

From: [Jenne Nelson](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Subject: letter for City Council meeting on 9/20 re: interim parking at United Village
Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 9:58:24 AM
Attachments: [HMC Letter of Opposition, Interim Parking Permits at United Village 2023.0919.docx.pdf](#)

Hello,

On behalf of the Hamline Midway Coalition Board of Directors and Development Committee, I am submitting a letter to be included in the written record regarding the interim parking permits at United Village, which will be discussed at the 9/20/23 City Council meeting. The letter is attached to this email.

Thank you,

Jenne Nelson | she/her
Executive Director
Hamline Midway Coalition
<https://calendly.com/director-hmc>
director@hamlinemidway.org
(651) 494-7682





HAMLIN MIDWAY COALITION

DISTRICT COUNCIL 11

1536 W MINNEHAHA AVENUE,

ST. PAUL MN 55104

651.494.7682 | www.hamlinemidway.org

September 19, 2023

Dear Saint Paul City Council,

The Hamline Midway Coalition recommends denial of the interim use permits requesting use for parking lots for up to five years. Our reasoning for this difficult decision is the result of our experience with the developer since 2016.

In 2018, the developer said parking was required for any development to occur adjacent to the stadium. In response, the Saint Paul City Council acted in good faith by approving an interim-use parking permit for five years in hopes of promoting development on the site. Since that time, no development other than Allianz Stadium has occurred. In fact, since 2018 almost all existing businesses on the site that served Frogtown, Hamline-Midway and Union Park neighborhoods have been eliminated. **The dedicated parking space established five years ago has not yielded the development the city was promised.**

It is evident that there was ample opportunity to develop the site prior to the challenges presented by the global pandemic and the unrest that followed the murder of George Floyd. One merely needs to look directly across the street from Allianz Field and just south of the I-94 freeway to see mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly buildings completed within the last five years. This community is primed for development, as home to the busiest intersections in Minnesota for transit and traffic alike.

The developer reengaged with us this summer to present a revised development plan for the site. This revised plan is inferior to the 2016 plan in every way possible; in particular a request for parking lots as part of the platting process. Mike Hahm has communicated that if the interim use parking permits are not approved in this phase, then the developer will not move forward with the proposed office space and hotel development, directly contributing to the blight cast by this development's unprecedented 5-year pause following the last interim-use parking agreement being granted.

Our response is this:

1. We have asked both Mike Hahm and Dr. Bill McGuire recently in separate public meetings whether there is a confirmed, signed agreement guaranteeing that either a hotel or office building will be built. They both said "no." There is no guaranteed development for this site. It is all hopeful thinking accompanied by artistic renderings.
2. Surface parking locations along Snelling will create a pedestrian-hostile barrier between the surrounding neighborhood and the proposed development. We propose that near-term access to additional surface parking might be created through use agreements with nearby landowners with underused lots. Allianz might offer a shuttle

system to these additional lots on event days. As additional uses identified in the 2016 plan are constructed, structured parking will be essential to accommodate traffic on game days and regular parking needs. We note the Guthrie Theater's parking ramp, which serves theater-goers and includes public access, as a positive example of similarly-scaled development. The Pitch, the stadium's nearest neighbor, also offers structured parking as an amenity. We are not opposed to parking on this site, if it is structured and screened with active uses as proposed in 2016.

3. The proposed development contains single-use buildings which do not create the population density to support an active, pedestrian friendly environment.
4. The proposed development contains no housing.
5. The developer's request for dedicated parking space for an additional 5-years conflicts with the \$1 billion investment in transit at the corner of Snelling and University on behalf of the City, the Met Council, and the State of Minnesota.

Any failure to develop this site is due to the developer's lack of experience and poor business decisions. The City Council and neighborhood District Councils have all acted in good faith to communicate a vision for 21st century urban development, a mixed-use, active hub for the adjacent neighborhoods and visitors. The 2016 plan achieved broad support from the community because it complemented the urban character of our neighborhood and leveraged transit investments to create a walkable, well-connected environment. The approved plan is consistent with best practices for urban development across the globe. Failure to implement this basic vision rests squarely on the developer.

HMC should not be perceived of, or represented as, a NIMBY organization or wholly anti-development. We are in this position because the only opportunities the developer has given us to engage with this development are to reject bad ideas. Our community has been patient and accommodating to the stadium development and the associated disruptions at the Snelling-Midway site because we believe that the development will ultimately improve our neighborhood. The importance of this site to Hamline-Midway, Union Park, and the City as a whole underscore the need to use this public review process to get the development right, rather than serving as a rubber-stamp to a proposal that does not meet the goals of the 2016 Master Plan and does not benefit the community as a whole.

Please reject these permits and hold the developer accountable to the plan we were all promised for this site.

Thank you,

Jenne Nelson
Executive Director, Hamline Midway Coalition
on behalf of the Hamline Midway Coalition Board
of Directors

Nate Roisen
Chair, Hamline Midway Coalition Development
Committee
on behalf of the Hamline Midway Coalition
Development Committee