



Dear Mayor Coleman and Members of the Saint Paul City Council –

As you know, for months our Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul group has been advocating for a mixed-use business-friendly approach to Ford site redevelopment planning.

We have said that there should be a pedestrian-friendly, bike-friendly, transit-friendly Ford site redevelopment plan that offers a range of housing options and prices, welcoming all comers to the neighborhood.

We have also said that the City’s current plan is so deeply flawed that it needs to be tabled and re-worked.

The nearly 700 – and growing -- lawn signs make the point that the City should **“Stop the Ford Plan – Re-think the Redevelopment.”**

We believe that this approach is both reasonable and responsible.

This Sunday’s Pioneer Press strongly underlined this perspective in two ways.

First, the Pioneer Press editorial board took an unequivocal stance in support of delaying the vote and re-thinking the City’s plan. To quote the editorial:

“After its public hearing this week and next, the council should put off a vote on the vision for a ‘mixed-use urban village’ on the 120-acre site, perhaps even until after a new mayor takes office in January.”

<http://www.twincities.com/2017/09/17/editorial-take-the-time-to-move-antagonism-toward-agreement-on-ford-site/>

Second, it published an opinion piece from Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul that argued for delaying the City Council vote to allow time to come up with a plan that can work for everyone. The opinion piece laid out a conceptual framework for the new plan.

<http://www.twincities.com/2017/09/17/charles-hathaway-a-framework-for-the-ford-site-that-more-people-could-support/>

We call on you to delay the vote and provide time for a new plan to be developed that truly respects the concerns and reflects the desire of the community to make the redeveloped Ford site something we all can be proud of.

Sincerely,

Charles Hathaway on behalf of Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul

From: Shirley Erstad [<mailto:shirleyerstad@gmail.com>]

Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2017 11:45 AM

To: Thao, Dai (Cl-StPaul)

Subject: Ford site conversation in print, online and my contributions to it

Dear Dai,

I hope you will vote in favor of a world-class development for the world-class site we know as the Ford site. The current plan needs more work and I ask you to vote "NO".

Thank you.

1. A piece I co-wrote was printed in the Pioneer Press on Thursday:

<http://www.twincities.com/2017/09/14/gemberling-erstad-just-ford-site-process-by-openness-and-accountability-not-just-by-number-of-meetings/>

2. Today's PiPress editorial asks for more discussion before the vote. For some weird reason, its not online yet but you can read it in print or keep searching later. The title is, "Take the time to move from antagonism toward agreement on Ford site".

3. I joined an online conversation at tcsidewalks.blogspot.com about public space and share my comments below. Please, feel free to check out the entire conversation on the site.

4. I posted on SPIF under the title, "St. Paul for MVP (Ford site: World-class site deserves World-class development" <http://forums.e-democracy.org/groups/stpaul-issues/messages/topic/27fFZbU1e52ehDyLu0koUr>

See 3. above:

You say you place strong value on social connection and lament privatization. Yet by overbuilding along the river, in our National Park, we promote the exact opposite of what you value. Who will be living in the luxury apartments with river views? The rich. Who will be looking at the forever-changed skyline that now is a tree canopy when on the river? All the rest of us suckers.

I've been on the river since the 75' building was built at Victoria Park. It has forever changed the experience of being on the river. What once looked like a nature preserve, thanks to that one building, is no longer. Imagine what the only gorge on the Mighty Mississippi will look like after we've lined the bluff with buildings above the tree canopy.

Rent for those penthouse views? I personally do not know but I was told \$4,500 a month in a public meeting. If that's affordable housing then our leadership has a very different view of the income level of their constituents than I do.

What did St. Paul do with the riverfront in the heyday you mention? They turned it into a National Park.

If downtown St. Paul were bursting at the seams, if the other Wards in our city were overflowing, then there might be a case for vertical building. But if this plan is approved, there will be a giant sucking sound in those Wards and badly-needed investment in other parts of our city will be delayed, again. Do you argue that the immigrant communities that already live here do not deserve the same kind of passion and fervor that you pour into the future citizens of our community? Do you argue that the recreation centers that were closed and that contribute to the lack of our current young residents having a place to go should be put aside in favor of future citizens that may or may not show up?

Parks are a vital part of the community fabric you so passionately believe in. Yet, this plan allows building in a National Park, "America's Best Idea", according to documentarian Ken Burns. The city does not have the tools to guarantee that parks will be part of this development.

If you are as committed as you say to community space, then fight for a zoning designation that, literally, puts parks on these zoning maps.

If you truly believe in public space and not privatization, then fight for a stronger parkland dedication ordinance that doesn't allow the option to pay a fee instead of give land.

Mayor Coleman, city planners, Council Member Tolbert, and your fellow Planning Commissioner, Kyle Makarios, went to five European countries to learn from them on what makes a world-class city. I attended the Planning Commission meeting when Ms. Clapp-Smith and Mr. Makarios reported on their trip.

They unequivocally described the premise of those great developments in those great cities, "When you build buildings higher than five stories, an interesting thing happens. People no longer come out of their 'towers' and the community feeling is lost."

Yet, those same folks on that European Tour came back to St. Paul, heard from developers about the need for tall buildings in our National Park, and somehow "unlearned" that lesson.

Staff has told me that buildings need to be high for development to be marketable. "Lobby ceilings need to be 13' high". Developers may WANT 13' lobby ceilings but we don't NEED them. People aren't that tall! Lob off 3' and we have a shorter building in our National Park, the same number of people in the building, and the only difference is a shorter lobby chandelier.

Developers are driving the zoning in this plan. Zoning (the tool courts have given the city to implement our vision for our community) is not driving the development. That's not how leadership is supposed to work. That's not caring for a National Park. That's selling to the highest bidder.

The Mayor has said, "frankly, developers are salivating" and "this will be a world-class development". I believe him on the first part but the second will not come to pass with this plan.

Put your energy where your mouth is. Fight for public space.

See 4 above.

The Mayor has said the Ford site is a World-Class site. I agree. It deserves a world-class development.

IVP to turn St. Paul into MVP.

Imagination
Vision
Persistence

lead to

Most
Valuable
Places

Central Park in New York City. Millennium Park in Chicago. The Presidio in San Francisco. These are world-class sites that make the land around them more valuable.

New Orleans is on one end of the navigable Mighty Mississippi and we're on the other. We hold the banner for this, not that other city across the river to our west. Why are we not viewing this site as a tourist destination? Eco-tourism is on the rise while the market for luxury apartments in the Twin Cities has peaked. Remember when the Mayor talked about Viking River Cruises coming to town?

The current plan needs more work. By its very definition, not all ideas are "Best Ideas". I am reminded of the decision to put a jail on the riverfront in downtown St. Paul. Turns out, not such a best idea. Indeed, I am told that immediately upon its completion, the inmates discovered all that shiny glass made for a great stage and the best idea needed a quick upgrade, at tax-payer expense, of course. Recently, Ramsey County residents paid \$19 million (and the writing is on the wall that we'll be dishing out more) to re-develop the site of that best idea.

Smart planning and smart design save us money in the long run.

The following is a response I penned to Bill Lindeke's written comments on the need for community space, among other things. In the interest of space, I will

attach the link to our conversation here.

<http://tcsidewalks.blogspot.com/2017/09/an-open-letter-to-charles-hathaway.html?m=1>
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Full disclosure: I write this as my personal opinion. Within my rights as a private citizen, I serve on the Steering Committee of Saint Paul STRONG. In my professional life, I am the Executive Director of Friends of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County.

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From: Tom Traxler [<mailto:tomtraxler79@gmail.com>]

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2017 2:52 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward5 <Ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: OBrien, Kim (CI-StPaul) <kim.obrien@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Opposition to The Ford Plan - Please Promote an Active Recreation Area, Low Density

Hello Amy:

Just thought I would send you a quick note concerning my opposition to the current plan for the Ford land.

Please read over the email below and let me know your thoughts on my comments concerning the current Ford Plan being pushed/forced on the Ward 3 constituents.

90% of the land should be dedicated to "Active" recreation. An "active" recreation area with an Amphitheater, fields for baseball, soccer, lacrosse, cross country skiing trails, bike trails, ice skating, ice hockey & sled hockey rinks, football, tennis courts, pickle ball, basketball courts, archery. There should be no multiple story buildings. No apartment buildings. No more than 50 Single family homes. The homes would consist of 3,500 or more square feet per home. These homes should be situated on the river bluff.

A minimum of 15 acres should be allocated/used for farming - local residents can grow vegetables, raise chickens.....

Plant many pine trees, maple trees, oak trees. The active recreation area would be a year round destination area. There are plenty of businesses in the area already. No need for more businesses.

The current plan is being forced on the people. The constituents will not accept the current ford plan. It needs to be scaled to provide active recreation for young and the not so young minds and bodies. We need to build an area that will provide sustained healthy active life styles for all.

Thank you for your attention. Good luck in all your efforts to support the constituents. Not an easy job as you well know. I look forward to hearing from you.

Tom Traxler
1780 Scheffer Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55116

Ford Plant Development

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SEP 18 2017
CITY CLERK

I am writing to urge the City Council to delay the vote on rezoning the Ford Plant until it is clear that the vote will not lock the city or developers into the plan as proposed. Like many, I have been slow to grasp the magnitude of the decision. My picture of what was planned and the latest information I have received are far apart. The reality of 4000 housing units on that site is beyond my imagination. The fact that no single houses will be built came as a complete surprise. Highland is a mixture of housing types; something for every taste but understandably not enough of any type to totally meet the demand. Part of the charm of the neighborhood is the diversity and the lack of cookie cutter buildings. The density proposed is going to create cookie cutter buildings to maximize occupancy per building.

Highland is green. While short on playground space, there are trees, flowers, yards, and parks to break up the landscape. The plan as proposed has very limited green space much of which is a drainage feature which will be wet. (Is that also a hazard?) The view of the river bluffs will be obstructed. The view will not be very attractive either from the bluff looking in or from the units looking out.

Traffic is another major problem. The arterial streets around the site are already busy. Putting hundreds of additional cars on those streets will have a huge impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. There is no direct way to hook up with highways without going through neighborhoods. There does not appear to be any way to develop new or enlarged routes without major disruption. Where could there be additional mass transportation without major neighborhood disruption? Biking, walking, the regeneration of "mom and pop" retail are interesting ideas that have yet to be proven. There is still winter here. Ice, snow and cold make biking and walking difficult, dangerous and undesirable for the fast growing senior population. Hopefully the new residents will be able to freely access art, cultural and sport activities and not be stuck in a ghetto of sorts. Will the density, lack of green space, lack of amenities for children make this area unattractive to buyers at resale?

30 years is a long way out. There are spectacular examples of long range planning that has missed the mark because the variables have changed over time. Humans are very hard to predict and change is happening rapidly. It is a mistake to assume what looks good today will look as good years out. Can these properties be remodeled? Planning should be done in shorter chunks that can reflect changes. The process of development should be incremental with checks and balances. Ford and a master developer are driven by profits, not necessarily long term livability.

Nobody paying taxes today will benefit from the construction at the Ford Plant. TIF financing will postpone any tax savings for many years. Infrastructure costs will be high over a 30 year buildout so taxes will be high.

We have a chance to do something wonderful. Let's not rush our decisions!

Elizabeth Kiernat
1410 Edgcumbe Road



651-690-2287

