

June 11, 2020

Dear Mr. Graybar and Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals,

I am vehemently opposed to the variances being requested by Ryan Companies (file#20-038544) and CommonBond Communities (File #20-038888). Variances should NOT be granted for increased building heights, increased building footprints, reductions in open space, and reduced setbacks.

The information presented in the variance requests is misleading. The city has a responsibility to make certain that the information presented by developers is clear, honest, and not misleading. Item 4 of the Ryan variance request states, "Mixed-use buildings must provide 25% of lot coverage for open spaces, 6.3% is proposed, for a variance of 18.7%." This statement is misleading and does not adequately represent how much open space will actually be lost. In reality, 75% of the designated open space would be lost. Similar misrepresentation exists in the CommonBond variance request. These misrepresentations should be corrected so that residents can understand the full ramification of these variances.

It is apparent that the City of Saint Paul and the Ryan Companies do not have the best interests and protection of citizens in mind as they pursue this high-density development, and it is shameful that the Ryan Companies deceived the community by first gaining their trust and then betraying them by changing the plan. It is even more shameful that the City of Saint Paul has failed its citizens and has never listened to the voices of the people.

It is irresponsible and negligent for the City of Saint Paul and the developers to continue to pursue a high-density development in light of the dangers posed by the current pandemic. Deaths from COVID 19 per 100,000 people, are exponentially higher in crowded, high-density cities, and yet the high-density plan for the Ford site continues, without pause or reconsideration. It is not healthy for people to live in such crowded places with inadequate amounts of green space. When greed and power supersede logic and reason, our society has failed miserably.

I urge the Board of Zoning Appeals to reject all variance requests for increased building heights, increased building footprints, reduced open space, and reduced setbacks. The City of Saint Paul and the Ryan Companies should stop and consider any and all possibilities for reducing the density of the plan because it is unhealthy and detrimental to the health and well-being of residents.

Kathryn McGuire  
2203 Fairmount Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Members of the Saint Paul City Council,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Ryan variance request for increased building lot coverage. I understand that the Board of Zoning Appeals denied this variance request and that Ryan Companies has appealed this decision. Please deny this appeal.

I applaud the BZA for denying Ryan's request for increased building lot coverage. This property is wide open, and the developer should be able to adjust the buildings to meet the standards set in the Master Plan without any variances.

Ryan's claim that increasing the building footprint does not alter open space requirements is somewhat offensive. In this pedestrian-friendly development, people should enjoy open space at eye level all around them rather than having to look up five stories to catch a glimpse of a roof-top deck. Open space should be accessible to the public. This suggestion sheds an extremely poor light on Ryan's intentions to create something that will enhance the neighborhood. It is pretty clear that they are trading open space for greater square footage and greater profit.

I believe that this plan has a high risk of failure. Is anyone paying attention to population trends, demographic changes, market trends, and desire for home ownership? Is anyone paying attention to the spread of pandemic disease in congested populations? The plan for the Ford site puts people at risk and perpetuates poverty. Saint Paul should be creating opportunities for people to find sustainable employment, attain home ownership, and live in a healthy environment. Saint Paul and Ryan Companies should be rethinking this entire plan.

Kathryn McGuire  
2203 Fairmount Avenue

I am writing again with concern to the requests for variances at the Ford site which had already been agreed upon.

Please reconsider granting their request for increasing building lot coverage from the original 70% maximum. Please do not reduce the open spaces from the original, agreed upon, 25% minimum.

As far as roof top decks are concerned.. these do not count as "open spaces". I and most of my Highland Park neighbors would not be able to enjoy these roof top decks.

Also, please limit the building heights to 65' and no one wants a 90 foot tower.

If I wanted to live in downtown Minneapolis, I would. There's reasons why the residents live in the Highland Park community, and what they are proposing, isn't it!

Thank you for your consideration.

Barbara Holtz  
2034 Yorkshire Avenue #2  
Saint Paul, MN 55116

They are abusing the process! Don't allow them to increase building lot coverage, reduce openspace, make higher buildings or a taller tower. Why aren't you asserting control over these people? Who are they bribing and how? Stop the abuse!! Kayhleen E Severin,1373 Randolph Ave, St Paul 55105.

Dear City Council,

I am writing in regards to the variance requests being sought by the Ryan Companies and Common Bond in the Ford Development in St. Paul. The Zoning Board of Appeals has already denied portions of the appeals, and that decision should be supported. In fact, I would ask that the portions of the appeals that were awarded be reviewed by the council as they are not supported by the community nor building regulations and guidelines..

The request for more than 70% building lot coverage is absolutely unacceptable. The community has been very vocal about the need and desire to keep as much green, publicly

accessible space as possible. This requests leads directly to the quality of life, feel of the neighborhood, and in many cases safety issues in the area. And on the request for lessening open space on a lot, that was the agreement, upheld by the BZA, and should be honored as such. The idea that a roof top deck, not viewable by the neighborhood and not accessible to the public, should be used in a calculation of open space is ridiculous.

In addition I would ask that the council reconsider the building height and tower variances as they also do not meet previously agreed upon requirements and do not fit with the surrounding neighborhood. The city council seems to be willing to sell pretty much anywhere to developers of late, regardless what the community wants. The decision made quietly along time time ago that potentially affect our homes and neighborhoods and quite a ways in to the future, is one that needs to be reviewed publicly now. The 2030 doe not honor the requests and desires of the neighborhoods. Most people don't even know it exists in its current form. The increase in density, especially in the southwest portion of the city from 35E to Mississippi Blvd to Hwy 94 is destroying the nature and fell of this area. The loop holes around parking garages, and seemingly endless grants for variance that are coming directly from the council are not going unnoticed. The decisions to allow development that is being vehemently fought by the community is not what a city council should be doing. Various groups fight and ask and beg for the development to be down scaled, stopped, or at least kept in (realistic) line with the immediately surrounding area. That the current rules and guidelines in place be honored and the loop holes be closed. Fighting and winning against over development is worth the time and effort to preserve what we love and what makes St. Paul, St. Paul. We don't need to be Minneapolis. We need to keep the small town in the big city reputation that we have. It is what makes us a great place to live. Please stop selling it to people only interested in making money. Honor the community and the existing building laws and guidelines.

As the first big variance requests now that the Ford development has actually started, this will set a precedent going forward. Honor the original agreements and the current housing laws and guidelines, as well as the BZA's decision.

Sincerely,  
Catherine Bittner  
1496 Laurel Ave  
St. Paul, MN 55104

- **I do Not support the increased building lot coverage—I request that you stick to the original plan which states 70%maximum. That is what you presented, keep it!**
- **I do Not support the reduction in open space lot coverage—I request that you stick to the plan which states 25% minimum. Open space is inviting, the lack of it says you don't want the public there.**
- **I do Not support Roof-top decks counted as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible. If that is the case, I look forward to enjoying the roof-top spaces along with the general public, thank you!**
- **I do Not support any additional building height, your proposed buildings will stick out, take away character of Highland Park, and are appropriate for New York City, not here.**

• **I do not support the 90 foot tower, again this will be too large for the area your are redeveloping and yet another item not in the original plan.** This tower will very much have a wall effect which would not be desirable for the surrounding community. These proposed changes are not inviting to those who live in the area and are vested partners to this community. We want to be part of nature as living this close to the river and many parks that are offered in this area entail. Your plan takes away our views and accessibility to the Ford Plant area. You call it Highland Bridge, to what? At this rate not a bridge of new coming to an established community and village.

• **I am one of many tax payers, Ryan is receiving an enormous amount of TIF money. Where is your accountability?**

• **Maggie Killeen**

• **2076 Niles Ave**

• **St Paul, MN. 55116**

Thank you for supporting our community by not allowing the proposed changes.

Ryan's request does not meet the requirements for a varaiance, as stated in the online guidelines, and I'm writing to add my support to your earlier decision to not grant the variance or succumb to their appeal.

Specifically:

1) NO INCREASE TO OVER 70% lot coverage.

2) NO INCREASE IN OPEN SPACE COVERAGE

3) Maintain OPEN, PUBLIC SPACE, recognizing that rooftop gardens, while a lovely addition, are not the same as walking through and enjoying a continuous open outdoors.

4) NO 90 FOOT TOWER. (To suggest that this enhances the pedestrian experience is nonsense-Imagine a 90 foot tower downtown Stillwater-does that feel like improvement?)

5) As above, NO ADDED BUILDING HEIGHT.

Thank you, again, for your work on this project. Please know your community supports your decision, and please keep in mind that there are no new issues with which we have challenged Ryan, there is no unexpected hardship to support Ryan's wishes.

Sincerely,

Judy Ferrell

2181 Princeton Ave

Saint Paul, MN 55105

Hello,

My name is Aine Skow and I am a homeowner in Highland Village and live at 2209 Pinehurst Ave., St. Paul, MN 55116.

I live one block from the development on the site of the Ford Plant, and would like to reiterate my **strong** objections to Ryan's variance requests for the proposed buildings at 830 and 2170 Ford Parkway.

I applaud the zoning board for denying Ryan's request for increased building lot coverage, but I understand that Ryan Companies has filed an appeal of this decision and is arguing that the open space lot coverage requirement of 25% will be fulfilled via roof-top decks and landscaping around the building. **This is absurd.** Counting as 'open space' the tops of buildings that are NOT accessible to the public makes no sense whatsoever. By this logic, most of downtown Minneapolis could be counted as open space if they threw a few plants and chairs on the rooftops. A quick google search shows that "open space" is meant to be undeveloped land with no built structures, that is accessible to the public. Allowing Ryan to get out of the open space requirement with roof-top decks and shrubs is insulting to Highland Park residents and the public at large. It was also be a signal to Ryan that they can get away with anything.

**Please do not allow inaccessible roof-top decks and landscaping to count as public open space.**

Thank you,  
Aine Skow

Have we not learned anything from the current pandemic? Planned high density is about the worse thing we can implement, case-in-point, New York City. I am asking the City Council to deny Ryan's appeal to their amendments for the Ford plan? If Ryan wanted to reduce the density of the site I could understand your support, but these are bait-and-switch amendments to increase building heights, reduce open green space, and expand the building footprints. Please stick to the original plan and help the residents of Highland Park and surrounding areas in opposing these amendments. I would also like to ask that you keep in mind the citizens of the area as future amendments from Ryan come across your desk.

Best regards,

Tom Ordahl  
2092 Eleanor Avenue

Dear Council Members,

Thank you for taking time and listening to my concerns regarding the development in my neighborhood in Highland Park, St. Paul. My name is Renate Amann and I live on 2231 Scheffer Ave, St. Paul, MN 55116 Here is my concern to Ryan Company's appeal regarding increased lot coverage:

1. Please no reduction in the open space coverage, the plan states 25% maximum. In a time where we had to learn it the hard way through an epidemic and have to practice "social distancing" for a long future, we should absolutely work on wide open spaces and less building density for residents to stay away from each other. This is the chance implement recreational space for residents to live in a healthy environment and keep people at a distance.

With residents hopefully more walking, running and biking like we see at this time we need space to breath at a 6 feet distance for the next future.

2. I oppose an increased lot coverage and ask to stick to the plan which states a 70% maximum. I also need to point to our experience with the epidemic and ask for less than more lot coverage.

3. Roof top decks cannot count as open space, it is not publicly accessible.

4. The building height in the original plan is already above the needs for this neighborhood, please don't allow more building height.

5. The 90" foot tower is an eyesore, when you drive from the Ford bridge into Highland Village and takes away the look onto the beautiful historic Landmark Water Tower of Highland Park. When I look around the new buildings lately they all look the same and there is a lack of character in style compared to the historic buildings from our ancestors. Please make sure the next generations will not point fingers at us because we lacked preserving our history and don't take away the Old Watertower has on this neighborhood when you drive in.

Thanks so much for always keeping the healthy living for a family neighborhood in mind.

Residents who have enough space around them and live in touch with parks and nature live more peacefully together.

Renate Amann

I am a concerned resident of the Highland Park neighborhood and I wish to ask that you uphold the decision to deny the variance requested by Ryan Companies regarding the Ford Plant development.

My name is Anne Lynch and I live at 2134 Highland Parkway in St. Paul.

Please deny Ryan's appeal and stick to the original plan which ensures the following:

- **No increased building lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 70% maximum.**
- **No reduction in open space lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 25% minimum.**

- Roof-top decks should not count as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible. This point is extremely important. How can private space be counted as 'green space'?

Thank you!

Anne Lynch

I am writing to register my disapproval with the recent and new requests by Ryan for the Ford Plant project. Specifically, I urgently request that you do the follow:

- No increased building lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 70% maximum.
- No reduction in open space lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 25% minimum.
- Roof-top decks should not count as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible.
- No added building height
- No 90 foot tower.

Thank you,

Richard Fahel  
1071 Cleveland Ave South  
Unit 203  
St Paul

To whom it may concern,

My name is Anne Keenan and I live at 1972 Norfolk Avenue, St. Paul.

I am writing due to my concern about the impact of proposed changes to the Ford site on the surrounding community which is my neighborhood.

Specifically I ask you to consider my request for the following:

--Please do not increase the percentage of the lot covered by buildings but rather stick to the plan of a 70% maximum

--Please do not reduce the open space coverage but rather stick to the 25% minimum. We know how much open space and green space contributes to a community's well being. It would be a mistake to overlook this!

--Please do not count rooftop space as open space. Rooftop space is not publicly accessible and therefore does not benefit the whole neighborhood not to mention the wildlife in the area.

--Please do not add height to the buildings including do NOT create a 90 foot tower. This is completely incongruous with the neighborhood.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,  
Anne Keenan

Good morning,

I am frustrated to learn that after all the negotiations Ryan Company seems to be deceiving, they should stick to the original plan. I know theres been a lot of debate and it continues here now even after which is ridiculous.

Since when is rooftop considered open space?

Its not. Open space is public accessible.

Also the height decision should stay as is and not higher along w 70% max building coverage.

I think we should start over if this is the way they operate and hire someone else.

Resident of Highland since 2016  
1730 Graham Ave #241  
St paul 55116  
Thank you.

I'm writing to express my opposition to Ryan Companies appeal to increase building lot coverage. There should be NO increase in building lot coverage, no extra height, no tower!!!!

There should be no decrease in open space. Decks DO NOT count. The approved density is OUTRAGEOUS and they just keep asking for more.

Please decline the appeal

Barb Fleig  
601 Fairview Ave S  
St Paul MN 55116

PS: the \$7.5m for Ayd Mill is a colossal waste of money in these tight times Shame on those council members that voted for it.

Dear Council,

I writing to ask for the open space at the Ford plant site to be accessible to the public and not met with rooftop spaces that are not publicly accessible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,  
Barbara Cox  
272 Woodlawn Ave  
Saint Paul, 55105

Dear Zoning Board of Appeals (BZA),

I am writing again as a resident in the Highland Bridge (aka Ford Project) neighborhood. I am generally supportive of a high quality development effort that would provide new amenities, resources and vibrancy to the Highland community. However, more is not always better in such projects, especially when it comes to long-term community improvements and quality of life.

Specifically, I understand that Ryan Companies has filed an appeal of your decision not to grant their variance request for increased building lot coverage. Thoughtful increases in urban density using success stories from across the world could be a win-win-win for the city, neighborhood and residents of the project. However, Ryan's position that roof-top decks be included in meeting the 25% open space lot coverage requirement borders on the ridiculous. People do not live their lives floating hundreds of feet above the ground where this space could be seen and incorporated into their experience of the environment.

In the interest of preserving our community and moving it forward toward not only a sustainable, but more livable future, I request that you not increase building lot coverage beyond the current 70% maximum and not reduce open space coverage -- on the ground -- below the 25% minimum. Roof-top decks are neither publicly accessible nor perceived as open space by human beings. Additionally, I encourage you not to increase allowable building heights and not approve a 90 foot tower that would dwarf adjoining properties in a detracting way. That is neither good design nor thoughtful community development.

Thank you for your careful consideration in making this project work for all stakeholders, including those of us already residing in this wonderful neighborhood.

Sincerely,

David Anderson  
544 Mississippi River Blvd S  
Saint Paul, MN 55116

I have been a resident and taxpayer since 1934. As much as I would like Highland Village to stay the same as it was then, I am really against a 90 foot tower and less open space. Roof top decks are NOT open space. Give us some room to move around. Density breeds disease and crime. I lived in Chicago once and believe me, it stinks. Too crowded, not enough open space.

Be sure to plant lots of trees, I see you have cut down most of the beautiful trees on the other side of the fence. We need more trees, not fewer to soak up the pollution and give us the oxygen we need. It broke my heart to walk along Mississippi River Blvd. and see bulldozers instead.

Janet Llerandi  
2036 Magoffin Ave.

Now more than ever it is critical for you to listen to the communities you are impacting. I am writing to let you know that I am opposed to the appeal from the Ryan company for the old Ford Plant.

Specifically:

I am opposed to an increased building lot coverage. The plan was 70% maximum believe it is your responsibility to stick to that promise, no more. I am also opposed to a reduction in open space lot coverage. It is to stick to the plan which states 25% minimum and this is essential for the health of our planet, city and community. I do not support roof-top decks being counted as open space. That is ridiculous and just an example of big business over stepping and prioritization of profit over community. Public spaces should be publicly accessible.

In addition, I am opposed to the added building height and 90 foot tower as this will impact the community feel by blocking off sight lines and creating more of a divided feel. There is no need or true benefit for this type of structure.

Maggie LaNasa  
1752 Bohland Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55116

**From:** catherine hunt <[katemhunt@outlook.com](mailto:katemhunt@outlook.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 9, 2020 12:57 PM  
**To:** Graybar, Matthew (CI-StPaul) <[Matthew.Graybar@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:Matthew.Graybar@ci.stpaul.mn.us)>  
**Subject:** Oppose Ford Site/Ryan Zoning Amendments

Dear Mr. Graybar and Zoning Committee Members:

I am writing to oppose the currently proposed zoning amendments to the Ford site proposed by Ryan Cos. From the beginning, zoning promoted density greater per capita than Manhattan with green space sacrificed in service to high density. This currently proposed set of zoning amendments furthers the degradation of this parcel of land and the neighboring community in the following ways: 1) Adds to building heights going from 65 sq. ft. maximum to 75 sq. ft. and adding 90 ft. towers; 2) Reduces open space. Current zoning requires 25% minimum of the lot be open space. Ryan requests six% open space. Ryan implausibly counts roof tops as "open space" (that the public cannot access) if visible from the street; 3) Expands building footprints. The

maximum coverage of a building is zoned for 70% but Ryan wants to increase the building coverage to 90%.

If approved, this zoning will create an environmental monstrosity by crowding out green space and replacing it with massive impenetrable structures. What will be accomplished by this assault on development common sense will be heat-trapping hot spots of claustrophobic canyons.

Please reject these amendments.  
Kate Hunt  
2081 Highland Parkway

Hello,

I live at 531 Mount Curve Blvd, Highland. My close neighborhood community on Mount Curve applauds the BZA for not granting the request for increased building lot coverage. Ryan is playing "**definition games**" to claim that the open space lot coverage requirement of 25% will be fulfilled via roof-top decks and landscaping around buildings. Let's be realistic, the public is not going to go up an elevator to enjoy a so-called green roof. (even if the private landlords are mandated to allow this). Further little boulevard strips of landscaping should not be counted as usable outdoor activity space.

We understand the Ryan appeal will go before City Council on Wednesday, July 22. I publicly request that the Council does not concede on Ryan's latest appeal.

I want the City Council to know the Highland community is closely watching and remembering who is supporting the community tax payers/voters versus Ryan Company's self interests. Our eyes are now wide open to the gamesmanship, modus operandi in their approach as demonstrated with ongoing amendments, appeals and variance requests to the original plan. Ryan Companies has lost all of its goodwill and trust that they built with the community before they closed on the property purchase.

**Here is simply what we are looking for:**

- No increased building lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 70% maximum.
- No reduction in open space lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 25% minimum.
- Roof-top decks should not count as open space. They are on top of privately owned buildings. Open space should be publicly accessible.
- Allow no building height variances

We appreciate the Council to hold Ryan accountable to the original core tenets of the Ford development plan and vision.

Thank you for submitting this for public record - Bruce & Jean Hoppe - 531 Mt Curve Blvd

*Jerry Helfand/Joan Cleary*  
*1975 Bayard Ave., St. Paul, MN 55116*  
[jerryhelfand@gmail.com](mailto:jerryhelfand@gmail.com)  
[joanlcleary@gmail.com](mailto:joanlcleary@gmail.com)  
*212-362-0822-jerry's cell; 612-250-0902-joan's cell*

July 20, 2020

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are writing to support the position of Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul.

We feel strongly that:

1. There should be no increased building lot coverage. We should stick to the plan which calls for 70% maximum.
2. There should be no reduction in open space lot coverage – 25 percent minimum, and hopefully more.
3. Roof-top decks are not open space. Open space is accessible to the public.
4. No added building height.
5. No 90-foot towers.

Thank you.

Jerry Helfand and Joan Cleary

Hello,

My name is Stephanie Amann and I live on 2231 Scheffer Ave, just a couple blocks away from the Ford Site.

Having lived in Highland Park for the past 18 years, I have always felt that area within and surrounding the Village has been a tight knit, cohesive family community with the residential areas and the shops creating a comfortable small town feeling. The Ford Site redevelopment plans will drastically change the old Highland Village dynamic— but we have already accepted this and had trusted that Ryan Companies would move forward with fair zoning restrictions and plans to somewhat continue the old Highland dynamic. Yet with news of these ridiculous zoning appeals, we have once again lost the that trust.

Therefore, I ask that you reconsider the following

1. Increasing the building lot coverage. The plan states a 70% maximum, so we should continue following this plan.

2. Reducing the open space lot coverage. Keep it at a 25% minimum reduction! Open space is crucial in development plans that have a density similar to New York City. Residents need to be able to have comfortable space to move around without feeling contained and oppressed by the high density and tall buildings.

3. Open space is something that is easily and freely accessible to the general public. Roof-top decks certainly do not fall under this category. By categorizing roof-top decks as "open space," Ryan Companies is creating a loophole around the important zoning restrictions that would ensure comfortable living surroundings.

4. Building heights and the 90 foot tower. This is simply not necessary! Why should we have such tall heights that are an eyesore and a visual divide between the new redevelopment and old Highland. How would a 90 foot tower create a "better pedestrian experience?" Please value the standards of living for Highland Park residents over aesthetic appeal.

Lastly, I would also like to note that in a time of COVID-19 and the climate crisis, how is it safe or environmentally feasible to create such a high density living community? As we have seen, dense areas are hotspots for viruses spreading so easily, as well as generating extensive amounts of waste. With so much uncertainty of more epidemics or worsening climate situation, it would not be wise to build a community like this one.

Thank you for considering the petitions of Highland Park residents and I hope that we can continue to move forward with these redevelopment plans in fair and feasible manner.

Stephanie Amann

Please don't allow increased building lot coverage or a 90 ft tower!

The agreed on open space should be open to the public and deck space shouldn't count even if it is assigned as public. Bikers wouldn't go to the rooftop nor would dog walkers.

Jean Iwen  
1855 Bayard Ave.  
St Paul, MN 55116

Greetings!

I'm writing to the decision-makers and influences about the Ryan Companies variance requests for the "Highland Bridge" project.

First, love the new name,

Second, I'm in favor of the plan that WAS approved. However, the variances requested by Ryan Companies continue to be problematic not only as precedents for other projects but specifically for these reasons:

1. Building height needs to remain as approved in the plan. The proposed tower structure (which will be so closely abutting Ford Parkway) will create a poor fit for the overall community. A behemoth building is a poor trade off for this exciting new project.
2. The 90-foot tower deserves specific mentions. This is an extreme way to get "visual appeal" for the project. I like the idea in concept but the height variance is not worth it. The tower is unusable space and presents more problems than it solves.
3. Space matters and "open" space must be preserved. I'm hearing that Ryan considers roof-top decks to be "open" space. This is misleading since there is no "open" access for the public at large. Please do not let the developer re-define "open" for all of us.

Like many of my neighbors, I'm excited about Highland Bridge and the opportunity for this project to bring a welcoming entry-point to Saint Paul. I'm also in this for the long haul--as are my children. Please help our city, the developer and the community by sticking with the already-approved plan.

Thank you,  
Karen Woodward  
730 Mount Curve Blvd  
St Paul, MN 55116

I support the Board of Zoning Appeals denial of Ryan Companies request for a variance from lot coverage requirements in the plan for Ford site redevelopment. Ryan Companies knew what those requirements were when they took on the project, and they should be required to work within them. In addition, I feel the additional height request that was approved by the BZA should be rejected. The intensity and density of land uses foreseen for the site do not justify the resulting adverse effects on currently desirable adjacent areas, largely due to inadequate access to the Ford site. St. Paul City officials should pay more attention to the interests of those who have made longterm lifetime investments in the city as we know it.

Hello,

I ask the Saint Paul City Council to deny the appeal being requested by Ryan Companies (ABZA 20-3) at their July 22 meeting.

The BZA previously voted down these requests recognizing the same problems I note below. In fact, the BZA received 175 letters in opposition to the variance request and only eight letters in support.

Ryan's request is a gross violation of the Ford masterplan with no compelling rationale for its implementation and clear evidence that it would harm the community. In sum, it doesn't meet the balancing test for approval by which such appeals are granted. Given the overwhelming community opposition to Ryan's variance request, the City Council should affirm the BZA's decision.

It's highly regrettable that Ryan continues to change fundamental parts of their plan. If their appeal is granted, this will decrease the amount of public open space. Ryan conflates private open space with public open space in order to reduce the latter (public open space) by counting the former (private open space) in the same "public space" bucket.

Ryan's shell game needs to stop. Bigger/taller buildings and less public green space are not sustainable ways to develop the Ford site.

By denying this appeal, the City Council will ensure that Ryan is held accountable to the community according to the following standards:

- No increased building lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 70% maximum.
- No reduction in open space lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 25% minimum.
- Roof-top decks or other private open space should not count as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible.
- No added building height.
- No 90 foot tower.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Varco  
1587 Beechwood Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55116

Dear City Council members:

Please deny Ryan Cos. appealed variances for 2170 Ford Parkway and 830 Cretin Ave. Reject all variance requests for increased building heights and footprints and reduced open space, and setbacks.

The public has spoken. Public comments overwhelmingly oppose the chicanery demonstrated by Ryan Cos. to change the Master Plan arbitrarily and capriciously by any means possible. The BZA received over 175 comments opposing Ryan's variances [**several opposition comments were mysteriously not counted including mine**]. However, the BZA received only eight comments supporting Ryan's variances. Six came from Ryan and special interests. City Council members, you are expected to serve the citizens you represent not developers and special interests.

Catherine Hunt  
2081 Highland Parkway  
St. Paul, MN 55116

- Extremely disappointed that Ryan Construction is trying to change the designs we agree upon for them to get the Construction deal.
- This is a "village" always has been always will be.
- This has to stop or everytime something is scheduled to be built they will try to get a variance.

- No increased building lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 70% maximum.
- No reduction in open space lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 25% minimum.
- Roof-top decks should not count as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible.
- No added building height\*
- No 90 foot tower\*
- Liz SAMPAIR
- 1845 Graham Ave
- St paul MN 55116

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*Liz Sampair*

To Whom It May Concern:

In reference to the Ryan Companies/Ford Plant appeal on the variance request for enlarging the area building lot coverage I am opposed. I particularly take issue with Ryan Companies trying to use roof top decks in counting open space. Decks on roofs were not considered such in the initial plans. The plan needs to stay with the 25% minimum open space coverage and this space should be for all of the public. Our neighborhood was assured the property would only have a 70% maximum building lot coverage.

Is this just the beginning of appeals and variances we can expect from Ryan? Are the countless meetings with our neighborhood and Ryan Companies now insignificant? This includes Ryan's request for increased building height and now a 90 foot tower. Really?

Please uphold the plans presented originally by Ryan Companies. No variances.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,  
 Nancy and Peter Werner  
 1680 Bayard Avenue  
 Saint Paul, MN 55116

We have lived a few blocks from the Ford plant for the last 31 years and continue to be concerned about Ryan Companies constant requests for variances after promising to consider the neighborhood concerns. We feel Ryan Companies deliberately misled us regarding their plans and fear they are now doing the same to the BZA.

The increased density, building heights, and increased lot coverage are the greatest concerns. Roof top decks should not count as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible. To be the second densest environment in the country after Manhattan with roof-top decks considered as "open space" should be protected against. Please continue to deny the request for increased lot coverage. Stick to the plan which states 70% maximum.

Philip Cochran  
 Mary Nichols

2204 Bayard

Please consider restraining Ryan Company's latest show of greediness. With their variance requests for more lot coverage and less open space, they are again showing total disregard for the neighborhood and people who will most be affected by their plan.

Roof-top decks should not count as open space. Open space is anything but open if it is on someone else's residence roof.

Ryan's plans and additional requests are turning the Ford Site into a fortress. The 90 foot tower and added building height will decrease the site's openness, welcoming tone and curb appeal.

Thank you,

Miriam Simons  
2208 Princeton Av  
St Paul MN 55105

Please be informed that I am a long-time St. Paul resident and homeowner. I am strongly opposed to variances being sought at the Ford Plant site including these specific items:

- the 90 foot tower,
- added building height,
- the inclusion in the "open space" percentage areas like roof decks that are not publicly accessible,
- a reduction in open space lot coverage under the 25% minimum in the current plan, and increased building lot coverage of more than 70% as is in the current plan.

Please don't allow the developers to violate their agreement with the citizens of St. Paul with these seemingly unending requests for changes. They are not acting in good faith.

Victoria Stewart  
124 Montrose Place  
St. Paul, MN 55104

Members of the City Council:

I again write to you as a 35-year resident of Highland Park. I reside here because of Highland's livability which means, among other things, an equilibrium among people (density), housing (density), shopping and traffic. As I stated in previous message, the agreements previously promised by Ryan Companies will continue desecrate the equilibrium. ***Why is the City of St. Paul doing business with a developer who reneges on its promises???***

As previously pointed out, although the project is barely underway, Ryan Companies is eroding restrictions on building heights and further diminishing the minimal open spaces. Starting with the original Ryan amendments, Highland Park residents have watched agreed-upon restrictions and guarantees of the Ford Site Plan disappear. Again, as previously pointed out, crowding out grass, trees, shrubs and gardens that will be

replaced by towering concrete structures will result in an overcrowded, claustrophobic, canyon-like feel of the property and “ugly-ize” the neighborhood. It will be the “new” urban blight.

For Ryan Companies to state that roof-top decks are open spaces is laughable. Roof-top decks are **not** open to the public. They are only open to building tenants and their guests.

Your approval of a 90-foot tower in order to “add character to the building to create a better aesthetic appearance and pedestrian experience for the surrounding area and to really have the building holding the corner” is quite frankly, absurd. If pedestrians are looking up at a 90-foot tower, they had better have excellent medical insurance. Pedestrians should not be looking up at a tower while walking on busy Ford Parkway. I suppose if air traffic picks up post-COVID-19, the 90-foot tower could be used by air-traffic controllers.

### **Deny Ryan Companies' Appeal!**

Jody Cohen Press  
2001 Magoffin Ave  
St. Paul 55116

Dear Zoning Board,

In regards to the appeal by Ryan Companies and CommonBond's variance request, I hereby respectfully request that you deny the appeal. The variances should not be granted from the originally approved plan. These restrictions specifically include the following::

- 1 No increased building lot coverage - stick to the plan which states 70% maximum
2. No reduction in open space lot coverage - stick to the plan which states 25% maximum
3. Roof-top decks should not count as open space, as open space should be accessible by the general public.

We need to keep the character of St. Paul intact. Please vote to deny the variance requests.

Sincerely,

Jason M. Worden  
1496 Laurel Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55104

My name is Margy Peterson.  
I live at 1787 Pinehurst Avenue, St Paul, 55116.

This process is so frustrating! We need open space at street level close to the river!!! No less than 25%.

I write to oppose the Ryan company's variance to decrease green space within the development in Highland Park. They already got to add height and a 90' tower, which will create a wall between the community and the river.

By the way, this 90' approval should be revoked unless they add sufficient extra elevators to allow for social distancing. More pandemics loom.

Rooftop green space is fine but it does NOT replace that on the ground. The development is already too dense at 70% building lot coverage, especially as pandemics loom and outside air is safest.

If anything, green space should be increased!

Thank you.  
Margy Peterson

Hello,

I ask the Saint Paul City Council to deny the appeal being requested by Ryan Companies (ABZA 20-3) at their [July 22](#) meeting.

I agree with the BZA reasoning that findings were not met for items #3 and #4 of the Code Requirements for Variances. Ryan has not established practical difficulties in complying with the provisions of the master plan, or that their plight is due to unique circumstances of the property.

After spending more than ten years and lots of money developing a master plan, we do not need to use the variance process to inflate the scale of this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt McGuire  
1646 Niles Ave  
St Paul, MN 55116

Members of the City Council:

As the Ryan developer makes their appeal on amendments to include roof-top decks and landscaping, please consider:

-what is the idea behind the open space? Is it simply a vacuous, arbitrary demand of the community? Or, does it provide an opportunity for people to gather for recreation and release from everyday cares?

-from a recreation and community-building/promoting view, how accessible are roof-top decks to the general community? Do people hang out there or sit in the landscaping?

-how many frisbees or footballs would you throw from a roof-top deck?

-when was the last time anyone you knew suggest going up to a roof-top to hang out?

-would Ryan executives live in such constricted places?

-would any tax revenues be offset by the need for more police as overcrowding denies needed space and the potential for conflict rises?

-how would overcrowding affect the character of the community?

For the health of the community, please

-preserve the open space requirements (25% minimum)

- maintain the building lot coverage (70% maximum) and
- do NOT count roof-top decks and landscaping as part of the open space requirements

Thanks for your consideration.

Tim Condon  
1840 Montreal Avenue

To whom it may concern,

My name is Scott Norquist and I live at 1959 Montreal Avenue in St Paul.

I am writing to express my concern with the variance proposals from Ryan regarding the Ford project. Specifically the following concern me and I object to:

- **No increased building lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 70%maximum.**
- **No reduction in open space lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 25% minimum.**
- **Roof-top decks should not count as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible.**
- **No added building height**
- **No 90 foot tower**

I understand that the taller tower is already approved but it seems disingenuous that Ryan is asking for these significant deviations immediately after starting the project. Please deny their appeal.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Scott Norquist  
1959 Montreal Avenue  
St Paul, MN 55116

Dear City Council,

My name is Jan Martland and I live at 12219 Bayard Avenue in St. Paul MN 55116. In reference to the Ford Site, and at the risk of sounding like a broken record from my previous letters...please :

- 1) Do NOT allow any further building lot coverage. Stick to the 70% maximum. That is PLENTY.
- 2) Please NO reduction in open space. Stick with a 25% MINIMUM. Have we not learned anything with the COVID -19? People need to be outside and need to be able to social distance. People NEED outdoor space! The more the better! Especially for the already densely planned site.
- 3) I am total FAVOR of the roof top deck and feel it absolutely should be included in the plan, BUT the general open space should be a public space separate and done in addition to the roof top deck.
- 4) NO additional building height and No 90 foot tower.

Sincerely,  
Jan Martland  
1219 Bayard Avenue  
St. Paul MN 55116

Members of the St. Paul City Council:

My name is Howard Miller and I reside at 2018 Highland Parkway. I am appalled at the city's ongoing conduct in pushing this undesired project forward. Our PED directors, CM Tolbert and many representatives of Ryan Construction have reported and proclaimed everywhere that public involvement in the development of the Ford site project has been maximized. People have heard us, true, but no one has done anything in response to our 'input'.

A review of the mail received by the Planning Committee, BZA, and the city council reveal that far and away the people of Highland Park want less at this site: less units, less concrete, less streets and much more open space. In fact, at each level this development has passed though, Ryan and the City have willfully ignored and in fact, done the opposite of the will of the people. Now that actual construction has begun, even further reductions of what the public has begged for are being approved. Variances requesting ever higher building elevations (65' to 75' and even 90' towers), ever smaller public spaces (variances request 50% reduction) and even greater loss of open space as building designs propose a variance increasing the occupancy of lot space from 70% to 90+%.

The 90 foot tower serves no purpose other than ornamentation; how is that a compelling reason for granting a variance? The open space issue remains unsettled; Guidelines for [Open Space at the Ford Site](#) (February 2011) declare that areas not accessible to the public cannot be regarded as public space, yet City planners declare that the inner courts, gardens, dog parks and balconies can count as open space. The guidelines state clearly *More open space is preferred to less* (1st guiding principle in the executive summary). You will have to determine if you want to have to explain to the citizens of Highland Park that up is down.

Had we not gone through hearing after hearing, AUAR after AUAR, to set these parameters where everyone wanted them, this might be excusable. But most of us believed that what's done had been done when the AUAR was published. Then the riverboat gambling began. This is a gross example of bait and switch and, as you will hear, will not sit well with the people of Highland Park.

Howard Miller  
2081 Highland Pkwy.

Dear St. Paul City Council,

I have been a resident of the Mac-Groveland/Highland Park neighborhoods since 1980 and I've paid plenty of property taxes in those 40 years. I am utterly incensed by Ryan Company's greedy, slight-of-hand in trying to pass rooftops, balconies and decks as "open space."

**Does this mean that I can go spend time on any rooftop, balcony, or deck, as it is defined as open space, just like I do in my other neighborhood open spaces?** Give me a break. Stop insulting Highland Park.

For once, we need to demand that developers **stop pushing residents around with white, privileged greed**, and council, even more so, should look to the citizenry, instead of to continuing the systemic pursuit of power over the wishes of the people you represent.

You do not respect the residents desires, let alone honor their input. SHAME ON YOU. From increased building lot coverage to reducing open space to the 90-foot tower, you have **disappointed neighbors over and over again** in the pursuit of what — a new, isolated, privileged gated community that will exclude the very community it is built upon.

And what of this sophomoric name? "Highland Bridge?" Please. It's clearly the "Highland Island," because it **builds no bridges** to the community.

Trust me, your insidious relationship to Ryan will create long-term bitterness and resentment. It already has.

Robyn Lingen  
2126 Jefferson Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55105

July 20, 2020

Council President Brendmoen and Members of City Council,

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul requests that the City Council deny the Ryan Companies' appeal for increased building lot coverage.

We support the BZA decision to deny the Ryan variance request for additional building lot coverage, and we ask the City Council to deny the Ryan Companies' appeal of that BZA decision. We agree with the BZA reasoning that findings were not met for items #3 and #4 of the Code Requirements for Variances. That is, the applicant (Ryan Companies) has not established practical difficulties in complying with the provisions, and the plight of the landowner (Ryan companies) is not due to circumstances unique to the property.

This development will overwhelm the Highland community if it is built according to the Ford Master Plan, and anything above and beyond that will destroy it. Stick to the plan.

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul

This is Dave OBrien. My address is at the bottom. I'm writing to ask you not to allow the variances being asked by the Ryan group. The initial proposal was what was approved, not the various changes they are asking for.

There needs to be adequate open space. Coverage should be 70% maximum. This also means that there should be a minimum of 25% open space lot coverage. I do not want to allow roof top decks to count as open space.

I do not want any added building height and please rescind the allowance of a 90 foot tower.

Thanks you,  
Dave

David OBrien  
2208 Princeton Ave  
St. Paul, MN 55105

I get this and I have to respond by noon tomorrow because Ryan is appealing the bza ruling. In short they know the rules and now they are trying to get around them. I E-mail Matthew Graybar all my reasons for not granting these variances and the bza did the right thing. Ryan knows the rules and will try to change them for they are in this for the money and don't care about the taxpayers in Highland. I moved into Highland in 1941 at age 3 and lived here all but 5 years in the 70s. Don't turn Highland into Downtown St. Paul. Edward Stephens 1865 Bayard ave

Councilman Tolbert, Councilpersons,

It is time to stop all the variance requests from Ryan and their selected construction and development partners.

A Master Plan was developed and vetted. Build according to specifications and purported finished product.

Ex: Common bond not wanting to add underground parking. The project has always stated that parking would be built under the structures or within and not surface parking.

Ex: How does roof top open space count toward greater community access. Then they want to include balconies. Keep to the standard.

Ex: Traffic. With the current development for the Grocery traffic need to enter "one way" off Ford on a separate (alley way) street that is adjacent to Ranger Way. They butt up to each other for the length of the buildings. Why not exit left on Boland Ave then return to Ford Parkway on Finn?

Ryan needs to hold, and be held, to the plan!

Yours,  
Gary Martland  
1862 Montreal Ave

Dear Saint Paul City Council Members,

I ask that you reject the Ryan Company requests for variances at the Ford site that were turned down by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

It is hard to believe the company would have the nerve to design something that they knew perfectly well would require variances, because the company agreed to the master plan and told the neighbors, over and over, that it was fine with parameters laid out in that plan.

I trusted them and believed they would honor that agreement.

On top of that, for them to declare that the tops of their towering apartment buildings is public open space gives new meaning to the word nonsense.

It is apparent that Ryan doesn't care anymore if the neighbors trust them or not. They got their master plan and probably will get any variances they want from the City Council.

I am one of those neighbors and I live at 1032 Bowdoin St., three houses south of the Ford site.

Sincerely,  
Jim Winterer

Dear City Council

Ryan Co. must honor its promises to the city, and citizens for the Ford Project zoning. Any request for variances should be rejected by the Council as has been affirmed by BZA. Changes in height, open space should not be allowed. This is the first building and the first attempt at betrayal by Ryan. Take their measure and say No!

Kent Petterson  
503 St. Clair Ave.

How absolutely wearying the process the City of St Paul and the neighborhood has had to follow regarding the Ford site Development. All along the way, the neighborhood has been concerned about density with its impact of traffic & use of an already popular area of St Paul, building heights, green space.

And, here we are.... Ryan companies redefining "open space" to mean roof-top decks... really? Please don't approve of that shenanigan. "Open space" means public green space accessible to the community at large. If you approve this variance, you are cementing "Highland Bridge" to be a land without a bridge to the community at large.... An island to itself... yet making heavy use of roadways to and from with nothing to share in return.

The long-standing residents of this area (myself since 1979) want a development that is not an island onto itself but something that appears to connect with the rest of the community. To limit green space on the ground, to increase building heights, to build a 90 ft tower... please, let's just name it the Highland Suburb and be done with it.

Ann Mathews-Lingen  
2126 Jefferson Ave  
St Paul, MN 55105

I oppose granting Ryan Companies the variance they are requesting for the Common Bond project. Please have them stick to the original plan of 70% maximum building lot coverage and 25% minimum open space lot coverage. I oppose substituting roof-top decks as a substitute for open space at ground level. I also oppose adding building height, including the 90 foot tower.

Sincerely,  
Jill Warren  
1624 Juno Ave  
St Paul MN 55116

Please keep agreed upon open space accessible for all mn citizens and future visitors

Asa W. Hoyt  
[awhoyt@gmail.com](mailto:awhoyt@gmail.com)  
636 Desnoyer Ave.  
St. Paul Mn 55104

- **No increased building lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 70%maximum.**
- **No reduction in open space lot coverage—stick to the plan which states 25% minimum.**
- **Roof-top decks should not count as open space. Open space should be publicly accessible.**
- **No added building height**

In reading the latest request of Ryan Companies regarding a "new variance" request, I would like for you to take my opinion in due consideration as follows:

- a.- No increased building lot coverage. Follow to the plan which states 70%maximum.
- b.- No reduction in open space lot coverage. Follow to the plan which states 25% minimum.
- c.- Rooftop decks should not count as open space. Open space should be accessed by the public (as the plain english word says).
- d.- No added building height.
- e.- No 90 foot tower.

This common sense request follows today's urgency around the country to keep the density of the population to a minimum. WE NEED TO BE OBSERVANT OF SCIENCE, PLEASE!!!  
Sincerely.

**Anselmo C. Castelán**  
**1681 Saunders Avenue**

The Ryan company is requesting a number of variances to the agreed-upon master plan, including building coverage, height, tower, and others affecting green space. I understand some of these variances have been approved and some denied by the BZA, and that such variances are now before the City Council for final action.

I urge the Council to deny these variances. The master plan generated much community controversy and significant opposition from residents living in the area. I am a long-term resident of Highland Park. I feel that Ryan has pursued a disingenuous policy, i.e., get a master plan approved and then proceed to obtain a series of variances that had they been part of the master plan would have generated even more opposition from the community.

Please deny the variances and advise Ryan to follow the existing plan.

Thank you.

Lance Teachworth  
1734 Hampshire Ave.  
St. Paul

Yes, this is Edward Stephens, 1865 Bayard, in Highland Park here, and it's in regard to Ryan Company asking for a change here, and as the BZA has just denied them their request for additional height and space and a few other things, which I spoke to someone earlier from another St. Paul office way back before this even came up, and it seems like the Ryan Company has one thing just in their mind and that is money. Money, and they know what the rules were prior, and they're just going to continue to do that like they've done other projects, even like the one up on Selby and Snelling there where they build right up to the sidewalk. And they want to get variances for parking and everything else. And sticking a 90-foot tower is the same as putting a nine-story building in there. So, as I've said before, you keep putting all those houses in there and traffic is just going to be miserable, and it has at rush hour and it will be like that all the time. I moved into Highland in 1941 when I was three years old, and I've lived here, with the exception of about four of five years, all that time. And to me this is really a bad thing for Highland and for all the people that live here and homeowners, we certainly pay more than our fair share of property taxes to this city, and I expect the City to at least maintain the laws here. And then I get this notice, here it is less than 24 hours and we have to make an opinion or write you a long letter, and I hope you people do your job. I imagine this is going right to the City Council because the BZA has already made their judgment and I think it's the correct judgment. And now Ryan, with their lawyers, is trying to get around and get their way. And that's unfortunately the way they work and they're going to continue to do that because that's all they're interested in, the money, and they're going to hurt the homeowners and then nothing else it's going to do is depreciate the property values right here in Highland, and just the whole issue of life. We don't have enough problems with the virus and now we've got the money-grabbers there, call them whatever you want. I went to some of their early meeting and they break people up into these small committees, and it's kind of a conquer and divide thing. And I find they're a wolf in sheep's clothing or vice versa, whatever it is. Thank you for taking this message. And I'm trying to go move ahead with my life, pay my taxes like everybody else and abide with the law, so I would hope they would do the same thing. You folks have a good day. Thank you.

July 20, 2020. TO: The Saint Paul City Council FROM: Mathews Hollinshead, 2114 Pinehurst Ave., St. Paul MN 55116, 651-492-0645 **I urge you to reverse BZA's denial of Ryan's lot coverage variance request.** Tax base and viability: 90.3% lot coverage will maximize tax yield as Saint Paul faces unprecedented revenue contraction. Existing tax base, and especially homeowners, cannot cover the shortfall. Open space: 2170 will front a full block of open space; 30% of 2170 east of Cretin would be merely cosmetic at high maintenance cost. Traffic calming: Established research correlates slower, more attentive driving with (a) narrow viewshed and (b) higher buildings either side. 90.3% lot coverage narrows viewshed, slowing drivers; 70% widens it, increasing speed and distraction. **I urge you to sustain BZA's denial of Ryan's car sharing variance request.** Appellant's variance will disadvantage car sharing compared to personal vehicle parking on-site. Removing car shares to an outdoor hub away from users, especially in winter and for seniors or parents with small children, will compromise use and membership. Appellant cites failure of for-profit providers but Hour Car's nonprofit model and exclusive local presence are precisely what can maximize membership and use at affordable prices. Appellant cites lack of funding but withdrawing eight spaces is itself in-kind defunding — an ironic paradox. Appellant offers no binding timeline and contribution to replicate the eight lost spaces. Hour Car's expansion elsewhere has corporate support that Ryan could emulate here at scale and cost. Appellant offers an electric scooter hub, but scooters are no substitute. You cannot carry anything, take a child or grandchild or use it with even minor disabilities. Highland street traffic is not safe so scooters use sidewalks — making sidewalks unsafe for pedestrians. Car sharing is an affordable housing strategy. Personally-owned vehicles cost on average \$9,300/year according to AAA, yet sit idle 95% of their life. Their parking stalls or spaces inflate the price of associated homes or apartments thousands or tens of thousands of dollars. 2170 Ford fronts four transit lines — the A BRT included — and is or will be within minutes' walk of two clinics, three pharmacies, two or possibly three groceries, a Target and numerous other services, offering financial freedom from personal vehicles. For someone on a fixed retirement income but still above maximum for designated affordable housing, who needs the proceeds of their current home for surprise billing by hospitals or eventual long-term care, saving thousands of dollars per year while still having a car available could be the financial key to 2170 Ford Parkway. Climate change: Maximizing car sharing maximizes environmental benefit by reducing vehicle mile traveled, reducing emissions, reducing the number of vehicles themselves, and in other ways. Given collapsing tax revenues, ample adjacent open space, the need to calm traffic, the necessity to make car sharing convenient, the baby-boomer bulge in downsizing demand and reduced income of retiring seniors, please approve 90.3% lot coverage and keep car sharing part of 2170 Ford Parkway. We cannot afford to wait. ***Mr. Hollinshead is a member of the Transportation Advisory Board of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities.***

As a long time resident of Highland Park, I am concerned regarding the variance requests and other items of the Ford project.

Here are my requests: No increased building lot coverage; I want the open space to stay the at 25% minimum; and roof top decks should not count; no increased building height, and no big tower.

Barbara Pilney  
1620 Scheffer Ave  
st Paul, Mn 55116

Dear Council Members,

As a taxpaying citizen of saint Paul for over thirty years, I am writing to plead with you to reject the appeal proposed by Ryan Companies, in which they are asking to reduce open space at the Highland Bridges community they are developing, from what they had agreed to in the original plan.

City dwellers need outdoor space that is accessible and conveniently located for mental health, physical health, and general well-being. Rooftop decks for private building residents should not be counted as “open space”, as they would not be publicly accessible.

Lot coverage was agreed to by Ryan Companies at a maximum of 70%. Increasing lot coverage beyond that much in the variance request will also impact the public adversely, taking away from open , walkable, light-filled areas for all to enjoy.

And speaking of light, granting yet another variance to Ryan Companies for them to increase building heights and constructing a 90’ tower will substantially reduce natural light, views of the beautiful Mississippi River, and general visibility and sense of openness. We deserve better!

Community members like myself agreed to Ryan Companies Master Plan for the Ford Site because they touted it as an extension of Highland Park and presented it as somewhat appealing, despite concerns over things like traffic congestion in the entire area, resulting from the increased density being added. With the variances proposed, however, the project will not blend in with Highland Park by any stretch of the imagination, and definitely not feel welcoming and approachable by the general public or visitors to the region. Please resist the pressure to alter the Master Plan!

Still Hopeful,  
Karen A. Osen  
1545 Goodrich Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55105

My name is John Pilney. I and my wife, Barbara Pilney, have lived at 1620 Scheffer Ave for over fifty years.

I'm writing today to express my concerns regarding the variance requests by the developer Ryan. We support no increase in building lot coverage, no reduction in open space coverage, not using deck top area towards open area, no added building height increase and no ninety foot towers.

It is getting to the point with high taxes, high traffic and congestion - even on side streets - that we are considering a possible move out of St. Paul.

Please do not grant Ryan's request for the Ford site.

Bill Angell, 24 N Mississippi River Blvd, 55104

To Whom It May Concern

We are writing to express our opposition to the Ryan Plan amendments that attempt to further diminish the already-inadequate open space at the former Ford site.

As concerned members of the Highland Park community, we feel that such crowding presents a threat to the health and welfare of our community.

We are dismayed at the developers' attempts to further increase density beyond the 70% maximum lot coverage initially agreed to; and to further diminish the minimal 25% open space provided by the Plan. Under no circumstance should rooftop decks count as open space! We are also protesting Ryan's requests for additional building height and 90 foot tower. A high-rise tower will not add any aesthetic attributes, and will be completely out of character to the surrounding community. Please take into consideration our deep distress and concern as we see agreed-upon restrictions and guarantees of the Plan disappear one by one.

Adina Cioc

Deniz Aslan

2247 Edgcumbe Road

Saint Paul

Council Member Tolbert, et al,

Once again I find myself having to write in support of an appeal after a Board of Zoning Appeals' decision. Again and again the board members' NIMBYism is on full display. I'll be writing another letter in a week or so for the appeal of another Highland Bridge project.

Please support the appeal by Ryan Co so that we can begin building out the much needed housing on the Ford Site. This has been well over a decade in the making and these variances fit perfectly well with the overall site plan that was passed by city council. I have some reservations

about the car sharing plan, but I also understand that it will be handled in a more centralized manner and know that the city is aware of its importance.

As for the 166 letters in opposition to this project and the affordable senior housing, that's the absolute extent of Livables' reach. This was proven in the 2017 mayoral election of Mayor Carter and the 2019 election of Council Member Tolbert. Both campaigns had clear lines drawn in the sand when it came to development and especially the Ford Site. Both Mayor Carter and CM Tolbert won handily because the majority of St Paulites want to see our city continue to move forward and that includes building homes, especially on the Ford Site.

I also hope that the city examines a couple things when it comes to BZA going forward. Specifically, I'd like the city to address the process for approving the Ford Site development projects. Is every project for the Highland Bridge going to be denied by the BZA only to then have that decision rightly appealed to city council. This is a severe drain on city resources. More generally, I'd like the city to take a look at the BZA and its relationship to the development process in St Paul as a whole. I've only really started to keep an eye on the BZA over the last year, and while it is very difficult to get all the information, packets and minutes, it has become abundantly clear that the BZA is operating outside the vision of St Paul as stated in multiple comprehensive plans and district/neighborhood plans. We can't continue to have the BZA ignore staff and district council recommendations.

Thank you,  
Mike Sonn  
1XXX Wellesley Ave

August 4, 2020

Members of City Council,

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul wishes to express opposition to the reduction of open space lot coverage requested by CommonBond Communities at the Ford site. We request that you deny this appeal.

Open space is an important factor of human health and happiness. Adequate open space is important for the residents and visitors of the CommonBond facility, and it is important for every residence in the Ford development and for every residence and business around the Ford development. The open space lot coverage guidelines were clearly spelled out in the Ford Master Plan to be no less than 25%, and developers should be required to adhere to this plan. Furthermore, all developers were well aware of the Master Plan and the conditions of the property before the property was purchased. There are no surprises, and no practical difficulties to justify this variance. There is no plight of the landowner due to circumstances unique to the property. This variance appeal should be denied.

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul also wishes to draw your attention to all of the letters sent to the Board of Zoning Appeals and to City Council, opposing the variances for both 2170 Ford Parkway and 830 Cretin Avenue. These variance requests were published together in a public hearing notice, and they are both pertaining to the Ford property development. Consequently, public comments lumped the two variance requests together. There is no confusion on the part of residents. They are opposed to the variances for added building lot coverage, added building height, a 90 foot tower, and any reduction in open space lot coverage anywhere on the Ford property.

If you read the letters, all of the 175 letters clearly express opposition to the requested variances. People are opposed to the changes. They received the public hearing notices of the variances, and they are responding with letters of opposition. Their intentions should be clear. Yet, according to the staff "Summary of the Letters of Opposition", 30% of those letters specifically mention the open space

lot coverage as a concern. It is simply unacceptable for the City to continue to disregard and undermine public input and neighborhood concerns.

The Ford Plan's glaring deficit of open recreational space has been repeatedly pointed out by concerned neighbors. And, as has been made abundantly clear by the current COVID-19 epidemic, ample open space should be a non-negotiable feature of any new development. Again, we request that you listen to the voices of citizens and deny this appeal for reduction in open space lot coverage.

Respectfully submitted,

Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul