

Mai Vang

From: Lisa Whalen <irishwhalen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 1, 2025 12:05 PM
To: *CI-StPaul_LegislativeHearings
Cc: Lisa Whalen
Subject: Comments on CVS at 499 Snelling Ave for

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Dear Legislators,

As a 28-year resident of Hamline Midway, I'm writing about a problem that's affecting our community. The vacant CVS building at 499 Snelling Avenue has become much more than an eyesore that inhibits developers and potential business owners from investing in the area. It has generated over 100 complaints to the city, with repeated clean-ups needed for trash and debris, break-ins, vandalism, and even stripped-out infrastructure. It also attracts loitering and drug dealing, along with providing a launching point for more serious crime throughout the surrounding neighborhood. The building sits on a prime location that should serve as a beacon within Midway's commercial district but instead, it not only wastes that space but detracts from the whole area. Something must be done to make it a productive spot, even if that means simply demolishing the crime hub that currently exists to offer additional parking for local businesses or an open plot with sightlines that make it easier for police to patrol.

Midway is struggling without grocery access since Cub Foods closed. Many residents, especially seniors and families without cars, now have to travel much farther for basic groceries. It's forcing people to shop at expensive convenience stores or skip fresh foods altogether. That empty CVS space would be perfect for a grocery store given its location on the Green Line.

I know you care about keeping our neighborhoods strong and making sure families can afford to live here. Could you help us explore options to get a grocery store--or at least a more productive space--in that location? This isn't just my concern. I have talked to dozens of neighbors who feel the same way. We're ready to support any effort to make this happen.

Thank you for listening and for everything you do for our community.

Sincerely,

Lisa Whalen
St. Paul, MN 55104