

ATTACHMENT 4:

Written comment from June 28, 2019 public hearing

## Richardson, Mike (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** Nathaniel M Hood <nmhood@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 17, 2019 2:41 PM  
**To:** Richardson, Mike (CI-StPaul)  
**Cc:** #CI-StPaul\_Ward3; McMahon, Melanie (CI-StPaul); Tolbert, Chris (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Ford Site Design Standards | Planning Commission | Submitted Comments

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Think Before You Click: This email originated outside our organization.

Good afternoon Mike,

I am submitting comments for the City of St. Paul's Ford Site Design Standards – If possible, could you submit these comments to the Planning Commission for consideration for the June 28th public hearing?

I am generally supportive of the Ford Site Design Standards as written. I think city staff did a good job highlighting the major issues. There are only a few additional items I feel could be improved on. I have detailed those below. Thank you for your consideration -- and thank you in advance to passing along to the city's Planning Commission.

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### Page 2: Open Space Diagram –

- The City should aim to connect Village Way to the site to allow for pedestrian and bike traffic. This can be accomplished in a cost-effective way with a 10ft shared-use bituminous trail.
- The City should also aim to create a connection on the north of the Highland Ball fields (Open Space "H") to allow pedestrian traffic to connect through to Saunders Ave. This can be accomplished in a cost-effective way with a 10ft shared-use bituminous trail.
- The extension of Saunders Ave on the western section of the Ford Site is labeled as "Galaxie Ave". This may be confusing and I recommend being consistent throughout the corridor and staying with "Saunders Ave" (unless there is a historic reason / rational precedent for changing the name).

### Page 3: Open Space Standards –

For "Open Space F" titled "Hidden Falls Headwaters Park" - While the the stormwater function is important, we should aim to make this space a great amenity for the neighborhood and include language to design it in a manner that doesn't make it simply a stormwater-run off retention wetland. The pond concept was one of the few non-controversial elements of the plan (it was widely supported) and we should aim to identify this space as something more than a "stormwater feature".

### Page 4: Street Types and Descriptions –

Under "Vehicle Access Street", the City should aim to limit the size of curb cuts for parking garages/underground parking to 22 to 24ft. Smaller curb cuts lead to lower turning speeds and allow for more on-street parking opportunities. Slower speeds for vehicles leaving garages will lead to a safer pedestrian environment.

### Page 7: Gateway East Definition

The paragraph states that "greenspace is *encouraged* to face the street". I believe we should change the language to "*should*". This area of the site will be the most dense residential district of the site and I believe that it's important we incorporate good, greenspace at the street level in this node. A well-design linear public greenspace can help make a dense residential district feel quiet, quaint and comfortable.

**Page 8:**

“G12” - “Where breaks occur, the street edge shall be continued through the use of fencing, low walls and/or landscaping”. We should add that the fencing should aim to be decorative and the low walls be made of higher quality building material.

**Page 9:**

“G18” - This section should provide guidance on structured and underground parking access design, such as curb cut width (aim for 22ft to 24ft for residential, slightly larger for commercial) and to provide a design that allows for safe exiting with proper site views. Having abrupt exits from structured parking can create a safety issue for pedestrians (e.g.: *The Finn onto Highland Parkway as an example of what not to do*). Smaller curb cuts lead to lower turning speeds and allow for more on-street parking opportunities. Slower speeds for vehicles leaving garages will lead to a safer pedestrian environment.

**Page 12:**

“S7” – The maximum height for a decorative fence should be reduced to 36”. This is an appropriate height to delineate private space, but will do so by not being as imposing as taller fencing/ walls. I believe making this modification will help make the pedestrian space along MRB better.

**Page 14: F3 Residential Mixed Mid**

The City should aim to include language regarding residential parking facilities. If too difficult / cost prohibitive to allow underground parking, the building should avoid the “parking podium” design which can create a blank space at the human-scaled pedestrian realm.

**Page 23: F6 Gateway**

“S43” – This outlines the building materials recommended. I agree with the building material standards on all other districts that favors a neo-traditional urban design. However, the Gateway is an opportunity to allow for a creative / landmark structure. While we should still aim for a high standard of material and design, I believe we should deviate from the norm of the site in this district to allow more architectural flexibility; such as glass buildings, create metal façade buildings, etc.). I do not have recommendations on what new language would look like, but this is the one district where we should explore something ambitious/creative.

Thanks again for the consideration,

- Nate Hood  
Highland Park, St. Paul

1879 Montreal Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55116



# HIGHLAND

## DISTRICT COUNCIL

1978 Ford Parkway • Saint Paul MN 55116 • 651.695.4005 • [HighlandDistrictCouncil.org](http://HighlandDistrictCouncil.org)

### Resolution on Ford Site Design Standards, Public Grounds Maintenance, and Placement of Utilities

Whereas the Highland District Council's Community Development Committee met with the City of Saint Paul, and Mike Lamb from LHB Urban Design and Planning on June 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss the proposed Design Standards for the Ford Site; and

Whereas there was a question about how building codes were factored into the Design Standards and Master Plan and what happens if they are updated during this process; and

Whereas the committee was concerned that the maintenance of public grounds, and placement of utilities are not specified in the Design Standards; therefore

Be it Resolved, that the Community Development Committee of the Highland District Council requests that the City make sure there is some method of accountability, for updating building codes, public ground maintenance contracts, and placement of utilities.

Approved June 25, 2019

By the Community Development Committee of the Highland District Council

## Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)

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**From:** Richardson, Mike (CI-StPaul)  
**Sent:** Friday, June 28, 2019 7:31 AM  
**To:** David Sullivan-nightengale  
**Cc:** Butler, Sonja (CI-StPaul)  
**Subject:** Re: Ford Design Standards Public Comment

Thank you very much, Mr. Sullivan-Nightengale.

Your comments will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their consideration.

Regards,  
Mike Richardson

On Jun 27, 2019, at 10:31 PM, David Sullivan-nightengale <[dsullivannightengale@yahoo.com](mailto:dsullivannightengale@yahoo.com)> wrote:

**Think Before You Click: This email originated **outside** our organization.**

Mr. Richardson:

Regarding the Ford Design Standard I make the following recommendations

1. Include the design criteria of the MNDOT Complete Streets Policy
2. Consider using barriers of any variety to prevent motor vehicles from colliding with pedestrians and businesses as this hazard continues to be unmitigated in both state and federal design standards
3. Consider making all new construction require fire sprinklers. Water has been proven to put out fires. Yes, the fire chief says it every year and we continue to ignore it.
4. Ensure adequate capability for inclusion of charging stations of electric vehicles especially bonding and grounding systems into the public right of way
5. Ensure all above ground power lines are buried to improve system reliability
6. Improve signage to assure people can find their way through the community without needing to own a smart phone
7. Include areas where snow can be piled without obstructing views between vehicle operators and pedestrians
8. Consider embedding a local operating network for public lighting to lower light pollution for the nearby Mississippi National River and Recreational Area.
9. Ensure people remain off of nearby dangerous sloped areas with improved guards and barriers
10. Provide safe access to the nearby river so people can connect with the paddlecraft community
11. Nothing is specifically zoned for schools or health clinics. We've seen how this can be problematic in the long run. It's a long way from the Ford Site to the get medical care as the former Ford workers know so very well.
12. The area is in the airport operations area for one of the runways at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Construction and habitation in this area falls inside the airport certification plan and risk reduction measures to lower bird strikes must be taken. Migratory pattern changes due to people living in this area as opposed to simply working in this area will occur resulting in a higher risk. Onsite use of composting or open garbage container restrictions are recommended for communities in close proximity to airports like MSP.
13. The advent of urban air mobility means that smaller and more frequent air travel across the site is possible. Consider noise mitigations for new construction.
14. Consider implementing signage and sensing elements to allow the safe use of autonomous vehicles now so we don't have to go through costly retrofits ten years from now.

Respectfully,

David J. Sullivan-Nightengale  
Certified Safety Professional  
1132 Norton Street  
St. Paul, MN 55117  
(651) 247-6410



Ford Site Design Standards - Ryan Companies Comments List 06.27.2019		
Change	Ryan Comments/Concerns	Page # or Section #
1	The Ryan Companies renderings from 2018 should be an additional reference point for the design standards	1
2	Specific requirements for programming/content in each of the open spaces will differ depending on the community engagement process and the funding resources available at the time of design/construction	3
3	Access restrictions to certain blocks must have flexibility depending on the final development conditions of the block (i.e. multiple buildings on one block may not be able to access from only one street). Ranger Way specifically is a concern for lack of vehicular access allowed if access is restricted from Cretin Ave	4
4	Preservation of trees must be considered along Mississippi River Boulevard	5, 10
5	Restrictions on wall heights pose issues with certain areas of the mass site grading and future building plans given the challenging topography of the site	8
6	Permitted materail list for private walks should be expanded	8
7	Requirements on Commerical, Civic and Mixed-use areas of the plan regarding building form, doors and windows	8, 14
8	Building material pallet should be expanded	9, 14, 23
9	Increased setback on specific F1 district lots creates inconsistencies between other lots in this district	11
10	Requiring walls to deliniate public and private space can be successfully solved by other means	12
11	Redundancy with the Public Realm Plan in permitted building types	14
12	Due to the challenging topography of the site, the finished floor elevations in relationship to exterior grade will vary across all of the buildings. Restricting this relationship to such as tight delta (18-42") will not be possible	15
13	The specific dimension of the proposed step-back on upper floors does not work with standard floor plans of multi family projects	16
14	Restrictions to shopfront facades should only apply for frontage of the specific commercial use, not the entire building	17, 18, 20
15	Alternative square and plaza surface materials, such as stamped concrete, should be allowed at the discretion of city staff for specific design features	19, 21
16	Due to the challenging topography of the site, flexibility should be allowed to transition the ground floor grade to the adjacent sidewalk grade exterior to the building (i.e. ramping) in certain instances	20
17	Consideration should be given to the building setback and location of the gathering areas in order to allow for the informal nature of the park	24
18	Based on the location and surrounding land uses, a larger setback or building placement may be preferable	25
19	Review for inconsistencies with the Public Realm Plan	66.931
20	Consideration should be given to the minor and major modification change descriptions	66.951

Mr. Tony Barranco  
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