

**From:** [Jon Reynolds](#)  
**To:** [\\*CI-StPaul](#); [Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment on City Council Appeal #21-237-456 - 411-417 Lexington Pkwy N.  
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Greetings, I am submitting comments on the City Council Appeal #21-237-456 (411-417 Lexington Pkwy N. site plan).

This development has garnered a lot of attention for its potential impacts on housing affordability in the neighborhood, and as a nearby resident I would like to voice my support for the project. While the current discourse has largely portrayed this project as entirely bad or entirely good, I fail to see how oversimplifying the narrative is serving our community well. Since no housing is being demolished, there will be no *direct* displacement resulting from this project. Those arguing against this project feel strongly that this project will lead to *indirect* displacement due to the possibility of neighborhood-level gentrification. I believe that concern has merit, especially given the history of white supremacy in Rondo and the current trends of rising rents across Saint Paul. But in that regard, this project serves both an example of how to combat rising rents, as well as an example of what can lead to rising rents. By adding much-needed modestly "affordable" housing in St. Paul this project plays a small role in reducing pressure on other naturally-occurring affordable housing in the area. St. Paul's population has grown rapidly since 2010 and this increased demand accounts for much of the rise in rents. Our city simply hasn't built enough affordable housing over the past few decades. Any new housing, even market rate, can mitigate these effects in the long run. But as we all know, this often correlates with displacement, and that's why I think this project also serves as an example of what causes rents to rise. Ultimately this neighborhood will see rising property values and a new wave of resters/owners who change the demographics of the community, and slowly push out current residents. I believe this is an inevitable outcome whether or not this project is built, unless the city/state/federal government can dramatically increase affordable housing subsidies and incentives. Even if this one project by Alatus is nixed the net effect could be the same. This area is primed for redevelopment and the primary way to ensure that residents aren't displaced is to direct a massive amount of new *heavily subsidized* construction to Midway/Frogtown/Rondo. There are dozens of prime developable lots within a few blocks of this proposed project that could become home to hundreds of deeply affordable apartments. But the current subsidies and incentives are not enough. So rather than pretend we can keep new residents out, let's focus our energy on partnering with more nonprofit developers, and adequately fund the housing crisis. This problem wasn't created by developers like Alatus and it certainly won't go away by denying this site plan. It would simply add more strain on the current housing stock in the area. Let's stop spreading the narrative that private developers are the "enemy," and instead work together to solve the affordable housing crisis through public-private partnerships. Thank you.

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**Jon Reynolds**