

Public Submissions (Online)
Related to the proposed Skyway closing at Park Square Court
March, 2021

Skyway Users...

MAJOR CLOSURE PROPOSED

The building owner (Madison Equities) is requesting to completely close the skyway through Park Square Court Building from the next three (3) years to accommodate conversion of the building to apartments. This would close all skyway use to and from....

River Park Lofts

Bulldog Lowertown

Barrio

Railroader Printing Building and its tenants

So... how do you get your voice heard?

React here. Do you support or oppose this proposal? Are there alternatives the owner might adopt?

Email us at Skywayssp@gmail.com

Attend zoom (link below)

Discussion will begin 9AM Friday March 26. This committee is being asked by the City Council to use public input to recommend for or against closures like this.

March 26, 2021, 9:00-10:30 AM - CRC Skyway Governance Advisory Committee (SGAC)

Join Zoom

Meeting Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83219315937?pwd=R0JvbmpYOEFVZStnVVlyeEVBZDhkZz09Meeting> ID: 832 1931 5937 Passcode: 835886

One tap mobile +13126266799,,83219315937#,,,,,0#,,835886# US (Chicago) Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83219315937?pwd=R0JvbmpYOEFVZStnVVlyeEVBZDhkZz09Meeting>

Bill Hanley

Chair, SGAC

Skywayssp@gmail.com

Hello CRC & SGAC Members,

My name is Heather Bunch and my husband, Clay, and I live in River Park Lofts.

We were absolutely shocked to hear that a developer is requesting a three-year skyway closure in Park Square Court that would completely sever our skyway connectivity during that time period. Although we plan to attend Friday's SGAC Zoom Meeting to learn more, we wanted to send this note in advance to express our concern.

When relocating to St. Paul in 2016, purchasing a home that was skyway-connected was one of the criteria at the top of our list. We use the skyway often for everything from running errands to exercising (walking!) in the winter months. We absolutely cannot imagine this asset, that we pay for (both in purchase price and dues for maintenance of our bridge), being stripped away for such an extreme period of time.

While we love to see buildings being renovated to enhance the community and while we recognize that temporary, short-term skyway closures (a week or two here or there, preferably in the summer) may be necessary for safety, a blanket “three years until project completion” is absurd. In our opinion, the developer must make every effort to keep the skyway open for public use as much as possible during renovations. There are so many imaginative solutions that could be considered (i.e., tarped/tented walkway through current skyway, diversion to another floor to avoid certain construction areas) and the onus is on the developer to creatively determine how to keep the skyway open for as many days as possible during the project. Bottom line: any burdens associated with building renovations should be placed on the developer, not the community.

If you need anything further from us, please feel free to reach out. We appreciate you taking the time to read this note and carefully consider this issue.

Best,

Heather and Clay Bunch, River Park Lofts

Totally opposed.

We purchased our loft because the building was connected to the Skyway. I will be 83 in June. Hopefully, I will still be here three years from now. But who knows.

I walked outside to Walgreens the other day. It was a lot easier walking back on the Skyway.

Robert and Carolyn Grenier

406 Wacouta St Unit 503

Saint Paul, MN, 55101

309-207-0999

I absolutely oppose this proposal. The skyways are a public asset and an important link through downtown St. Paul for people with disabilities and others who walk for exercise, walk to work, walk to shop, walk to church, walk to restaurants and walk to connect with all downtown amenities,

including the library, XCel center, the Ordway, Children's Museum, Science Museum, and other arts and culture venues.

It should be feasible for the building owners to provide alternate routes through the buildings as they work on the conversion. If, during the conversion construction, there is a need to close the skyway for a short time, they could apply again for a closure, but it should be for a week or two, not years.

Linda Kohl
Skyway Committee member

Hello,

I'm writing to you to give my feedback on the proposed skyway closure for the Park Square Court building. I urge the CRC to only support a limited, short term closure of the skyway. There are other examples of buildings that have undergone renovations that had their skyways still remain open. For example the Pioneer Endicott building. In Minneapolis, the Dayton's building and Block E projects kept their skyways open during construction. It's a simple matter for the contractor to put up temporary walls to protect the space and allow users to still have access.

I support Madison Equities project and wish them the best. But they should not be given carte blanche with a three year closure. That's an absurd amount, especially since the skyway area won't be worked on continuously the entire three year span. And given their recent track record with the Degree of Honor building conversion, they've shown nothing but arrogance and incompetence with such projects.

Thank you for your time.

Jim Buscher
Downtown St. Paul resident

-----Lowertown Group 3/21-----

Comments

Patrick Arden Wood

Well that's lousy. But I doubt that Madison Equities gives a damn.

Kate Burns

Patrick Arden Wood I don't think they own the building, it was sold to someone else wasn't it?

Patrick Arden Wood

As far as I know, they still own the building. It's listed on their website.... <http://madisonequities.biz/>

Kate Burns

Patrick Arden Wood Thanks for the info, a couple months ago there was a big group of people standing outside and waving sparklers and popping champagne, and when I opened my window to listen to what was going on, they were talking about a sale and I thought maybe Madison gave up and sold it. But I obviously didn't get the whole thing and I didn't go over and ask what was going on, because hey, pandemic.

Brent Zustiak

Anyone know what happened with their plan to put apartment in the first national bank bldg?

Marney Rumpley

Three years seems excessive. It seems to me that they could work around that area therefore closing it for a shorter amount of time.

Steve Switzer

Can I buy one?

Lynn Korsman

It's basically been closed for the last year anyway. I got locked in and got yelled at by security for taking the elevator down to get out.

Lisa June Rojas

Lynn Korsman exactly

Kate Burns

I got locked into the Securian buildings the other day because I entered before 7pm and was hustling as fast as I can with a cane but made it to the other side at 7pm but the door was already locked and they were not happy with me either.

Susan Schmid

They have already locked it down which they CANNOT! I heard they stated that it will be dangerous for people to get through their building during construction. I cannot believe that passage through their

building would be dangerous to skyway users for 3+ years. That is ridiculous. Part of the responsibility of having a building with a skyway is to make sure that it is open and usable...apparently they don't believe this.

Walter Sass

It's not his to close.

Kimshi Trav

Walter Sass when you buy a building with skyway access (even open access like town square) this is a draw for businesses, tenants and employees. It's the owners responsibility to maintain access and security.

Darla Kay

Is this throughway exempt from ADA compliance. if not, accessibility concerns will win this issue. Good luck.

Michelle Stinson Ross

There was a mugging in there very recently. It hasn't been particularly safe in that building lately.

Julie Hill

Jackie Narjes - Did you see this? Thought of your post the other day....

Micki Marie

Mr Bigos is actively remodeling the Galtier building... and the skyway is unimpacted. Three years is a joke. We use the skyway to access Bulldog in the winter. Bulldog deserves support as one of the few remaining restaurants in the immediate area.

Janice Ostrem

Micki Marie It's CeayPlaza, not the Galtier building which Bigos bought and will be converting to apartments. I do hope they change the name back to Galtier. Skyway access hasn't been impacted by the demolition work so far but it might be later.

Micki Marie

The skyway was there when they bought the building. Also, what exactly do the landlords of all of these buildings think people are going to do when they move here? No shopping, no dining, no YMCA - at least the skyway helps connect those of us on the ... See More

TheThird Rob

Micki Marie I agree makes living downtown depressing. And we're still paying the same amount of money def not fair !

Kate Burns

I live next door and am already upset they drove out Handsome Hog and Public/Green Lantern. I can see them needing to restrict access sometimes, but three years really does seem excessive. Having access to the skyways is the reason a lot of us decided ... See More

Holly Green

Kate Burns They didn't drive them out, Madison owns those restaurants. They relocated Handsome Hog to a larger building that they also own, and chose to close Public/Green Lantern. Public/Green Lantern would have been closed during covid anyway, but as... See More

Kate Burns

When I had talked to Justin about it, he hadn't wanted to close them all, he did want to relocate/open another Handsome Hog up where the Salt Cellar/Fitz had been because they just weren't working out and it has a much bigger patio. But with the long t... See More

Holly Green

Kate Burns Ah, okay, you already know the story there. I mean, I agree with the logic behind closing them but we don't have to like it.

Kate Burns

Exactly, I miss being able to hop over and get some chicken fried ribs when I get a hankering. Now a whole bus ride is involved, boo.

Holly Green

Kate Burns Agreed. I'm annoyed having to Uber home from Pillbox and Loon cuz the skyway is closed after 6 or 7. Now that its light out longer and warming up I can walk home, but I still feel safer walking alone when I'm inside.

Kelly Pearson

Well crap, I'm moving in to RPL in a couple days. I want a skyway!!

Jackie Narjes

Kelly Pearson welcome to RPL! This is not our first rodeo. We have had a couple of fights about skyway access. Stay involved and make your voice heard.

Kelly Pearson

Jackie Narjes come say hi at the Wacouta Street entrance Saturday from 8:00 to 10:00 lol

Kelly Ireland

Kelly Pearson is that Karl?!!

Kelly Pearson

Kelly Ireland ??? Huh ????

Kelly Ireland

Kelly Haha sorry. Your dog. Is your dog Karl the sheep dog??

Kelly Pearson

Kelly Ireland oh no, that's the other sheepdog. My sheepdog is Fluffy Winston. I know who Karl is though.

Micki Marie

I echo, we bought in the building we did specifically because of skyway access

Sondra Mericle

I live in the Firehouse next to RPL and the Skyway is essential to my mobility in the Winter

Jackie Narjes

I live in River Park Lofts. We moved here with the plan to age in place, so the skyway is essential for us in the winter and bad weather. It will also become more important if we aren't able to use stairs someday. We also have at least four people in o... [See More](#)

Kimshi Trav

Is this new proposal actually going to happen this time? Plenty of buildings downtown and lowertown are under renovation without complete closure of the skyway. Plus 3 years for the disabled tenants (as well as those preferring to avoid the elements) i... [See More](#)

Thomas Burke

I live in RPL and I oppose this move by Madison. Lets not let them spin it as a proposal or a request. They already locked the door. They are acting unilaterally to create facts on the ground prior to entering a negotiation. They should comply with the... [See More](#)

Lynne Terry

Shutting down a whole section of skyway is never going to go well.

Greg Peterson

There is no partial solution for this? The whole skyway needs closing for the entire time? No temporary corridor possible? Other buildings have remodeled and retained skyway access before.

Bill Hanley

Folks... the key word here is "proposal". The Skyway Committee is created in the City Ordinance to advise the City Council on the opinions of ALL of the affected stakeholder groups on any such proposals. So this reaction is terrific ... along with emails and the Friday ZOOM. Your voice is already having an impact on me and other Committee members.

Micki Marie

Bill Hanley long and short, the city is evolving to more residential units and fewer commercial buildings. Those of us who relocated downtown have done so, in part, because we live in a state that can be miserable outside 1/3 of the year and we like the convince.

Perkelate St Paul

Minneapolis never closed down their skyways when constructing/remodeling Dayton's. St. Paul can do better!

Lisa June Rojas

The previously mentioned places are not the only places affected by this potential closure. The nearby Creative Space, Buttered Tin, Dreadlocks for Dingoes, to mention a few will be less accessible as well.

Jesse Haug

I'd highly recommend considering a wider perspective on these topics.

This episode of 99% invisible really opened my eyes to factors I hadn't known /considered.

<https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/beneath-the-skyway/>

Beneath the Skyway - 99% Invisible

[99PERCENTINVISIBLE.ORG](https://99percentinvisible.org)

Beneath the Skyway - 99% Invisible

Janice Ostrem

Jesse Haug According to that article, our skyways mostly connect office buildings and shopping centers. Someone please tell me where I can find a shopping center in downtown st. Paul. And it ignores connections to the many residential buildings, hotels... See More

Micki Marie

Jesse Haug the African American security guard at 333 was moving an unshielded white person along two mornings ago. Here's the thing, there are people in this world who are willing to work hard, try to overcome circumstances and make a life. Then ther... See More

Jamie Elizabeth

Leave it the hell alone.

----- DOWNTOWN-----

Aimee Tuskey

I understand a closure of it for safety sake especially if the renovations involve lead based paint and/or asbestos abatement. But, 3 years sounds a bit excessive? There has got to be some alternative solutions that would significantly reduce the amount of time it would be closed. Many people rely on our skyway for getting around safely. Especially folks with disabilities. We all have to keep that in mind and how the public will be affected.

Joshua Jackson

Damn 3 yrs?

James Buscher

That's ridiculous. They wouldn't be working in those specific areas for 3 uninterrupted years. The Pioneer Endicott was converted over a few years of construction, with no skyway closure ever that I can recall.

Ryan Gruber

I see Jim Crockarell is angling for another Downtown Saint Paul Citizen of the Year award...

Mike Fratto

What an absolutely asinine idea. There is not reason that stretch of skyway needs to be closed the long, if ever, during the conversion. A possible exception may be when thy try to convert the second floor into apartments.

Steve Nelson

Madison Equities is so bad for St Paul. Everything they touch is just bad. That said I bet they get this approved. They seem to have their hand on the strings of our elected government officials. Vote them out!

Brent Zustiak

Steve Nelson majority control of property in downtown st paul

Bill Lindeke

close it for good. this is the perfect place to begin removing skyways from St. Paul. they never should have been installed in these historic buildings in the first place.

Janice Ostrem

Bill Lindeke You obviously don't have disabilities which make it unsafe to walk on sidewalks and across streets.

Brent Zustiak

Janice Ostrem those electric scooters are a menace

Lisa June Rojas

Brent Zustiak is not the electric scooters being referenced here. These skyways systems are /could be an absolute asset to this town. What better way to increase commerce without extending the city limits farther and concentrating it for city dwellers. The safety of them should be apparent and with increased use and numbers comes safety. We live in a crazy cold climate making travel on the city streets difficult and dangerous. I pay a premium to have skyway access. These skyways need to be opened up and made accessible everywhere.

Bill Lindeke

Janice Ostrem There are hundreds of cities around the world that are safe and accessible for people with disabilities that focus on improving the sidewalks; meanwhile skyways have a lot of drawbacks.

Lisa Clasen

Bill Lindeke I could partially agree with your statement, but I don't think we can disregard how this impacts the local residents that were sold on the idea that Downtown St. Paul has skyway access.

"Connected to the skyway" is listed as a feature on t... See More

Adrean Clark

Bill Lindeke you need to stop saying things like that. Your opinion is fine but continuing to promote it is hurting Downtown residents who actually depend on the skyway - we can't get a great affordable system like this anywhere else. Enough already.

Adrean Clark

Also Bill, I'm disabled, my husband is disabled and the sidewalks aren't as accessible to us as the skyways. We moved to downtown exactly because of this. So stop using the disabled community as an excuse.

Bill Lindeke

Adrean Clark sidewalks should be much better than they are; that is the problem IMO. If you're interested in learning about why skyways are actually bad for cities -- especially because they are part of a racist system of public and private space -- he... See More

Beneath the Skyway - 99% Invisible

99PERCENTINVISIBLE.ORG

Adrean Clark

For as long as cars dominate the roads they'll never be as accessible.

Bill Lindeke

Adrean Clark Exactly.

Adrean Clark

Bill - I've already read your work. Again, skyways are important for mobility and a lot of disabled people use them. Even cities with no skyways have severe problems with racism. We need to look at the unique structure of downtown as it is and not try to solve problems by destroying things and pitting people against each other in a false zero-sum game.

Adrean Clark

Bill, if you really want to address racism and ableism in downtown then let's talk about income inequality and overpolicing, and let's talk about ways to advocate multi-family affordable housing downtown. Grocery stores, more schools, etc. Lots more to do in that area.

Adrean Clark

We definitely need more diversity on the downtown advisory committees that shape development. Let's work on making sure people with diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to serve in public decision making roles. Add more, not less.

Tommy Sar

Three years is absolutely ridiculous.

Dan Loeffler

Tommy Sar - Agreed - there is no reason that a competent contractor can't schedule a shorter duration that only affects the skyway when construction activity is in progress. I spent 40 years in construction and know that this isn't needed but is conven... See More

Janine Langemo

Really a sad situation for the folks who regularly use this skyway. 3 yrs is a long time.

Dan Loeffler

Janine Langemo - and totally unneeded. It is convenient for the owner and cheaper but disadvantages too many.

Lisa Clasen

At a minimum, they should have to give a three-year notice so people that have come to rely on the skyway access have time to make alternate accommodations (not that they should have to).

Katy Lindblad

Seems like elsewhere, like Galtier/Cray, they managed to accommodate skyway usage while reconfiguring the spaces on the skyway level.

Brigette Dawn

I'm glad to see most people are advocating for the inclusion and safety of our community members with disabilities. This closure would deeply impact an area of our neighborhood where most of the senior and disability housing is.

I would like to see a revised plan where they halt closure of the skyway for construction in the winter months or they create a make shift wind tunnel with additional security and street ambassadors who can keep pathways and curb cuts cleared.

Dan Loeffler

Brigette Dawn - that would seem like a good idea for teens needing a job - street ambassador / guide.

Angela Marie

We need a work around. The don't own the skyway!

Lisa Clasen

I think it might be time to start a CRC Sidewalk Governance Advisory Committee. Our Downtown sidewalks are a menace.

Robb Mitchell

No way. This is just another example of how the city consorts to destroy downtown living and commerce for its residents.

Greg Applekamp

Kind of separate but related topic to downtown living. Can anyone tell me why Ramsey county taxes some of the more expensive condos at super high rates ? I've seen 3 I'd love to buy but no way I paying \$12,000-\$16,000 a year for tax to live in a condo... See More

Adrean Clark

Commenting here although I may mention it in the committee meeting –

My DeafBlind husband and I depend on that route through Park Square Court to reach the Chuck and Don's and other essential stores in that area. 3 years is too long of a time to shut down. The owners need to figure out a shorter timeframe or alternative to closure since they would cut off residents from needed services. This is different from the Degree of Honor building because they were connected to a parking ramp.

Mears Park also needs to be clear on the times they have their skyway entrance open because we've been locked out returning home via skyway in that area before.