

Charles Hathaway
507 Montrose Lane
Saint Paul, MN

September 26, 2017

Dear Councilmember Stark,

As you think about your upcoming vote on the Ford zoning plan, I thought that it might be helpful for you to review the situation. The facts and what they indicate are troubling. I hope that you will take action to resolve the problem.

THE FACTS:

- The Ford Site Task force, which was intended to represent the community, was not consulted beforehand as to overall density, proposed building heights, or amount of green space to be included in the zoning plan. The plan was kept secret from the Task Force until it was unveiled to the public in November of 2016, and the Task Force wasn't asked to meet to discuss it until six months afterward.
- Despite having been urged by some members to do so, the Task Force never had an in-depth discussion or debate over the social, economic, or community impacts of the plan. Pros and cons were never weighed.
- PED never presented any alternate plans for consideration by the Task Force or the community. Only one proposed plan has ever been brought forth by the city, so there has never been an opportunity for people to seriously consider other options.
- The (relatively mild) Task Force recommendations for changes to the plan were ignored, and were not incorporated into the plan
- At the meeting held by the Highland District Council to consider the plan, there was overwhelming and vociferous community opposition. This opposition was ignored, and the city's plan was endorsed by the HDC.
- The Planning Commission saw overwhelming community opposition to the plan, both in letters received and in public testimony. Yet it endorsed the plan unanimously without even a single suggestion for change in response to the community criticism of the plan.
- Thousands and thousands of people from the community continue to oppose the current plan, having expressed this opposition in many ways and in many venues. Estimates are that approximately 70% of the Highland neighbors oppose the plan. Despite all this, PED has made no effort to adjust the plan to alleviate neighborhood concerns.
- One would expect that if the community were actually being heard, the plan would at some point have been adjusted to bring it more in line with neighborhood expectations. Yet after 10 months of the community expressing its deep concerns, the plan remains essentially unchanged from what it was when it was unveiled in November of 2016.

WHAT THE FACTS TELL US:

What I and many others conclude from all of this is that the zoning plan and the process for moving it forward have all along been controlled by people who believe that the community's perspective simply doesn't matter.

It would seem that the people who happen to be part of the Planning Department, or the HDC, or the Planning Commission, believe that their own opinions are important, but others' opinions really are not. So, the thousands of voices of opposition can be dismissed, ignored. Apparently the people expressing opposition simply do not have standing. And their perspective does not deserve to be reflected in the planning for their own neighborhood.

I have been a member of the Ford Site Task Force for ten years, and have followed the process closely. This is how the situation looks to me. But perhaps there's something I'm not seeing or understanding here. Do you see the situation differently?

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM, WHY THIS IS WRONG:

If I'm correct in my assessment, there is a big problem here. Because what it means is that the people controlling the situation have been wholly dismissive of the informed, considered opinion of the people who are closest to the situation and best able to judge the plan's impacts: the Highland neighbors.

These are not selfish whiners. These are exemplary citizens. They are doctors, lawyers, engineers, professors, principals, contractors, journalists, civic leaders, financial analysts, consultants, CEOs and business owners. They are people who provide a large portion of the City's property tax revenue. They are committed to their neighborhoods; they have formed strong bonds with their neighbors through decades of volunteering and community activities. They have invested many hundreds of thousands of dollars in their homes, and in contributions to community programs. They are among the City's most committed citizens in terms of civic engagement. With respect to voting turnout, they are among the City's best. And that's because they care about their community, and their City.

By contrast to the planners, urban-density evangelists, and advocacy groups who are promoting the City's plan, these people actually live here. They feel the effects of the proposed plan in their bones. What happens at the Ford site will have a huge impact on their lives. It will profoundly affect how they live, work, play, commute, and engage with the community. It will affect their families, their neighbors, and their friends. It will change their neighborhoods forever.

These people understand that the City's plan, if adopted, will irrevocably damage their community. To ignore these people and push forward with the plan regardless is simply wrong. It is inconsiderate, insulting, and disrespectful. It is morally wrong.

It is also wrong from a practical perspective; it is foolish. To push forward while ignoring the views of the people closest to the situation is likely to result in poor decision making. The design

result is likely to be impractical and problematic, and overall project failure becomes much more likely.

Finally, it is wrong from a social and political perspective. The thousands of citizens who sense that they are being disrespected and ignored are already angry, and rightfully so. To follow along the same course will fan the flames of this anger. The ill-feeling and resentment will remain simmering in the community, and at some point will boil over in unexpected and unpleasant ways.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE A WISER COURSE:

On Wednesday you will have the opportunity to vote on the zoning plan. You can make the situation worse by choosing to ignore the strong community voices of opposition and vote the plan forward.

Or, you can choose the path of respect, concern, and consideration for the Highland community. The community has made it clear that mere amendments will not suffice – the plan needs a major overhaul. You have the opportunity now to press pause, and set the plan down so it can be re-worked. For everyone's sake, I hope you will.

Sincerely,

Charles Hathaway

From: Connor Schaefer [<mailto:schae477@umn.edu>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 10:29 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4

Subject: Ford Site Support

Hello Councilmember Stark,

I have just recently moved to Ward 4 in Saint Paul (948 Cromwell, to be exact) and am already enjoying my time here. Although I am new to Saint Paul, I have studied and admired the Ford Site zoning and public realm plan from afar in my past two years of graduate school. The public process that City leaders and staff have conducted has been nothing short of remarkable. I fully support the zoning and public realm plan as originally proposed. The balance of park space (with purpose, not just for the sake of open area) with a mix of density and uses is exactly the kind of neighborhood I would want to live in. I have recently read that that you support the original proposal as well. If so, thank you. I urge you to build consensus among the other city council members to build a coalition of support and if that means accepting the proposed amendment, so be it.

Thank you for your leadership and I look forward to being involved in Ward 4 happenings in the future.

Regards,

--

Connor Schaefer

Master of Urban and Regional Planning - University of Minnesota

From: Dennis McGuire [<mailto:Dennis@vaderandlandgraf.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 7:49 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4

Subject: Ford Plan

Russ,

Please delay the zoning vote until environmental studies are completed and a new mayor is elected. Thank you.

Dennis McGuire

2203 Fairmont Ave.

From: Ellen Watters [<mailto:ellenwatters@comcast.net>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 1:30 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4

Subject: I support the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan

Russ Stark,

I spent 10 years on the Ford Site Planning Task Force and urge the City Council to move forward with the zoning and public plan as amended. Critics argue that the process didnt include neighborhood input but I strongly disagree. The Task Force listened intently to community feedback, engaged directly in conversation at numerous meetings and discussed and vetted all the various comments and studies. We also look at models from around the world to distill the principles that are embedded in the draft plan. We supported the draft nearly unanimously. The zoning and public realm plans are well considered, visionary and will ensure that the Ford site lives up to its potential as a transformative asset for the MSP region. For Highland Park, development of the site over the next decade or more will certainly bring change, but that change will bring new energy, vitality, innovation and contribute to a stronger community. Those who fear this change are largely reacting to urb an myths and stereotypes perpetuated by the anti-Ford plan folks. People who choose to rent should be welcomed to Highland Park just as they are in St. Anthony Park where more than 50% of the households rent. The density called for in the plan will create a dynamic community and I can't wait for the Ford site to redevelop!

#SayYesStPaul

Ellen Watters

ellenwatters@comcast.net

923 Bayless Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114

Carol Kist – Called at 11:20 on 9/25 – In opposition to Ford, high density and too many people. She is concerned about the sewer system, and if the run off will go into the River. Read / heard somewhere where 20% will be left for parks, trails and open space but then could go as low as 9% - Keep it at 20%. Also, the ballfields could go on the upper level.

Bridgit Faricy – Called 12:37 9/25 – A bit disappointed in the plan, would like to see more industrial; density too high and too much additional housing for the area. All the work you have done is very admirable, but would really like to see more great jobs vs housing.

From: Ellen Watters [<mailto:ellenwatters@comcast.net>]
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 1:30 PM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3
Subject: I support the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan

Chris Tolbert,

I spent 10 years on the Ford Site Planning Task Force and urge the City Council to move forward with the zoning and public plan as amended. Critics argue that the process didnt include neighborhood input but I strongly disagree. The Task Force listened intently to community feedback, engaged directly in conversation at numerous meetings and discussed and vetted all the various comments and studies. We also look at models from around the world to distill the principles that are embedded in the draft plan. We supported the draft nearly unanimously. The zoning and public realm plans are well considered, visionary and will ensure that the Ford site lives up to its potential as a transformative asset for the MSP region. For Highland Park, development of the site over the next decade or more will certainly bring change, but that change will bring new energy, vitality, innovation and contribute to a stronger community. Those who fear this change are largely reacting to urb an myths and stereotypes perpetuated by the anti-Ford plan folks. People who choose to rent should be welcomed to Highland Park just as they are in St. Anthony Park where more than 50% of the households rent. The density called for in the plan will create a dynamic community and I can't wait for the Ford site to redevelop!

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Ellen Watters

Ellen Watters

ellenwatters@comcast.net

923 Bayless Avenue

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114

From: JNRolland [<mailto:jnrolland@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 2:12 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: FORD PLAN

MR. TOLBERT,

We OPPOSE the current Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan. The City Council should postpone their vote until a better community consensus is reached. Thank you,

James & Carol Rolland

661 Fairview Ave So

St Paul, MN 55116

From: g.mischke@yahoo.com [<mailto:g.mischke@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 2:11 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Ford plan

Hi Chris,

I'm writing to let you know that I am currently opposed to what I have seen thus far regarding the density that is envisioned at the Ford site. I'm also concerned about the future of the toxic waste still buried next to the river. I hope things are well with you.

Gerry Mischke

1923 Saint Clair Ave, #10

Saint Paul

From: Jim Carlen [<mailto:jpcarlen@comcast.net>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 2:44 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Ford Redevelopment Plan Comment

- I am writing to express my opposition to the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan. I believe the City Council needs to postpone their vote until a better community consensus is reached.
- I agree with the major points made in the September 17th Pioneer Press editorial -- what is the rush to vote? Let the next Administration move this forward.
- Specifically I do not believe the plan has adequate green space and view the housing density and potential increase in population as disruptive and destructive to Highland Park's quality of life. The assumption that most or even many of these new occupants will use mass transit is just a hope without any reason to think that their uptake of transit will be different than

mine. Traffic will get much worse in the Village and along Cretin and Cleveland and quality of life will suffer.

- Growing the City's tax base cannot come at the expense of its current citizens. Ideologically driven development is inappropriate. Postpone the vote.

Jim Carlen

601 Montcalm Place

St. Paul. MN. 55116

Joe Maguire called 9/25 urging CM Tolbert to rethink the Ford plan.

Conor O'Phelan – Called 9/25 and said overall he thinks Ford Plan is great and good for St Paul although he does have questions regarding how the sporting fields are being handled and wants zoning in place for the fields.

Mary Hess – Left VM 9/26 at 5:40 AM – Opposed Ford plan and hopes CM Tolbert will rethink the plan by reducing the amount of density and increasing the amount of green space. This is an opportunity not to be missed. Prefers CM Tolbert rethink the plan.

AND

From: Mary Hess [<mailto:mhess.star@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 5:39 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Oppose the Ford Plan

Dear Chris,

I would like to tell you that I oppose the Ford Plan, specifically the building brights and the relative sparsity of green space. Please delay the vote and rethink the development. As a nearby resident, I'm also very concerned about the traffic that will ensue.

Please rethink this plan! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Hess

From: James Wilkinson [<mailto:jewilkinsoniii@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 4:44 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Ford site

Mr. Tolbert:

Please support higher density development in this area. I think that the decision to reduce height is "short-sighted" given that what we will do in the next decade will have effect in a century.

And while I don't see Mr. Thao's delay idea as deserving support, I do think that at least 10% affordable housing, including a good # highly subsidized units is needed. We ought to have something more ambitious than the development schemes favoring bog office and upscale housing developments in the City.

The 5-80 concept of designing the area as friendly for and usable by people from ages 5 to 80 is a good vision.

While denser development on Snelling in years to come may inconvenience me at times, I will support that too.

Jay Wilkinson

1388 Goodrich

55105

From: Kate Hebel [<mailto:kate@newedition-inc.com>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 7:58 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3; #CI-StPaul_Ward1; #CI-StPaul_Ward2; #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_Ward5; #CI-StPaul_Ward7; #CI-StPaul_Ward6

Subject: Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Plan

As a resident of Macalester Groveland Highland Park's shopping district is one I frequent often. I do my banking, grocery shopping, pick up dog food and bird seed, meet friends for dining, peruse books, and just overall support the shops. Therefore my interest is personal in the proposed plans for the Ford plant development. I have been watching the process: I've attended meetings; watched council meetings; listened to testimony; read the newspaper articles.

I fail to comprehend how the three main arteries (Ford/Cretin/Cleveland) are going to be able to handle the additional traffic of 4800-8000 residents, AND, that's not including the employees of the businesses planned. The Ford plant employed 2,100 employees at it's peak; that's about 700 employees/cars per shift. The Master Plan is proposing 2400-4000 dwelling units.

I've read the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan; I've even watched the video of the Ford Site Transportation Study. I get that the study and the plan suggest extending existing streets through the site, but for those folks who need to go north to I-94, they'll be using Cretin and/or Cleveland.

Every report generated from the City, or it's consultants, consistently push the fact that the area will have strong pedestrian/bicycle connections throughout the development to encourage more people to walk and bike instead of driving. And of course the A-line is always available. The inference of course is the fact that most people will walk, bicycle or use mass transit. That certainly sounds "ideal", but it's nothing but a hypothesis. It's not based on fact; it's "pie in the sky".

If I was living there I wouldn't be taking mass transit to work since my clients are in suburbs. I continually hear that this will be a great retirement area when the local baby-boomers want to downsize. Well, I'm there, but I wouldn't be riding a bike or walking because both knees need to be replaced. And many seniors have similar joint issues. They're not going to take mass transit to a doctor's appointment when it's inconvenient and takes twice as long to get there.

And please don't dismiss the weather in Minnesota; it's inclement for at least 7 months of the year. No senior is going to take their chance on the ice!

If traffic becomes a bigger hassle than it is presently, folks from outside the immediate Highland area just won't bother. It's not just the locals in the Village that support Highland businesses. During the last year, at times it's been easier for me to get to the Byerly's in Eagan rather than deal with the construction between my home and Lund's. And how do the businesses fare then, when they lose a substantial number of their customers? The City should do everything in it's power to support the local businesses that have created the flavor and character of the neighborhood shopping district.

But don't underestimate the breaking point for drivers when it comes to hassles and traffic.

Kate Hebel

1301 Fairmount Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55105

From: Sara Homstad [<mailto:sara.homstad@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 10:36 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Ford Site Zoning and Realm Master Plan

Dear Council Member Tolbert,

I am writing to express my opposition to the current Ford Site Zoning and Realm Master Plan. I believe the City Council needs to postpone their decision until a better community consensus is reached.

As the resident of a street which will likely see major increases in traffic due to the development of the Ford Site, I have serious concerns about the current density being planned for the Ford Site and the effects the increased volume of traffic will have on the surrounding neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Sara Homstad

481 Mount Curve Blvd.

Saint Paul, MN 55116

From: Eric Amann [<mailto:ericamann7@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2017 11:33 PM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Postpone the Ford Site vote

Dear Councilmember Tolbert,

As a resident of Ward 3 I strongly oppose the current Ford Site plan and urge you to reconsider your vote.

It is short sighted and completely unacceptable that there are NO RECREATIONAL SPORTS FIELDS for soccer, baseball, etc. included in this plan. The city needs to be owning and securing this land for recreational fields. Being "supportive of efforts by private groups to secure space on-site for future recreation fields" as your website suggests, is a meager cop out. There is no way a non-profit sports club and any party interested in recreational fields will outbid a developer for land.

Putting RECREATIONAL SPORTS FIELDS on the Ford site accomplishes two important things: it lowers the extreme density of the current plan and it places recreational fields right where the large, densely compacted population will be able to use them. Having kids ride their bikes to sports practice cuts down on car traffic and provides a great quality of life that makes people want to live in Highland Park.

A large, open spot of urban land like the Ford site is a historic, once in a 100 year opportunity to do great things that you can't always do. Yet this opportunity is being squandered by rushing to cram it full of development. You can always build higher density residential housing most anywhere. But converting highly dense, developed land back to recreational use is nearly impossible. This is why the city needs to recognize this historic opportunity and include recreational sports fields in the plan.

This is so historic and so important to me, that if you vote for this current plan, I will unfortunately never vote for you for any office you seek.

Respectfully,

Eric Amann

From: Kluka001 [<mailto:kluka001@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 2:38 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: tax increment financing ford plant site

Dear Councilman Tolbert:

What can you tell me about tax increment financing for the Ford Plant site? Is there a plan? or a report? I have heard comments that the Ford site plan documents are mum about the use of tax increment financing although there are plans to use tax increment financial tools to install various improvements at the site. I used the "find" feature on my computer to search the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm

Master Plan document without success. Some of my neighbors have mentioned that they oppose the current plan because of tax increment financing.

I was on the St. Paul Planning Commission in the early 1970's when Frank Marzitelli promised that TIF would be used sparingly. Since that time the city has used TIF with gusto. So, what's up with TIF and the Ford Plant site?

sincerely

Bob Klukas

From: thaas26@comcast.net [<mailto:thaas26@comcast.net>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 5:30 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3; #CI-StPaul_Ward1; #CI-StPaul_Ward2; #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_Ward5; #CI-StPaul_Ward6; #CI-StPaul_Ward7

Subject: Please delay the Ford development vote

Mr. Tolbert,

Please delay the Ford development vote. The major newspapers report that the current plans should not be voted on now. Every voter I talk to says it should be delayed.

Until recently most of St Paul trusted that our interests would be considered in the Ford Development. Now we can see that the plan is 5-10 stories, 10,000 people and destroying lives of good citizens. I have never in my life seen a city issue upset so many people.

Please delay the Ford development vote.

Thank you!

From: Peter Polga [<mailto:polgapeter@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 6:50 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: I oppose the current Ford Plan

I respectfully request that the vote on the current Ford Plan be delayed. The focus should be on a development that fosters community and quality of life. The mayor and council have spoken to making the development something special. High density is not special. It is being done everywhere. The research has been clear that the design of a living environment can foster community, health and improved quality of life. None of the elements that research has shown to be effective are included in this plan. We all want affordable housing available for everyone in our community. As a city we can do better to create a space that fosters high quality of life for everyone.

From: Peter Tiffin [<mailto:tiffinpeter@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 6:54 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3
Subject: Support for high density development at Ford Site

Representative Tolbert,

I am writing to let you know that I support the Ford Plan.-- I think our city needs higher density housing and development, I think the site and plant hold promise for a vibrant and attractive neighborhood that will benefit Ward 3 and the entire city.

Sincerely,

Peter Tiffin

1798 Princeton Ave
St. Paul, MN 55105

From: hathaway@iphouse.com [<mailto:hathaway@iphouse.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 9:11 AM
To: Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul)
Cc: #CI-StPaul_Ward3
Subject: The morality of your Ford site vote

Dear Chris -

Possibly you've not thought of it in those terms, but how to plan for the Ford site is really a moral issue. Please see attached.

Thanks,

Chico Hathaway

ATTACHMENT:

Charles Hathaway

507 Montrose Lane

Saint Paul, MN

September 26, 2017

Dear Councilmember Tolbert,

As you think about your upcoming vote on the Ford zoning plan, I thought that it might be helpful for you to review the situation. The facts and what they indicate are troubling. I hope that you will take action to resolve the problem.

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- Despite having been urged by some members to do so, the Task Force never had an in-depth discussion or debate over the social, economic, or community impacts of the plan. Pros and cons were never weighed.
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- Thousands and thousands of people from the community continue to oppose the current plan, having expressed this opposition in many ways and in many venues. Estimates are that approximately 70% of the Highland neighbors oppose the plan. Despite all this, PED has made no effort to adjust the plan to alleviate neighborhood concerns.
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It would seem that the people who happen to be part of the Planning Department, or the HDC, or the Planning Commission, believe that their own opinions are important, but others' opinions really are not. So, the thousands of voices of opposition can be dismissed, ignored. Apparently the people expressing opposition simply do not have standing. And their perspective does not deserve to be reflected in the planning for their own neighborhood.

I have been a member of the Ford Site Task Force for ten years, and have followed the process closely. This is how the situation looks to me. But perhaps there's something I'm not seeing or understanding here. Do you see the situation differently?

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It is also wrong from a practical perspective; it is foolish. To push forward while ignoring the views of the people closest to the situation is likely to result in poor decision making. The design result is likely to be impractical and problematic, and overall project failure becomes much more likely.

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Or, you can choose the path of respect, concern, and consideration for the Highland community. The community has made it clear that mere amendments will not suffice – the plan needs a major overhaul. You have the opportunity now to press pause, and set the plan down so it can be re-worked. For everyone's sake, I hope you will.

Sincerely,

Charles Hathaway

From: Ellen Baudler [<mailto:ellenb@arcmn.org>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 8:11 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward1; #CI-StPaul_Ward2; #CI-StPaul_Ward3; #CI-StPaul_Ward3; #CI-StPaul_Ward4; #CI-StPaul_Ward5; #CI-StPaul_Ward6; #CI-StPaul_Ward7

Subject: The Arc Minnesota's request regarding the Ford Plant site

Council Members,

Attached please find the Arc Minnesota's request regarding the Ford Plant site. Thank you for your attention to this matter

Ellen Baudler

Director of Housing Access

The Arc of Minnesota

800 Transfer Road Suite 7a

St. Paul, MN 55114

ATTACHMENT:



The Arc Minnesota

800 Transfer Road, Suite 7A
Saint Paul, MN 55114-1414

T 651-523-0823 1-800-582-5256

F 651-523-0829

www.arcmn.org

Achieve with us.

September 25, 2017

Dear St. Paul City Councilmembers and City Staff:

My name is Ellen Baudler, and I am the Director of Housing Access for The Arc Minnesota. Since 2009, The Arc Minnesota has had a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to assist people with disabilities in finding and moving to new, independent housing-a place of their own. We have assisted more than 1,900 people with disabilities since the beginning of the grant.

It is with the people we serve in mind that I write to you regarding the Ford Plant site.

- The Ford Plant site plan does not provide housing that would be affordable for the people with disabilities we serve.
The proposed housing for the Ford Plant site includes some housing affordable to persons making 50% and 60% of the area median income (AMI). Housing at this level of affordability is out of reach for the majority of people with disabilities. The plan should include housing affordable to persons at 30% of the area median income.
- The people with disabilities that The Arc Minnesota assists find it extremely difficult to find housing they can afford.
The dramatic changes in the metro housing market include significant rent increases and a declining vacancy rate. This has created a scarcity of housing affordable to extremely low income renters, such as those we assist.
- People with disabilities, like all other Minnesotans, need and deserve safe and affordable housing so that they can live stable lives and be included in their communities.

The City defends the absence of any Ford Plant site housing affordable at 30% of the AMI, reasoning that Ward 3 is home to 700 publicly-assisted low income and public housing rental units, of which approximately 500 are affordable to households at or below 30% of AMI. (See staff memo, Affordable Housing Strategy: Ford Site Planning, p. 2.)

While accurate, almost all of the subsidized affordable housing in Ward 3 is along West 7th Street. The only subsidized housing in the Highland Park area is a senior high rise apartment building. (See Housing Justice Center letter dated September 20, 2017.)

Housing for low income and people with disabilities should be scattered within neighborhoods and communities, and should reflect the natural proportion of people with disabilities in the general population. The Highland Park neighborhood is pedestrian- friendly, has easy access to necessary commercial enterprises, is near mass transit, and has community centers -- all necessary for people with disabilities to be able to live independently and be included in their community.

We would hope that people with disabilities are welcomed in Highland Park. Public policies, including the Ford Plant site plan that the St. Paul City Council is considering, should provide affordable, independent housing options for all Minnesotans, including people with disabilities.

The Arc Minnesota asks that you add to the Ford Site plan 10% of units affordable at 30% of AMI.

Yours truly,

Ellen J. Baudler
Director of Housing Access
The Arc Minnesota
800 Transfer Rd.
Suite 7A
St. Paul, MN 55114
651-604-8044
ellenb@arcmn.org

From: Manny C. [<mailto:mannyone1961@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 8:54 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward3

Subject: Ford Plant Site

Council Member Tolbert,

Vote to Postpone the final decision on the Ford Site Zoning. Additional studies need to be performed in order to arrive at a solution that addressed the concerns of the Highland Park neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Manuel Castillo

1070 Jefferson Ave

St Paul

From: Tim Morehead [<mailto:tmorehead1@q.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 9:02 AM

To: Kelley, Pattie (CI-StPaul)

Subject: Ford Plan Comments for the Open Meeting 9-26-17

Pattie,

Can I again ask for your assistance to forward my comments to the city council for today's meeting on the Ford Site development. I did try to submit my comments online, but I am not sure I completed the process correctly.

Again, thank you for your help and contact me should you have a question.

Sincerely,

Tim Morehead

1932 Bayard Ave.

Saint Paul, MN 55116

ATTACHMENT:

To the Saint Paul City Council:

SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS ON THE FORD SITE PLAN

9-26-17

This document contains an update to my viewpoint of the Ford Site Development Plan since the Saint Paul Council meeting on 09-20-17. I have also attached to this document my original comments that delivered at the 09-20-17 meeting.

I want to again express my sincere thanks to everyone that have put efforts into developing this Ford Site Plan to date. I also want to thank everyone that attended the 09-20-17 meeting to deliver their opinions and suggestions to the city council. This is what the United States is all about.

I want to share my viewpoint on what I have observed currently and have observed for quite some time.

- Many people have valid concerns and data to support their concerns and ideas on many sides of this planning issue. I respect listening to all these concerns and ideas.
- Although the planning for this site has been underway for several years, there is a significant group of people who feel their voices have not been heard. These people have tried to work within the system to put forth opinions on developing the Ford Plan, but were either not heard or not represented appropriately. I have watched this group of people get increasingly frustrated to the point they have organized into a coalition to stop the current plan and want it revised to meet at least some of their concerns. My observation is that the majority of this group just wants to decrease the total number of households on the Ford site to a more reasonable number. They believe generally that some number of concentrated houses is very appropriate for this site.
- There is a significant group of people that believe the current plan is the best way to proceed and are organized behind the “yes” banner.
- So what do we have? One large group supporting the current Ford Plan and another large group opposed to the current Ford Development Plan. Should the city council vote to proceed with the Ford Plan in its current form, it will produce a win/lose situation with many people becoming even more frustrated.
- I have respectfully listened to many viewpoints on this issue from all sides. As I delivered in my presentation of the city council on 09-20-17, I STRONGLY believe that there is room for compromise to produce more of a win/win instead of a win/lose.

Let me share what I have observed in other situations similar to this dilemma. Many, many years ago the construction of the interstate 35E was held up in court for 15 years because a group of people did not feel they were included in the plan. In the end, a compromise was negotiated to solve that problem. I have also observed other multi-housing developments that have not withstood the test of time for good city growth. I grew up across the street from one of those developments.

What I fear happening if the current Ford Plan is approved by the city council in its current form (win/lose), is that some of the losing side will get even more frustrated and pursue a legal option in court. This would be devastating to this plan, the city and the citizenry in general. If we don't learn from history and we are destined to repeat it. Let's try to work together and find a good compromise. I proposed this solution at the 09-20-17 meeting and I firmly believe this is the way to proceed. We need to find some way to come together, especially in the current social environment we are living.

Sincerely,

Tim Morehead

1932 Bayard Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55116

tmorehead1@g.com

AND

To the Saint Paul City Council:

SAINT PAUL CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS ON THE FORD SITE PLAN

9-20-17

I want to express my sincere thanks to all the people that have put the effort into the research and develop planning for the Ford site to this point.

I have been attending meetings and reviewing documents on the Ford project to educate myself and understand the details.

I have determined that there are basically six groups with interests in this plan:

- The Ford Motor Company
- The future developer of the Ford site
- The City of Saint Paul
- The Railroad Property
- Local Highland Park Residents opposed to the Current Ford Plan in its current form
- Local Highland Park Residents supporting the Current Ford Plan in its current form

There are obviously other people with interests in this Ford site development, but these are the major groups in my opinion.

Let me briefly give you my viewpoint on each of these groups in relationship to the Ford site development.

The Ford Motor Company could sell their land for a higher price to a developer building the highest number of housing units on that land. The more units the more valuable the land.

A future developer would make more money by building as many housing units as possible. The more units the more valuable the land and profit from a business standpoint.

The City of Saint Paul would realize more tax revenue from more housing units.

The railroad company just wants to maximize the value of their land for sale. I don't see the railroad company interested in developing their land into park space.

Residents opposed to the existing Ford plan see too many housing units squeezed into that property, maximum of 4000, for the continued quality of the existing Highland community from a land use and traffic congestion standpoints. This group is extremely worried about traffic in the Highland area and the neighborhood losing its special character.

Residents supporting the existing Ford plan want to see a future looking land use for changing living styles which include: lower priced housing and rents, housing for elderly that want to stay in Highland, less car usage, more dense living with access to amenities, etc.

MY RECOMMENDATION:

I believe there is a middle ground here for compromise to at least make most people somewhat happy.

- Cap the maximum house units at 2000. The Ford Motor Company, the new developer, the City of St. Paul would still get a reasonable value from the property, just not the maximum value. The residents supporting the plan would get a community that is planned for the future, but not to the maximum buildout. The residents opposing the plan would see a limit to the development which could curb their concerns for too many people in that area with less traffic concerns.
- Eliminate the possibility of a new developer from buying out of the 9% park space requirement. This has been done in the past and we can't afford for that option to be used in this site.
- Try to find some multiuse park space somewhere in the plan for the many people that will eventually live there to utilize. Even New York City has its central park.

I am proposing a win/win, not a win/lose or a lose/lose. There is room for compromise. We need to start compromising more in our society.

I am available to discuss this in more detail at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Tim Morehead

1932 Bayard Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55116

tmorehead1@q.com

From: Rolf Nordstrom [<mailto:rolfnordstrom1@gmail.com>]

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2017 9:32 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4

Subject: STRONGLY SUPPORT your proposed "GreenToGo" initiative!

Hello Russ,

First, a huge thank you for your service in general. People don't say that enough to elected officials and what you do is so important (and often thankless). So thanks! Second, I was thrilled to read about your GreenToGo proposal. There are so many market alternatives now that it's time to make packaging that is in line with a more circular economy the norm.

Finally, I want to express my support for the Ford Plan. I realize it's caused quite a stir, but using that urban land to its fullest potential is a once-in-several-generations opportunity. Thanks for your leadership!

Cheers,

Rolf

Rolf Nordstrom
1706 Dayon Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104

Please reconsider the Ford plan as it is now, Highland Park is already very congested and will only worsen with the proposed ford plan. People who live here already pay high taxes to live here and if the city doesn't accommodate us, we will vote with our feet.

Greetings,

A couple of softball comments on the pending opportunities and issues.

Next Public Meeting: It was my understanding the next public meeting was We/Sep 20th. My assumption was it probably would be held at the local library. Regardless of if the next meeting is on or off, when it occurs, please have the insight into working with St. Kate's O'Shaunassy Auditorium for the meeting. The stakes are high and citizens will be out in force. Having appropriate space, regardless of cost, will remove a key barrier related to those wishing to participate.

As for my personal input. My hope is the city, developers and citizens are able to upgrade the little league park. Upgrade may be in the current location or perhaps another location. Upgrade would include perhaps turf, better seating, better parking, more walk around space hill seating, lights, dugouts, restroom facilities, etc. This from someone with absolutely no vested interest other than to have an area available for the next several generations.

Regards,

Lawrence A. Ellis
2038 Ford Parkway #230
St. Paul, MN 55116
651-332-1641 / ellis.lae@mac.com

From: katherine montague [<mailto:khmontague@msn.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 11:12 AM
To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4
Subject: I oppose the Ford Plan

Hello,

I oppose the current plan for the Ford site. I live in Mac Groveland and near Cretin Avenue. My major concern is the high density housing impacting traffic and our roads through our neighborhood. Cretin and Cleveland Avenue's are already heavy traffic arteries.

My vision for the Ford site is 100% green space and public park with a neighborhood recreation center for St. Paul families and visitors to enjoy.

Thank you,
Kate Montague

From: Mark Hanson [<mailto:markallanhanson@outlook.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 11:43 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4

Subject: Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan

Dear Russ,

I oppose the current Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan.

We need to vote no on the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan for; economic, environmental and social reasons.

Citizens should be more mindful and thoughtful for our future:

It is hard to emphasize how important it is to be more mindful and thoughtful about the strengths Minnesota and the twin cities have and how we can use them to manage both our short and long term opportunities and challenges.

Within this, we need to be more mindful of and grateful for the quality of life we have here today and that we need to work to improve this.

Simple questions to ask ourselves:

“What would the ideal balance of environment, economic and social living conditions be like in an ideal world?” And “what would be realistic for the people who live, work and play in this world?”

An ideal place may be within an area that has a healthy environment/ecology, yes or no? With a rich, diverse ecology that naturally supports human, plant, animal etc. populations? An ideal place may have a lower population density that allows society to more easily share natural resources to support its citizens’ needs, yes or no? An ideal place may have strong educational system that provide its citizens the opportunity to expand their personal growth and contribute to important causes through work, volunteer, entertainment, etc. yes or no?

The citizens of this ideal place would be mindful of their limitations, of economic limitations and the environments limitations, yes or no? The citizens would be aware of how regional, national and global economics, social and environment conditions may pressure them, yes or no?

The leaders and citizens of the ideal place would have to make tough decision to protect all three aspects that are mutually dependent on each other, yes or no; the environment, economics and social health?

Take a look around:

If you were to look around the state, upper Midwest region or the USA. And if you were to look at other countries and cities around the world, what place do you think is more closely aligned with you answers for having the ideal balance of environment, economics and social health?

I would argue that Minnesota and the twin cities quality of life is the face of this ideal place, which is realistic, and is here today. For Minnesota and the twin cities, it is never going to be easier to plan and make adjustments for improving our quality of life, than it is today. It will only grow more challenging and more difficult in the future.

Minnesota and the twin cities is already regionally and internationally known for its stewardship of its lakes, rivers, forests, plains, geology etc. This includes its parks and recreations. For its leading high tech and low tech industries which ship products around the world, as well as help maintain the region's needs. It is well known for its leading health organization in products and services it provides. And it is known for its pacing and quality of life. That one can catch their breath here, that they are not overwhelmed by its pacing.

Reasons for challenges:

Through education - the awareness it brings and in listening to experts from around the world, one will learn that fewer people will be needed in the workforce across every industry to manage, produce products, for maintenance, transportation etc. Advances in automation will be a leading cause of this.

That there are limitations to what our environment and ecology can sustain.

The effect that human population density has on the environment and changes within our region and the world's ecology, that we are witnessing today, will contribute to fewer resources required to meet peoples' needs.

There are opportunities:

Some challenges should be good news, for example, because people were not meant to spend 5 days a week, 8 hours a day in factories making products, delivering products, cleaning, programming, researching etc. (or working 6 days a week as they do in Asian countries).

We need to communicate truths and plan for this:

Our citizen residence, citizen city council members, citizen state and country representatives need to have a conversation on what citizens can expect if we continue to grow the population density into the future. We need to have a conversation on what economies and services are sustainable and what are not.

What are the truths?

It is inevitable, there will be fewer resources available to meet the needs of people, of families.

People, families will have to accept less personal space to live in.

People, families will have to accept less water, food, clothing, etc. to meet their needs.

There will be fewer opportunities for people to contribute as they do today, to fulfill personal growth needs which will affect everyone, as a society.

It will be inevitable that there will be increasing hardships, confrontations among citizens and violence as population density rise and resources diminish.

We need to be more mindful and thoughtful today:

We have three city center within 5-8 minutes of the Ford sites rezoning plan, that already have the infrastructure that can absorb the industrial size office-complex that is planned. They are the downtown Saint Paul city center, the downtown Minneapolis city center and the city centers along the highway 494 strip.

Most of our citizens in the twin cities will experience fewer job opportunities in the future, that most will experience shorter work weeks with lower pay. That most of us will have lower incomes and we need to plan for this.

We need to make sure we have quality affordable housing - that can be maintained with minimal resources in the future.

We need to recognize that our environment/ecology and city won't be able to support a higher population density. That the only solution is to lower the population density across urban, suburban and rural areas. That a sustainable society depends the ability of the local environment/ecology to support the region, and within this a healthy society that can also contribute to supporting it.

We need to recognize that this conversation needs to start today.

Summary:

We should be grateful for the efforts many studied people have contributed to our: environment/ecology, education, high tech, low tech, agriculture, health care, etc. That they made/make a great effort and energy with personal sacrifice.

That today, our citizen residents, citizen council members, state citizen leaders need to work together across city lines and county lines etc. and make the effect to create a better plan.

That we need to vote No on the Ford Site Zoning and Public Realm Master Plan

Kind regards,
Mark

From: bill wolfson [<mailto:wolfson@rmi.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 12:01 PM
To: Clapp-Smith, Merritt (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Galatz, Eric; Fremajane and Blair Wolfson
Subject: Please include this in the public comment for the Ford Master Plan and Rezoning

Dear Merrit,

Please enter this as summary of the conversations and meetings we have had over the years concerning the Ford Plant Master Plan in the record for the proposed adoption of the Master Plan and rezoning to accommodate the plan.

We have been consistently concerned with the potential effects of the intense density, traffic, zoning changes and impact this proposal will have on the community of Highland. A community that is a true gem within the entire metro if not the Midwest. A community that my family settled in over 100 years ago. Although the density and plan proposed will may be good for us as real estate owners, we are also concerned for the community and the intense change that could come if your plan comes to full fruition. I personally am a commercial real estate broker and have seen many communities stripped of their core character and values in exchange for high rises, higher tax bases and high demographics. I hope that this will not be the case here, but the proposed Master Plan clearly indicates otherwise. My concern is that all of our comments and concerns have not been accounted for in the master plan or in the staff presentation to the Planning Commission. Our comments have instead been dismissed as short sighted. Planning Staff has repeatedly said this master plan and rezoning is good for us as owners without any understanding or consideration for the our goal, values, business model or financial modeling to support this.

In addition, I have expressed our concern over the image that overlays buildings and streets on our private property and disregards current property status and inherently undermines our ability to operate in our current capacity. I have expressed that this is inherently adversarial. We are especially concerned about the impact of the long term vision on the continued maintenance and improvement of the existing Highland Village Shopping Center. The Center is a very important asset to the community, and one that is not going to transform overnight into the higher density vision reflected in the Master Plan. Because we have the right to maintain the Center as it is, and the Center is highly successful as it is, the Center is not going to go away anytime soon. The Master Plan and proposed rezoning will impede incremental improvements and growth that would otherwise happen as the market demands.

We do support change and growth, but our experience tells us that we need to leave more of this to the organic market forces that have proven to be a better judge of what a community needs than hypothetical long range planning.

Please confirm receipt and ensure me that the Planning Commission and City Council will consider this and our desire to function as we are currently entitled until we deem in appropriate to do otherwise.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Bill Wolfson on behalf of Highland Village Center 2128 Ford Parkway St. Paul, MN

From: Tom Vellenga [<mailto:tvellenga@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2017 10:15 PM
To: Stark, Russ (CI-StPaul); #CI-StPaul_Ward4
Subject: Ford Development

Russ,

Count me among your constituents who favor the Ford plan. I value the economic potential it holds for our community and the entire city. I would welcome higher density.

Thanks,

Tom

From: Kathryn McGuire [<mailto:mcguire.kathy56@gmail.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 8:50 AM

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

Subject: Please Read Today!

Dear Councilmember Brendmoen,

Today, you and your colleagues will make a decision on the Ford plan that will impact thousands of people for generations. I hope that you will take a few moments to consider my thoughts.

You and I do not know each other, and I regret that. I believe that if we had the opportunity to have some conversations, we would discover that we have much in common and share many of the same visions for the future of our city.

Somehow life has gone by quickly, and I now find myself in the older generation. Because of my age, it is true that the proposed development in Highland may not impact me personally, but it will impact this community and the entire City of Saint Paul for many generations. But like those who lived here before us, we must provide for the present and the future of our city. This becomes increasingly more difficult as our society becomes increasingly more complex.

The economic fabric and demographic character of our entire country are shifting dramatically. The brick and mortar retail segment that we know is being replaced rapidly by e-commerce business. While companies like Amazon have the potential to create thousands of jobs, they will simultaneously eliminate thousands of retail employment opportunities in our cities. Increases in automation have the potential to eliminate even more jobs. This is a challenge that lies in our future. One for which we should be preparing.

Data analysis from the US Census Bureau indicate that nationally, the population is shifting back to the sunbelt. Locally, the shift is moving back to the suburbs where millennials are finding affordable single family homes, strong schools, and lower taxes. Given these changes in demographics and retail/commerce, I fear that the proposal for the Ford property is already out of sink with these trends. It may be more prudent for Saint Paul to pursue a variety of businesses to employ people in living wage jobs that will stand the test of time.

I understand many of the benefits of high density development, and I think that it is possible to carefully integrate this into our existing communities. However, this must be done carefully in order to preserve what generations have worked to create throughout our city.

Councilmember Brendmoen, please make your decision carefully, recognize the importance of your decision, and please give every consideration to delaying the vote on the Ford plan. Please read the public comments and recognize that the overwhelming majority of our community is opposed to the current plan. Please give us the time to engage in genuine discussion because up to now, we have only had the opportunity to react to a plan that the city has determined is best. Please delay the vote, engage the community, and develop a plan that will stand the test of time for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Kathy McGuire