

Dear St. Paul City Council Members,

Regarding File #21-310-795, 1708 Selby Rezoning

I am opposed to the rezoning of 1708 Selby Avenue and to the proposed development covering 1708-1716 Selby Avenue (hearing on Wednesday, December 8th, 2021). I have been a resident of St. Paul on Hague Avenue for 23 years. My objections are numerous, including:

1. St. Paul and the Union Park District Council do not follow the Comprehensive Plan for rezoning and development related to multiple policies, including LU-6, LU-8, LU-9, LU-10, LU-15, LU1.3, Objective LU2, LU3,2, LU3,3LU4.1, LU4.4 (as thoroughly researched and noted by our neighbor, Andrew Cleary).
2. There has been very minimal outreach to neighbors and minimal attempts to include community input (Policy LU4.4)
3. Our lot(s) sizes on the north side of Hague are shorter (by 10 ft) than stated on our property taxes - an error in assessment (?) from many years ago, possibly when Selby was widened. THIS WILL NEED TO BE FORMALLY ADDRESSED and RE-ASSESSED by the county before any building plans are submitted (should we be gaining 10 ft from the lots on the south side of Selby?).
4. Selby Avenue is a narrow street, with parking on both sides and no room for bike lanes or pedestrian safety medians (as there are on much wider Marshall and Snelling Avenues).
5. Hague Ave (to the south of Selby) is also a narrow street compared to adjacent streets and has no alley to buffer it from the properties on the south side of Selby)
6. The neighborhood is already very densely developed, with family owned homes, many apartment buildings, several owner occupied condos, rental homes (primarily student rentals for Macalester College and St. Thomas University), and small businesses.
7. Parking is already at capacity in this neighborhood due to the above noted high density that is already established here. The developer plans to include only minimal parking for his renters.
8. The proposed five (5) story building is grossly out of scale with the neighborhood of two (2) or three (3) story buildings (Objective LU2 and Policy LU2.3, LU3.2).
9. The proposed development states to include only "up to four" units out of 38 for low income residents. This does very little to address our housing crises but instead lines the pockets of developers.
10. Pedestrian safety and walkability of the neighborhood (Policy LU-9) will be adversely affected by the proposed street level parking garage and lack of amenities. I would worry about my 17 year old daughter walking by the parking garage night or day. We should be creating safer and more visually pleasing walkable neighborhoods (Policy LU-10, LU1.3), not the opposite.
11. We need to commit to support BIPOC. This developer and his construction crews that we've observed working on Marshall Avenue are not. We should be making a concerted effort to support those developers and construction crews that employ minorities and people of color.

12. We should be thinking outside of the box. Why do we continue to build rental apartment buildings instead of assisting more people with loans and remodeling so they can own homes, so they can build equity and wealth.

13. Environmental issues (Policy LU-8):

- trees and bushes that provide habitat for insects, birds, mammals will be cut down and paved over

- all permeable surfaces will be paved over creating issues with sewer capacity and polluted run-off entering our rivers

- a large building will shadow neighbors that rely on sun for gardens and yards

*****AT THIS TIME in our city/nation/world, we should be doing EVERYTHING we can to ensure that all building is sustainable, that new development is LEED Certified or using green certified building design and materials.

We chose to live in St. Paul because we love the small town feel of it while also enjoying a large city. We love that we can walk and bike to do most of our errands, shopping, eating, and that in doing so, we support local, small businesses. It feels sad that we are allowing wealthy developers from the suburbs to rape our city by tearing down centuries old homes to build architecturally bland apartment buildings that are actually doing very little to support those in need of housing. As we've discovered, most of the apartments along Marshall, Snelling, and now the one proposed on Selby will be at market price and likely be used for student housing or by working professionals with very few actually planned for low income residents.

We support growth and development in our neighborhood, but it should be done in such a way that the neighbors have input, it contributes rather than deters from safety and walkability, it adds to and blends in with the character of the neighborhood, that it attracts more small business to the area, and that it truly helps those in need.

Sincerely,

Jill Guetschow
1721 Hague Ave
St. Paul, MN 55104