



## Capitol Region Watershed District

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Office of the Saint Paul City Council  
310 City Hall  
15 Kellogg Boulevard West  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

*Re: Comments on MN United FC Stadium Site Plan*

Dear Saint Paul City Councilmembers:

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) strongly urges the Saint Paul City Council to require that MN United FC to incorporate three stormwater management concepts into its stadium site plan: 1) comprehensive stormwater management system for the entire 35-acre site, 2) rainwater harvesting of the entire stadium roof and its use for irrigating the soccer field, and 3) a major water feature that uses treated stormwater runoff. We have secured grant funding of approximately **\$500,000** to fund innovative and sustainable stormwater practices.

First, the Snelling Midway redevelopment site affords the City and CRWD an opportunity to advance our common goal of moving away from stormwater management on a parcel by parcel basis to establishing a **comprehensive, shared management model for stormwater**. For the past seven months, the City and CRWD, with assistance from MN United FC, have been investigating a comprehensive stormwater management approach for the Snelling-Midway site that would treat stormwater runoff from all parcels within the 35-acre site in a central location. The intent of the approach is to provide a common, shared system that utilizes landscape features or natural processes to manage stormwater and provide other environmental, social and economic benefits. We believe this approach is more cost-effective in terms of both construction and long-term operation and maintenance, reducing the quantity of construction materials and labor and the number of practices to inspect and maintain. Also, infrastructure functions can be stacked in a common space (i.e., stormwater and parks), which allows for more developable land, and buildable parcels that are not required to treat stormwater can be folded into a shared stormwater system.

The City and CRWD have presented to MN United FC and RK Midway a schematic design of a comprehensive stormwater management system that includes rainwater harvesting cisterns, tree trenches and rain gardens (enclosed). While the Snelling-Midway Master Plan is consistent with our vision of treating stormwater runoff of the 35-acre site in a central location with green infrastructure practices, the stadium site plan falls short and proposes to provide treatment for only half the site in BMPs distributed across the anticipated 16-acre Phase I redevelopment area. CRWD acknowledges that the stadium site plan shows some commitment to innovations in stormwater management, however, the Stadium site plan should take further steps and incorporate a comprehensive stormwater management approach.

Second, **rainwater harvesting of the entire soccer stadium roof for irrigating the soccer field** should be included in the stadium site plan. The current stadium site plan indicates that rainwater is collected from only 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the stadium roof and used only for irrigating landscaping. Yet collecting rainwater from the entire stadium roof could provide significant reductions in potable water use for irrigating the soccer field. Based on CRWD's estimate, over two million gallons of runoff is generated from the roof in an average year. Beyond irrigating the soccer field, other end uses may include irrigating other greenspaces, a major water feature, stadium washdown water and flushing toilets. The City, Saint Paul Saints and CRWD are successfully demonstrating harvesting of rainwater for field

*Our Mission is to protect, manage and improve the water resources of Capitol Region Watershed District.*

irrigation and toilet flushing at CHS Field and have established the new standard for stormwater management at publicly owned, professional sports stadiums. The City-owned soccer stadium should strive to exceed the current standard for stormwater management.

Lastly, CRWD seeks a **major water feature that utilizes treated stormwater** integrated into the site to help CRWD achieve its watershed management goal of “Bringing Water Back to Saint Paul” both literally and figuratively in the eyes and minds of the public. The nearest surface waterbody to the site, the Mississippi River, is over a mile and a half away. This lack of proximity to surface waterbody was identified in a previous CRWD study as a major community barrier to placing higher value on water and adopting water resource protection measures. Through a major water feature and other green infrastructure practices, we can capture the attention of a highly diverse, lower than average income audience and connect them to water resources and motivate them to become water stewards.

We also believe that a major water feature can help the City achieve its transit-oriented redevelopment vision for the site. It can be the centerpiece for creating a sense of place that is attractive, vibrant and engaging and draws people of all ages and demographics year-round to the site. Local examples of integrating constructed water features into park designs, natural or formal, include Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary, Rice Park and Mears Park with the latter two presented as precedent park images in the Master Plan. Also metropolitan cities across the globe are rethinking how they value and treat stormwater and are finding innovative ways to integrate water systems and civic infrastructure. CRWD has presented to MN United FC precedent images of park water features that on average take up less than 5% of the park space.

The comprehensive stormwater management system, rainwater harvesting, and a major water feature are the same planning principles that the City has already adopted for the master plan of the West Side Flats redevelopment site and are being considered in the master planning process for the Ford redevelopment site. Planning for these two major redevelopment sites envision rainwater as a resource and call for an integration of stormwater runoff via green infrastructure practices into the design ethic and landscape of these sites. Also the City is considering an urban park water feature or stream fed by stormwater runoff as a focal point and attractive amenity for the local community at each of these redevelopment sites.

We are committed to continue working with the City, MN United FC, and RK Midway on refining the stadium site plan design and resolving the barriers to adopting these three concepts. This is a pivotal moment to create a public-private partnership to collectively and cost-effectively manage a shared resource and provide a water-centric amenity that reconnects the community to their water resources.

Sincerely,



Mark Doneux  
Administrator

cc: CRWD Board of Managers  
Kristin Beckman, City of Saint Paul Deputy Mayor  
Kady Dadlez, City of Saint Paul  
Donna Drummond, City of Saint Paul  
Jonathan Sage-Martinson, City of Saint Paul  
Wes Saunders-Pearce, City of Saint Paul  
Richard Birdoff, RK Midway  
William McGuire, MN United FC  
Nate Pearson, Tegra Group