



Greater East Side Community Council

1/8/24

To: Bill Dermody, City Planner
St Paul City Council
Councilmembers Yang & Johnson
Ramsey County Commissioner Xiong

On behalf of The Greater East Side (District 2) Community Council, we are writing to express our support of the creation of a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District at the Heights for housing. Overall, the board is very optimistic over this investment in our neighborhood and our city. With the proposal of the creation of the TIF district on the council agenda, we would like to take this opportunity to emphasize a district priority to support the creation of more affordable housing in our neighborhood.

As you may be aware, our neighborhood, encompassing the area between Larpenteur & Minnehaha and McKnight to Johnson Parkway/the Vento Trail has one of the highest concentrations of poverty in Ramsey County. We are very excited to see that there will be multiple housing options included in the Master Plan but we would also like to reinforce our position that the housing built should also include housing that is “truly” affordable to our residents. The average median income for the region according to HUD is over \$73,000 however the average median income of our neighborhood is less than \$53,000 annually. What is affordable at \$73,000 per year, is not necessarily affordable at \$53,000. We are supportive of the proposals from Sherman & Associates, JO Companies and Twin City Habitat for Humanity because we believe their proposals are in line with the approved master plan and housing priorities that we have advocated for including: Rentals, Owner Occupied, Market Rate, Affordable, Deeply Affordable focused on the “Missing Middle”, Large Families, Multi-generational Households and Senior Living.

We highly encourage the City to work with developers and make the needed investments to ensure the housing built on this site is reflective of the neighborhood needs.

We also do not want to see the Heights Development as a separate “neighborhood” from our existing community. We do not want it to be an island. We understand that this project will be the “jewel” in our district but we ask that the “box”, the existing neighborhood, surrounding the “jewel” is improved as well.

We thank Councilmember Yang and Bill Dermody from Planning and Economic Development for their work on the Heights to this point and we look forward to continuing to partner with them. We also look forward to growing our partnership with Sherman and Associates, JO Companies & Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity in the future.

Sincerely on behalf of the Greater East Side Community Council,

Lisa Theis

Lisa Theis, Executive Director