

Dear Dai,

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 rises 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 effort to create a better plan.

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

Kind regards,
Mark Hanson

Dear Mr Thao

I was at the last city council meeting with my husband standing by the door with a Stop Ford sign. It was the first meeting that we have come to and we are shocked and stunned that an idea this bad has been able to go as far as it has. We were impressed with Councilwoman Jane Prince and her suggestion that toxins could most definitely be released into the Mississippi River through the ground water and tributaries to the river, because of this poorly thought out plan. The Mississippi River is a national flyway for millions of migrating birds as well. Please please please do not approve of this uncreative and most destructive plan to one of the gems of this city.

The most impressive audience speaker to us was the gentleman in the beginning who defined himself as the working poor who *begged* the council and City to do better. He said that he was hard working and had invested in his home - now to have his neighborhood totally destroyed by this plan. I was also very very impressed with the population statistics of almost zero growth in Saint Paul by Kathy McGuire (we agree completely) and also by the self described pregnant "millennial" and Mount Curve property owner

who is shocked by the Manhattan population density, traffic congestion and problems that are a certainty. Now that she and her husband just bought a home in Saint Paul she hoped the council would hear from millennials who are completely in opposition to this terrible plan.

We have lived in Saint Paul for 25 years and given time, talent and treasure to the city in the form of donations, volunteering, and paying truly magnificent taxes (which I read are going up beyond belief). We think that this plan should be STOPPED and that the council realize that the people who will be most affected by this plan do not want it. If you drive through Mac Groveland and Highland Park, there are almost 100 signs AGAINST to possibly 1 or 2 signs for the plan. I would be curious to know if the city council lives in our neighborhoods affected by this stupid proposal- maybe they would finally understand that we have invested with our hard work into our homes, and now we do not want everything we hoped and dreamed for changed for the worse.

I beg you to give this more time and thought and delay the vote on this plan. It seems to lack even the most basic of reasonable thought processes. You have so many people who live in the neighborhoods of Mac Groveland and Highland that are opposed to this. The car congestion on MRB, Cretin, Ford Avenues are *already* at a volume ripe for implosion. How does one really think that adding more cars and a few bikes is smart planning ? (please, no one will be biking more often other than in the utopian power point presentation provided to us last night.)

Thank you for your time, your hard work, and I trust, also for your integrity and level head in delaying the vote on this poor concept of a plan. Saint Paul needs better and deserves better. How about something beautiful like Centennial Lakes in Edina- we in Saint Paul deserve something lovely like that too.

Sincerely and with great respect,

Connie Scanlon
1XX Mississippi River Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Councilmember Thao:

As you're aware, how to plan for the Ford site is a moral issue. Please see attached.

Thanks,
Charles Hathaway

Charles Hathaway
507 Montrose Lane
Saint Paul, MN

September 26, 2017

Dear Councilmember Thao ,

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

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
13XX Fairmount Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
651.690.3441

Dai Thao,

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 didn't 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 urban 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
9XX Bayless Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114

Councilmember Thao,

I am writing to express my opposition to the zoning change at the Ford site AND the Public Realm Master Plan Draft (5-4-2017). My primary concern is the complete ELIMINATION of a community that will occur if the rezoning and current Ford site plan is approved.

The current plan does not guarantee that green space will be dedicated to replacing the Ford Fields, which were essentially gifted to the Highland Little League program by Ford Motor Company. Six hundred boys play on the fields from April through October, with daily use starting at 3pm on weeknights until 10 PM, and weekend use from 8 AM-9 PM during the peak summer schedule. The Highland Little League Community is essential to what makes this community work. Where would all those kids play? Honestly, if the fields do not exist, their families will make an exodus to the suburbs. A community that doesn't have an essential opportunity for kids to play baseball is a blemish on that community. Highland Park would suffer greatly without such an important piece of it.

The league is made up of board members, coaches, and parents who all volunteer their time to make the program work. Hundreds of hours of time are dedicated to creating athletic and character-building opportunities that baseball and softball players will use far beyond their time on the field. Contrast this to the paid city employees who came up with this ridiculous plan and IGNORED all these kids and their families. They ignored the kids.

Many, many of those who oppose this plan are not only concerned with over development of a small parcel of land, but ultimately, they are concerned with what their children, their children's friends, and the entire community will do with a loss of an American essential like baseball.

Please vote NO to rezoning and and the Public Realm Master Plan Draft (5-4-2017).

Theresa Haider
6XX Sumner Street
St. Paul, MN 55116
Theresa Haider

Vote No on the City's (vs the people) Ford Site Plan

Thank you,

Greg Nayman
16XX Hillcrest Ave
St. Paul, MN 55116
651-698-1527

Good morning Dai,

I really hope you will support the Ford plan. I'm not sure where you feel the process broke down or the City lacked transparency but these phrases really harm a lot of people who have worked really hard on behalf of all Saint Paul residents. I've actually been impressed by the efforts to engage and as you know these are always going to be met with mixed reviews. We need more housing. Period. Or we will drive

the less affluent out of Saint Paul and that would be a tragic scenario like the ones we are watching around the country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Margaret

Margaret Jones
