

From: Justin Lewandowski <organizer@hamlinemidway.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 6, 2024 2:48 PM
To: *CI-STPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary <PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Samantha Langer <samantha.langer@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT: 24-013-570 1566 University Ave CUP & Variances (United Village)

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

My name is Justin Lewandowski and I am the organizing director for the Hamline Midway Coalition, District Council 11, located at 1536 West Minnehaha.

I am submitting the following on behalf of the HMC Development Committee for public comment on the 1566 University Ave CUP & Variances (United Village).

The concerns of the HMC Development Committee revolve around three main areas:

- 1) Street frontage on University Avenue - the location and design of the parking ramp, along with the separation of the project from the street by an additional drive, will serve to separate the development from the neighborhood. We feel that more effective methods to screen parking with active uses and handle traffic from drop-offs at the hotel can be designed.
- 2) Lack of consideration of pedestrian and bicycle routes - we have not seen details for how the proposal will tie into pedestrian and bicycle routes through the site, so it is not possible to determine its success at integrating non-vehicular transportation. Our input on these details is critically important to their successful implementation - we are the folks who will bike, walk, and take transit through the site.
- 3) Separation of green space from the neighborhood. The new plaza on the south side of the hotel will not feel accessible from the neighborhood. This is counter to the original intent of the 2017 Master Plan, which envisioned open spaces connected directly to University Ave.

With the absence of comprehensive traffic management strategies for both everyday and special event scenarios, combined with a noticeable neglect in urban design considerations, prevents us from supporting variance request 2. Likewise, the design outlined in request 5, characterized by its lack of pedestrian-friendly elements, falls short of our objective to create a welcoming and accessible urban space.

We are excited for development to be occurring on this site and will welcome a new hotel in the neighborhood. We do not intend to raise these concerns as a method of blocking the project - we want it to be as effectively integrated into our urban fabric as possible, to ensure its long term success. We think that some redesign efforts will be mutually beneficial and urge the development team to hear our concerns with an open mind.

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Justin Lewandowski (He/Him)
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