

Green space at the Snelling-Midway redevelopment site
March 2, 2016

I'm Shirley Erstad, Executive Director of Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County. I am a St. Paul resident and live not far from the Snelling-Midway redevelopment site.

I've heard from many people that they are pleased to see so much lovely green space included in the renderings of the design. Indeed, it has been pointed out that there is more green space with this development than the current minimums required by parkland dedication.

However, I would also like to point out that the language in the current development agreement is vague when it comes to dedication. It says, "If the Midway Green Spaces are transferred to the City, the Midway Green Spaces will count toward the satisfaction of the park dedication fees or requirements of the City."

What is the timeline for making that determination? What if the Midway Green Spaces are not transferred? What if that hasn't yet been decided twenty years from now when the new stadium is no longer the new stadium and there is a push for another new stadium? What would be the status of the Midway Green Spaces then?

If the land for the Midway Green Spaces and the land for the soccer stadium are not redeveloped at the same time, the Midway Green Spaces cannot be included in the parkland dedication determination. Parkland dedication, land or cash-in-lieu, is tied to current development, not future development possibilities.

State statute requires that if land is not being transferred, that cash-in-lieu is paid at time of final permit approval.

I realize the Master Plan is yet to be completed. Please keep some of these things in mind when completing it.

I encourage you to think of the Midway Green Spaces much as other cities think of their green spaces. If you already have that perspective, then I thank you for your vision.

Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Central Park in New York City. Millennium Park in Chicago. These places are jewels unto themselves. They are not "after thoughts" to some other development, they are jewels in their own right.

I ask you to think of the Midway Green Spaces in the same way. As a twin jewel in this development, equal to the jewel of the stadium itself. Indeed, for much of the community, the open space will be more meaningful and more valuable than for those few who can afford to purchase a ticket to enter the stadium.

Thank you.