended into the Hillcrest site past Winthrop Street, do not have sidewalks; increasing traffic will increase the hazards for pedestrians. Another concern of mine is that current residents will have the burden of additional street maintenance fees (even with a 50% reduction due to two street frontages, total frontage cost will increase because the lots in this neighborhood have greater depths than widths).

Thank you for taking the time to consider my public comment. I am hopeful the voices of my neighborhood will be incorporated into the master plan. I appreciate being part of the democratic process in developing my neighborhood in Saint Paul.

Thank you,
Jennifer George

February 1, 2022

Dear Planning Commission Members,

Nearly everyone who lives in this part of town has been following the plans of the City and the St. Paul Port Authority to develop the former Hillcrest Golf Course with great interest and concern. But few have more at stake and more to lose than the six homeowners who live on the vacated portion of Winthrop Street between Sherwood and Ivy. If Winthrop is pushed through as it is now platted on the city maps, we will lose a substantial portion of “our yards” – that part of the right-of-way on the west side of the golf course fence.

We live on Ivy Avenue right next to the far southwest corner of the Hillcrest property. When we bought the house almost 35 years ago, we knew that “our yard” didn’t go all the way to the fence. But we also figured that with a golf course there for over 60 years, there would be no interest in either party to see the street pushed through in the right-of-way. Indeed, the City of St. Paul showed no interest in that land for 100 years. For over three decades, we’ve mowed the lawn and trimmed the brush along the fence, treating that ground as part of our yard, while gladly welcoming our neighbors to walk along the fence on the public right-of-way from Ivy up Sherwood. And, we had the pleasure of looking out over the fence at the nice green parkland of the golf course.

With the golf course gone, the ideal scenario for us would be for no development to occur on the SW corner and for the green space to be retained, but we understand well that may not be ideal from the City’s perspective.

The draft master plan for Hillcrest calls for low-density housing being built along the western edge of the property and for Winthrop to be extended from Sherwood to Ivy. If that must be the case, we ask that the paved street, sidewalks, and boulevards be narrowed and pushed as far to the east as possible in the 60’ ROW so that the loss of what we’ve always treated as “our yard” is minimized.

Thank you,

John Crea & Susan Barghini

2139 Ivy Ave E

651-983-1507

jcsb2139@gmail.com

Sent: Sunday, January 30, 2022 1:08 PM

To: bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Subject: RE: Hillcrest public hearing testimony - with image for alternative approach

Bill,

Further to my earlier comments below, please see the attached image for an approach that might address many of those and some further thoughts. My primary focus was to dimension the residential areas for more practical development, and be more consistent with existing neighborhood development patterns.

1. Block 1 becomes a more typical residential block depth of 300' east-west by about 620' north-south, to span the distance from Hoyt on the north to Nebraska on the south. This would lay out well for 26-30 lots with typical alley service access down the middle.

2. Block 2 would be the same standard 300' east-west by 972', but could be broken up by an extension of Arlington through to the proposed Howard Street. This might have 40-48 lots.

3-5. Blocks 3, 4 and 5 are simply extensions of the existing Ivy, Clear and Cottage residential block patterns. Perhaps it would be useful to break up these long blocks with an extension of Winthrop or Howard, but it seems overkill to do both. Without those road extensions the blocks are each about 300' north-south by 1200' and could logically contain about 50 lots each.

So this approach adds up to at most 228 lots. With a mix of duplexes, SFH with ADUs, duplexes plus ADUs, and townhomes, this might result in around 450-500 new housing units. I didn't see how the earlier concept achieved the target housing units under the proposed T1 / T2 zoning.

6. It makes more sense to me for the park area to expand to the whole area shown as 6 instead of creating that small odd shaped lot denoted for Medium Density Residential on the other concept.

7. Lot 7 seems logical to zone all one zoning designation instead of the mix and odd shapes in the other concept. It would be useful to study what typologies of housing structures in the Higher Density zones would be required to achieve the target 1000 units across the entire site.

8. Block D is larger than I believe comports with the City Comprehensive Plan so it might be useful to have Nebraska extend through, and enhance the connections in the existing residential neighborhoods.

All this is without the benefit of understanding the post remediation topography being proposed.

Thanks again for considering.

Jamie

AND USE CATEGORIES



-----Original Message-----

Sent: Saturday, January 29, 2022 2:00 PM

To: bill.dermody@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Subject: Hillcrest public hearing testimony

Bill,

I am writing to share feedback and suggestions to the Master Plan and proposed rezoning of the Hillcrest site, as follows:

1. Balance of land uses. I recommend that more of the land area be allocated to housing and less to industrial uses. The existing neighborhoods are primarily residential and there is more demand for housing in the area and city than there is for industrial space. Housing also generates more tax revenue per square foot of land area and does not introduce the same type of traffic and pollution to the existing residential area as does industrial use.

2. Land plan, Howard Street. To achieve a greater share of residential land uses, I suggest that the proposed southward extension of Howard Street be oriented further to the east of the site and ultimately align with Hawthorne Avenue East to the south, with a new signalized intersection at both ends of the Hillcrest site.

The land plan does not seem to appropriately consider the lot dimensions of the residential areas. Could the planners please share the depth of those proposed parcels and how they would be oriented and serviced? And it would also be useful to better understand the intended finished topography of that area, as well as the industrial area. Topo figures are shown for the existing condition but I don't see any for the proposed master plan.

3. Zoning. I strongly recommend that the housing areas on the west side of the existing golf course area be zoned RM2 and not the mix of T districts currently proposed. I recommend the zoning for housing-oriented areas be conducive of different housing typologies including Accessory Dwelling Units, Cluster Developments and townhomes.

4. Zoning adjacent areas. I also strongly recommend that areas outside of the golf course proper, along Larpenner, be upzoned to the higher of RM2 or the zone of the adjacent area in the golf course.

5. Transportation linkage: mass transit and bikeway. The proposed extension of Howard seems a logical route for bus service and a dedicated bikeway that links to other residential areas to the north and south. I recommend the plan better depict the key transportation pathways across the site and as linked to existing neighboring areas, and that the site consider things other than automobiles and semi trucks. Bike lanes, walking lanes and trails seem appropriate to wind through and across the site to better integrate it with the surrounding neighborhoods.

Thank you for considering.

Jamie

Jamie Stolpestad

Partner, YardHomes MN

475 Old Highway 8 NW, New Brighton, MN 55112



Lower Phalen Creek Project
60 Plato Blvd E, Suite 400
Saint Paul MN 55107
651.370.2016
[www/lowerphalencreek.org](http://www.lowerphalencreek.org)

EIN 27-5469929

St. Paul City Planning Commission,

We are writing to you to share our priorities and interests for the Hillcrest Master Plan. As a Native-led environmental conservation nonprofit dedicated to the care of our natural places and sacred sites in St. Paul, we would support a redevelopment at this site which considers the future demands of our human, plant, and animal communities and amends the pollution and contamination inflicted on the site. We would like the Master Plan to include:

- Prioritization of native greenspace which would include reintroduction and/or restoration of the site's original deciduous savanna ecosystem
- Efforts made to keep as many old-growth trees on site as possible

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keeli Siyaka". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keeli Siyaka
Environmental Justice Educator and Organizer

February 22, 2022

Planning Commission
25 W. Fourth St.,
Suite 1400
St. Paul, Mn 55102

Attention: Bill Dermody

Dear Mr. Dermody:

We are writing in regard to the **proposal** for the **112-acre site off Larpenteur Avenue and McKnight Road, Maplewood**, owned by the St. Paul Port Authority.

We understand the developer desires to recoup every last cent of every last dollar invested in this property. However, because of the location of the site and the surrounding neighborhoods already established, we have grave concerns.

Access and egress from the property is severely limited to the **NORTH** due to the **traffic signal at McKnight and Larpenteur Ave**; due to the **businesses** located on the corners of **McKnight/Larpenteur Ave**; and the high amount of vehicle traffic initiated by **Mounds Park Academy** on the **west** and **Hill Murray High School** on the **east**, morning and afternoons.

Access and egress to the property to the **WEST** is limited due to the long established housing neighborhood and streets;

Access and egress to the property to the **SOUTH** is limited due to the railroad tracks and long established housing neighborhoods and streets;

Access and egress to the property to the **EAST** is limited due to the railroad bridge and long established housing neighborhoods and streets;

Additionally, there are **traffic lights** at the corners of **McKnight Road/Larpenteur Ave** and at **McKnight Road/Maryland Avenue**.

That effectively leaves **McKnight Road** for access and egress to most of the traffic flow into and out of the development site.

There are **three streets** from neighborhoods to the **east** of this site on **McKnight Road** between **Larpenteur Ave** to the **north** and the **railroad bridge** to the **south**:

Arlington Ave, which has no route out of the neighborhood other than McKnight road and which is immediately adjacent to a wetland and the railroad bridge;

Nebraska, which has no route out of the neighborhood other than McKnight Road or by weaving in and out thru parts of other neighborhoods to **Larpenteur Ave**;

Montana, which has no route out of the neighborhood other than McKnight Road or by weaving in and out thru parts of other neighborhoods to **Larpenteur Ave**.

In addition, there are houses north of, and fronting on, **McKnight Road** between **Montana and Larpenteur Ave** which have **no access** at all other than **McKnight Road**.

Mr. Dermody, we are certain you have some, or all, of the above information and are also certain the developer has come up with their ideas while trying to maintain as much of their plans as possible.

However, this proposed development will have a **huge impact** on the surrounding **neighborhoods**, and **the people** living in those neighborhoods that, hopefully, will be factored into the equation.

We are uncertain this impact is being given the consideration it deserves, or the fact that we will have to live with the consequences of the decision of the Planning Commission every day.

Very truly yours,


Gerald and Joyce Moran
1472 Myrtle Ct. N
Maplewood, MN 55112
651-269-7096

3-7-22

Mr. Dermody;

My name is Barbara Pecks and I live at 876 Orange Ave E. As a Saint Paul resident, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts about the proposed Hillcrest Master Plan. You have my support for the following reasons:

- The longer the site stays vacant, the longer the city goes without much needed housing, jobs, tax relief, and green space to enjoy. A delay also puts funding sources at risk.

- We are in a housing crisis, and the 1,000 new housing units will help alleviate the shortage.

- I am glad to see the inclusion of light industrial areas and the sustained good paying jobs that will come to this neighborhood. And for those with transportation challenges, the opportunity to walk to work will be a game changer.

At the same time, I hope the following items will still be addressed in either the Master Plan or throughout the redevelopment process:

- Create policies that will ensure safe job sites for the entire development.

- Work with the community to develop pathways for careers, specifically reaching out to under-represented communities.

- Monitor all projects in the development to ensure that livable wages with good benefits will be provided for all workers.

Thank you

Barbara Pecks

March 7, 2022



Dear Mr. Dermody,

As we face increasing harm to our communities and our climate caused by burning fossil fuels, St. Paul 350's mission is to power St. Paul with 100% clean, renewable energy for everyone.

This draft Master Plan was released in January 2022, the same month the Saint Paul City Council unanimously passed a resolution declaring a climate emergency. While St. Paul 350 members were preparing our comment on the draft Hillcrest Master Plan, the IPCC also released its latest report, which warns that increasingly severe effects of climate change are already outpacing the ability to adapt in some regions.

It is in the context of this global crisis as well as urgent local needs for affordable housing, family-supporting jobs, and sustainable infrastructure that we welcome the vision for a zero carbon development at Hillcrest. Our hope is that Hillcrest will make the East Side a leader for the rest of the city—and for all cold climate cities—for climate resilience and adaptation at the community level.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK (pg. 9)

We ask that the City of Saint Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan also be included as part of the Regulatory Framework along with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance 19-39 listed on pg. 9. The Hillcrest Master Plan fulfills many CARP goals to accelerate alternatives to combustion vehicles and natural gas (CARP pg. 63) and is an opportunity to raise the profile of this important document and demonstrate concrete applications of its policies. (See sustainability section below for examples.)

TRANSPORTATION (pg. 12)

Consider renaming this section "TRANSPORTATION AND EMPLOYMENT" or adding an Employment section since the manufacturing history of the Greater East Side and its subsequent deindustrialization is an important part of the context for transportation patterns. Currently, the large majority of people who live on the East Side must commute out of our neighborhoods for work, even though 12% of us don't have cars. Approximately 40% of us have commutes longer than 30 minutes. This adds expense, pollution, stress, and infrastructure wear & tear.

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS: Pollution (pg. 13)

This section could benefit from a broader environmental justice analysis of the Greater East Side beyond the mercury contamination on site. Due to the industrial history of the Greater East Side, our communities have a disproportionately high number of brownfields (as stated in the EPA grant application for remediation funding, we are "burdened by 379 known environmentally impacted properties, including 39 brownfield sites, 218 hazardous substance facilities, 12 dump sites, 7 air quality sites and 143 sites with violations, spills, and leaks"). Greater East Side communities also face increased health risks from air pollution caused by freeway traffic on I35E and I94. The MPCA has identified contamination from PFAS in Battle Creek to the south, Lake Phalen to the east, and in the East Metro groundwater. The Hillcrest Master Plan is an opportunity to develop in a way that addresses the disproportionate contamination of East Side land, air, and water.

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS: Open Space and Habitat Connectivity (pg. 14)

Connection is a critical resilience strategy, and we appreciate the way the plan bridges differing neighborhood types (pg. 10), recognizes the opportunity to restore habitat connectivity for the larger urban ecosystem (pg. 14), and arranges wetland and stormwater acreage so it is "connected, functional, accessible, and valuable to the entire community" (pg. 37). These values are also reflected in the Transportation section of the plan (pg. 29ff), with policies that include trail connections, integrating public art and placemaking into the streetscape design, and calling for the City and Metro Transit to provide the highest level of transit service.

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS: Tree Canopy & Soils (pg. 17)

Conservation is also critical to resilience, as mature trees and soil sequester carbon and enrich biodiversity in ways we are only beginning to understand. As noted in the plan (pg. 17), the site has a substantial tree canopy which includes high value old-growth trees and soils that have never been disturbed by mass grading—very rare in an urban context. We understand the need to mitigate the mercury contamination on site (pg. 13), and support its remediation as an environmental justice issue for the surrounding and future communities.

For these reasons, we support the policies under Topic 2: Integrate development with the ecology of the site (pg. 39). In addition, we request:

- Before the remediation/mass grading process begins, offer paid consultation with local Dakota communities about harvesting valuable trees in a good way.
- Reserve valuable trees that cannot be saved or relocated for an appropriate use on site after harvest.

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS: Climate (pg. 18)

In addition to the statewide climate impacts noted in this section, the Climate Action and Resilience Plan identifies Greater East Side neighborhoods as having the highest composite vulnerability for poor air quality, extreme heat, and flooding due to climate change (CARP, pg. 22). The draft Master Plan shows how these serious environmental justice issues will be addressed (through remediation, stormwater management, tree canopy, and zero carbon development) in the Hillcrest development and hopefully offer strategies for other vulnerable communities.

PROCESS, PRIORITIES AND GOALS (pg. 19)

We appreciate the work of the Technical Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Committee, and the hundreds of neighbors who have contributed input in this process over the course of the last three years. Members of SP350 have been engaged at each phase of the process. We urge the City and Port Authority to continue meaningful engagement (including offering translation services, childcare, and paid compensation when appropriate) that centers BIPOC voices who are most affected by the environmental injustice noted above, in addition to the urgent needs for affordable housing and family-supporting jobs. We understand that community engagement is not the only factor in making planning decisions, so we appreciate clear communication about how design choices are being made, in order to build trust and understanding (even if agreement cannot be reached).

We look forward to the Housing and Outdoor Spaces workgroups starting up alongside the existing Sustainability and Urban Design workgroups, to help fill in important remaining questions about design priorities.

SUSTAINABILITY (pg. 38)

We strongly support the site-wide Carbon-Neutrality Policies listed on pg. 38, and we note that many of these policies directly meet goals in the City of Saint Paul's Climate Action and Resilience Plan. For example, Policy S-4 helps fulfill the goal of 200 MW of local renewable energy by 2030 (CARP pg. 39) and policy S-6 supports the vision for district heating and cooling systems (CARP pg. 40). As community advocates, we're eager to work with the Port Authority and City to ensure that S-5 and S-9 are achieved. We also note that these policies help our utility partner, Xcel Energy, meet their commitments for [Zero-Carbon Electricity](#) and [Net Zero Vision for Gas](#).

TRANSPORTATION (pg. 29) & HOUSING (pg. 40)

St. Paul 350 is very interested in the intersections between sustainability and affordable transportation and housing. As the cost of fuel for combustion vehicles and home heating increases, household energy burdens are soaring. Thoughtful street design that is safe and accessible for walkers, rollers, and bikers, and provides access to gathering spaces, entertainment, and employment creates a culture that is less dependent on vehicle traffic and all the expense, pollution, and health and safety issues that come with

it. Energy efficiency reduces household energy burdens and electric appliances improve indoor air quality and overall health. The Hillcrest Master Plan's vision for a zero carbon community significantly increases the long-term affordability of these basic needs and improves the community's overall health and safety.

A CULTURE OF RESILIENCE

In conclusion, we support the many aspects of this plan that make meeting our basic needs (air, water, power, food, etc) visible and accessible, so the community can build a culture of resilience rather than a sense that the things we depend on most are outside our control. Examples of this include:

- Intuitive transportation that makes walking, biking, and rolling accessible and that offers trail and transit connections
- The district stormwater system that provides a green infrastructure spine through the whole development and connects the wetlands
- The district heating and cooling system that will connect homes and businesses from below
- The locally-produced energy from solar panels that lets neighbors know their lives are powered by clean, renewable energy
- Indoor and outdoor gathering spaces (e.g. the neighborhood node and city park)
- Visible air quality monitors
- Benchmarking energy use
- Art and place-making opportunities

In addition to these elements, we also suggest the following:

- Invite long-time advocates of urban agriculture on the East Side (like Urban Roots and Hmong American Farmers Association) to join the Outdoor Spaces workgroup to help plan community garden space
- Explore the possibility of cooperative ownership for energy and housing to increase shared responsibility, create wealth-building opportunities, and provide potential funding sources
- Engage people of different ages and abilities on workgroups in order to implement the principles of [universal design](#), to ensure the site is accessible for all users

CONCLUSION

Given the urgent need for affordable housing, living wage jobs, and climate action, we urge the City to:

- Keep the Hillcrest development timeline on track
- Continue engaging community members as noted above
- Ensure that affordable housing and advanced energy infrastructure needs are fully funded, not only for the sake of future Hillcrest residents and workers, but also for the sake of the surrounding communities and the entire city as we seek solutions to some of the greatest challenges of our lifetimes

Sincerely,

Chelsea DeArmond

St. Paul 350 founder, 25-year East Side resident and small business owner, together with our grassroots group of neighbors committed to 100% clean, renewable energy for everyone in St. Paul

chelseadearmond@gmail.com

651-968-1022

Master Plan Support Document

March 1, 2022

The Saint Paul Port Authority fully supports the City of Saint Paul's Hillcrest Master Plan.

Included below is further explanation of our support and how we will maximize the opportunity to bring 112-acres of underutilized land to life, with further community engagement.



This rendering is an example of how creative landscaping and public art strategies could be used to better blend light industrial spaces near McKnight and Larpenteur.

WE DO NOT WANT THE MASTER PLAN TO BE SLOWED OR STOPPED.

A handful of detractors should not overshadow the hard work of many over the past few years. Slowing the Master Plan for the sake of personal interest puts the entire plan in jeopardy. The longer the site stays vacant, the longer the city goes without much needed housing, jobs, tax relief, and green space to enjoy (i.e., parks, trails, dog parks, community gardens, and gathering areas). A delay also puts funding sources at risk.

THE HILLCREST MASTER PLAN PROVIDES FLEXIBILITY AND LEAVES ROOM FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

Even though the Hillcrest Master Plan dictates zoning and the location of things like streets, buildings, and green space, it doesn't go into specifics on how these components will come to life. That is the role of the landowner. As such, we will continue our community outreach efforts. This will help us make more informed decisions around housing, urban design, sustainability, and outdoor spaces.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING WILL BE A PROJECT PRIORITY.

We've heard the message loud and clear, the community wants affordable housing. This includes both deeply affordable and long-term affordability options. To that degree, we have been in contact with affordable housing developers who have expressed initial interest in the site. At the same time, no decisions have been made as to the actual mix of affordability options. A Housing Workgroup will convene in late 2022 to bring community voices into the conversation and help guide strategies and decisions. It is important to point out that public subsidies, including TIF financing, have not been ruled out for affordable housing investments.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL.

We have seen a wide range of opinions around the preferred size for housing units. While some prefer single-family homes, others are asking for high rises. We believe the compromise, found in the Hillcrest Master Plan, which transitions from low- to high-density, is a good solution. The Port Authority would also like to see high-density housing units with ground floor mixed-use spaces. Concepts that may work include retail options, community spaces, and shared space for the faith community. None of these has been decided.

LEAVING A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE SITE AS GREEN SPACE WOULD CREATE A SIGNIFICANT TAX BURDEN ON SAINT PAUL RESIDENTS.

Converting a commercial golf course into a publicly managed green space is not feasible from a budgetary standpoint. The city's parks department has neither the capacity nor the resources to manage more than a five-acre active park. In addition, the financial impact to maintain more than that would put a significant burden on residential taxpayers. With that said, the Port Authority will work with the community to maximize the potential of an additional 15-acres of publicly accessible green space as previously agreed upon.



In keeping with the proposed Hillcrest Master Plan, this rendering shows how passive green spaces could fit between residential areas to enhance community connections.

RESIDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO NEW OUTDOOR SPACES.

At this time, no decisions have been made as to the design of the 15-acres of green space, which will be above and beyond the 5-acre city park. Survey results show the most desired outdoor amenities, aside from public art, include an expanded trail network (17%); gardens/benches/water features (17%); park equipment for children (13%); gazebo/picnic areas (13%); and multi-generational exercise equipment (8%). The Port Authority will convene an Outdoor Spaces Workgroup, starting in the summer of 2022, to bring community voices into the conversation and help guide strategies and decisions.

A COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT WILL BE IN PLACE FOR COMMERCIAL LAND SALES.

In anticipation of an approved Master Plan, the Saint Paul Port Authority has spent over a year working with a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to guide staff and community stakeholders through the process of developing a new community benefits model that better reflects neighborhood need. This agreement will drive job density, sustainability, living wages/benefits, and local hiring targets. The first draft should be available online by the end of 2022.

LIGHT INDUSTRY WILL BRING JOBS AND TAXES TO THE CITY AND ITS RESIDENTS.

Some have asked why the Port Authority advocates for light industrial growth in Saint Paul, wondering if these businesses would be better served in communities like Oakdale. On the contrary, we disagree. In fact, since we've acquired the site, we've received numerous calls from light industrial business owners wanting to relocate to the Hillcrest site because of its location and access to a larger labor pool. If the Master Plan stalls, there is a strong likelihood these businesses will go elsewhere, and the jobs and tax revenue will go with them.

Taxes are an important part of this conversation. Our research shows that light industrial businesses pay more than their fair share in taxes compared to the services they use. On the flip side, residential taxpayers use more in services than they pay in taxes. Balancing the tax base by bringing in light industrial businesses can reduce the burden of residential taxpayers.

It's also important to point out that in 2020, the Port Authority had 8 businesses bound by workforce agreements. In those businesses, average hourly wages were \$22.82/hour. 347 employees lived in the City of Saint Paul and 161 lived on the East Side. This is just a snapshot in time but speaks to the fact that hundreds of Saint Paul families have benefited from Saint Paul Port Authority Business Centers with jobs that offer living wages, employee benefits, and are close to home.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS MUST BLEND WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

We appreciate the fact that light industrial buildings must blend with the existing neighborhood. In response, we are working with architects and community members to find creative urban design solutions. The goal is to go above and beyond anything that has ever been done in a Saint Paul business park. Anticipated tactics to greatly improve the aesthetics include the use of public art and creative landscape design.

And while some feel it would be best to build up, and design multi-level, light industrial buildings, market demand and operational feasibility say otherwise. And for those who are asking about bringing in multi-level office space, we don't recommend it. It's a challenging market right now as businesses continue to weigh the pros and cons of investing in office space, scaling back with a hybrid model, or encouraging employees to work from home.



In alignment with the Hillcrest Master Plan, this shows how low-density housing could be designed to blend with the existing neighborhood while prioritizing walkability and community connections.

REMEDICATION IS UNAVOIDABLE.

There are people in the community who think we have overstated the contamination found at Hillcrest. We'd like to counter this perception. A team of civil and environmental engineers tested the soil and found that remediation is required for any significant redevelopment plan.

Furthermore, it is inaccurate to compare Hillcrest to recently redeveloped golf courses. In this case, contamination was more widespread. On most courses, mercury is contained within the greens and maybe a few tee boxes. At Hillcrest, contaminants were also found in the fairways, wetlands, and other hotspots throughout the course.

The Port Authority will continue to work with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to ensure the site is cleaned, protecting both the environment and health and wellness of future generations.

It is also important to point out that the Port Authority competes with other entities for brownfield cleanup grants. To qualify, projects must focus on economic development outcomes. To summarize, cleanup funds would not be available without jobs, tax base, and housing goals.

WE WILL REPURPOSE TREES.

It is important to repurpose trees that are taken down because of soil contamination. We believe some will work well onsite to create benches, trails, or artwork. We are also exploring opportunities to donate to organizations that will use lumber for other purposes.

THERE WILL BE NO NET LOSS OF WETLANDS.

Unfortunately, we have found contamination in the wetlands. All but one has elevated mercury levels. We will preserve the non-contaminated wetland. We will remediate and restore the rest at a 1:1 ration. This will entail keeping half where they are and moving the other half elsewhere on the site. We are working on this in partnership with the Ramsey Washington Regional Watershed District.

HILLCREST HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A PRIVATELY-OWNED PROPERTY.

In the past, Hillcrest was a destination for golfers who paid to be on the course. We look forward to a future where families will have access to a new park. Walkers can take advantage of expanded trails. And new community spaces will be more readily available for public use. As for the clubhouse, it is less than 20 years old and holds no historical value.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DOESN'T END WITH THE HILLCREST MASTER PLAN.

We appreciate the fact that the city reached out to 1,300+ people in their community engagement efforts. Add to that the 500 people we've already connected with and we're off to a great start. Going forward, community engagement will continue to be a priority throughout the redevelopment process.

Right now, we have two active workgroups in session. One focuses on urban design and the other on sustainability. They will meet through May 2022. Later in the year we will bring together two new workgroups, one focused on housing and the other on outdoor spaces. This does not include plans for the city-managed, five-acre park.

Chair and Planning Commissioners,

My name is Thor Sohlstrom. I am a resident of Saint Paul and live at 2139 Cottage Ave East. I am writing to you today about the Hillcrest development and anticipate the development of this great parcel of land. I have attended planning meetings for the Hillcrest development and reviewed the draft master plan. There are several elements of the draft master plan that in my opinion are good, such as the light industry being located along McKnight Road and the neighborhood node located near the intersection of McKnight Road and Larpenteur Avenue. This seems like the best place for a neighborhood node since there is already commercial property at that intersection. Placing the park on the highest point on the plot would make the perfect place for a sledding hill.

However, while there are many good points, the master plan fails to address several of the community priorities. First, it states: "New development should respect the quiet nature of the existing neighborhood. Whereas we recognize that new development may open up our neighborhood, we value our trees, quiet streets, access to nature, and sense of a neighborhood. New development should not eliminate these qualities." By connecting the existing dead-end streets and continuing them into the development, this will only encourage more traffic through our neighborhood. This also is counter to another priority to "avoid connections to the west that carry fast and high volumes of vehicular traffic. Connections into the site, if any, from the west, should be carefully designed so as to avoid excess traffic flow through the neighborhood." If the streets are for some reason deemed necessary, they could be they could be installed at half blocks to discourage people cutting between White Bear Avenue and McKnight Road. Secondly, the draft master plan states: "Housing (design and type) should encourage pride in ownership and in community" The plan does not encourage pride in ownership as it relates to housing since its housing priority one is rental housing. The current home ownership of the neighborhood is 75% and the draft master plan has no provisions to develop near that proportion. My final concern is about the continuation of Winthrop Street in particular. The plan states that the new addition of Winthrop Street will be narrower or moved east from the existing location. If this portion is reduced in width, on street parking will suffer. There are far too many streets in our neighborhood where the widths are too narrow for one car to drive down the middle, let alone two, when cars are parked on both sides of the street.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my public comment. I look forward to seeing how the voices of my neighborhood will be incorporated into the master plan. I appreciate being part of the democratic process in developing my neighborhood in Saint Paul.

Thank you,

Thor Sohlstrom