



UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL

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July 27, 2015

Mayor Chris Coleman
Council President Russ Stark
Councilmember Dai Thao
Saint Paul City Hall
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mayor Coleman, Council President Stark, and Councilmember Thao:

On July 24th, the Union Park District Council passed a resolution supporting further exploration of the Bus Barn site as a possible location for a Major League Soccer stadium, if the project allows for and encourages transit-oriented, mixed-use development of the entire 34.5 acre Snelling-Midway SmartSite, consistent with the Snelling Station Area Plan.

In conjunction with this resolution, our Land Use Committee identified a number of issues of concern to the community as we consider the benefits and challenges of a potential stadium at that site.

1. Although we recognize that the stadium decision-making process may happen quickly, we see a strong need to collect and consider resident feedback through a formalized community engagement process. We are prepared to assist the City in these efforts and look forward to quickly identifying clear avenues of communication with developers and city staff. We have taken the initiative to begin the process at the local level by hosting a community discussion on August 11th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Midpointe Event Center (415 N Pascal St), adjacent to the Bus Barn site. We invite you to attend.

2. We urge the City to approach the 34.5-acre site holistically and to avoid allowing the excitement and urgency of the stadium project to limit the remarkable opportunity that exists in the heart of our city. The best location for a stadium on the site *may* be the Met Council-owned parcel, but we know the development would be stronger if the entire site and its infrastructure were designed as a whole, even though the plans would likely be implemented in phases over time. Indeed, all existing planning documents approved by the City call for redevelopment of the superblock with multiple uses supported by public infrastructure such as roads and green space. In June, before we were aware of a stadium proposal, our board passed the attached resolution that endorses a strategic comprehensive plan for future development of the Snelling Midway Super-Block. We encourage the City to keep RK Midway and the Metropolitan Council involved in the planning process.

3. While we are optimistic that a stadium could unlock the superblock's potential by serving as a catalyst for broader development, there are several key concerns about the specific nature of

stadium-related development. For example, we do not want to compromise the goal of a walkable site with public open spaces and a mix of housing and business development focused on creating long-term quality jobs. We are also cautious about tax relief options, and do not want local residents and or businesses to bear a financial burden related to the stadium construction.

4. Parking and traffic management are critical issues for our neighborhood and community. We support the construction of shared parking facilities that would serve both the stadium and other future development. To reduce the need for stadium parking, we urge planners to promote incentives for public transit use, and to consider ways to minimize the traffic and parking impacts on surrounding residential areas.

5. We look forward to the prospect of the soccer stadium as a community amenity, and would like to insure that free or low cost seats are made available for MLS games, and that the use of the stadium is maximized at other times. We envision it being used for youth soccer programming, cultural events such as Hmong and East African tournaments and festivals, local college and University games and practices, and other community programs and events.

Please let me know how the City plans to address the community concerns identified in this letter, so we can share this information with our residents. The Union Park District Council looks forward to partnering with the City on community engagement about the potential for a soccer stadium as part of a plan for multi-use development on the 34.5 acre Snelling-Midway SmartSite.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Julie Reiter".

Julie Reiter, Executive Director
Union Park District Council