

MIDWAY CENTER COMMUNITY VISIONING STEERING TEAM FINAL REPORT

UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECEMBER 14, 2015

REVISED AND ENDORSED BY THE UNION PARK DISTRICT COUNCIL BOARD JANUARY 6, 2016

BACKGROUND

In the 2015 Work Plan for the Union Park District Council (UPDC), the Board of Directors committed to the following activity and desired outcomes:

Activity: Form a working group to develop recommendations for the Bus Barn site and Midway Shopping Center. Work with City, Met Council, and property owner to begin implementing community recommendations.

Anticipated Outcomes: Working group (5 people) leads community visioning to develop recommendations for Midway Shopping Center. Approximately 300 residents and business owners engaged in community process.

The Steering Team began its work in March 2015.

During the course of the Steering Team's work, the City of Saint Paul began negotiations with Minnesota United to use a portion of the Midway Center site as the location for a new Major League Soccer (MLS) stadium. Those negotiations resulted in the commitment by Minnesota United to build a soccer stadium on the 'bus barn' portion of the superblock and a commitment by RK Midway to redevelop the remaining portion of the area.

USAGE NOTE

Throughout this document, the following terms are used frequently:

Superblock is used to refer to the entire 34.5 acre site bounded by University Avenue to the north, Pascal Street to the east, St. Anthony Avenue to the south and Snelling Avenue to the west. The superblock includes both the future stadium site and the Midway Center.

Midway Center is used to refer to the two properties owned by RK Midway. These include the 19.8 acre site along University Avenue as well as the smaller 4.8 acres in the southeast corner of the superblock.

Bus Barn Site is used to refer to the 9.9 acres on the southwest portion of the superblock that is owned by the Metropolitan Council. This portion of the site has been designated as the future site of the MLS stadium.

OUTREACH

As part of its work, the Steering Team developed a number of strategies to speak to residents, business owners, and other constituents who will be impacted by the redevelopment of the superblock. This outreach included the following specific actions:

- Created an open-ended questionnaire to better understand how neighbors use the existing services in Midway Center and what services they feel are missing. The questionnaire was used at numerous ‘tabling’ events where volunteers spoke directly with visitors of Midway Center. (82 respondents)
- Used the questionnaire noted above, as well as personal conversations and an interactive ‘dot voting’ tool, to share information with residents at community events such as the Union Park District Council annual event, Central Baptist Church block party, and tabling with students at Concordia University. (Approximately 150 conversations and at least 75 recorded dot votes)
- Hosted a community meeting on August 11, 2015 to hear neighbors’ hopes and fears regarding the future of Midway Center and the potential impact of a soccer stadium. (100 participants)
- Targeted meetings/conversations with:
 - City Council President Russ Stark
 - City Council Member Dai Thao
 - Donna Drummond, City of Saint Paul
 - Frogtown Neighborhood Association (District Council 7) Board of Directors
 - Customers at Big Top Liquor
 - Lexington-Hamline area neighbors at the Lex-Ham Annual Meeting
 - Business owners/manager in Midway Center through door to door outreach
 - Individual members of the African Economic Development Solutions (AEDS)

It is important to note the Steering Team consciously chose not to use quantitative or scientific polling tools. Nearly all data collection was achieved through open-ended questions and comments which were then grouped in specific themes and common ideas. We sought to engage neighbors in a conversation about the future development of the site rather than collect votes on specific topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The superblock is a substantial tract of land in the heart of Saint Paul. While there is near unanimous agreement that the parcel is unsightly and underutilized, there are varying opinions among neighbors about what redevelopment of the site should look like. In particular, neighbors are divided about the decision to have a major league soccer stadium in the area. The lack of transparency and little public engagement in the formal negotiation process between the city and the team raised concerns among many neighbors that the future redevelopment would not address the specific needs and desires of local residents and businesses.

Given the controversial nature of the stadium itself, and the fact that an agreement has been reached between MLS and the City of Saint Paul, Union Park District Council is not taking a position in favor of, or opposed to, the stadium. Through this report, we seek to articulate key themes raised by neighbors regarding the redevelopment of the entire Midway Center site, which we now know will include a stadium.

While many of the recommendations below assign ownership or responsibility to the City of Saint Paul, RK Midway or Minnesota United, the Union Park District Council seeks to be a supportive, active partner in implementing these recommendations. Volunteers and staff can provide valuable insight into how best to implement the strategies and how to continue to engage the neighborhood. We seek to be active partners in a successful redevelopment of the entire superblock.

A VISION . . .

Union Park District Council believes redevelopment of the Midway Center and Bus Barn site can dramatically benefit our neighborhood with new services, jobs, economic development, and beautiful places. To do so, planning for the entire superblock must address five key priorities that respond to the needs of the neighborhood and support the development goals of the City, Major League Soccer, and RK Midway.

1. Enhance the quality of life in the Midway
2. Support local businesses
3. Improve transportation and safety
4. Increase public and green space
5. Protect taxpayers

ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE MIDWAY

The neighborhood surrounding the superblock is diverse in every sense of the word and does not speak with one voice. To be successful, the newly redeveloped Midway Center must seek to address the needs and desires of existing residents while also welcoming new visitors and businesses to the area. New development should leverage the range of cultures and incomes already adjacent to Midway Center. If housing is included, it should include a range of income levels; if retail space is included, it should support both local and national businesses (see below). Specifically, the following actions should be addressed by the City of Saint Paul and/or development partners:

- A. RK Midway should develop community outreach tools to create new lines of communication and partnership with the neighborhood. For years, the owners of Midway Center have had a distant relationship with the residents and customers who shop or live near Midway Center. This ‘absentee-landlord’ approach has created some cynicism about the property owner’s sincere interest in the quality of life in the Midway. Many residents fear new development will cater only to the interests of those who do not live here. The redevelopment project creates an exciting opportunity to change this relationship and develop open lines of communication between RK Midway and the people of Saint Paul. Creating new opportunities for outreach will allow neighbors to share first-hand with RK Midway their priorities for the site, and establish clear lines of communication for the future.
- B. Minnesota United and neighbors should begin conversations now about the impact of the new stadium on neighborhood life. Creating a “Community Compact” and starting outreach as soon as possible is essential to creating a positive relationship between Minnesota United and its new neighbors. The use of a soccer stadium presents many unknowns to the neighborhood. We expect the team to develop robust strategies and concrete plans to address fears of noise, light pollution, inappropriately behaved fans, and litter. Special attention to the concerns of the residential neighborhood immediately west of the stadium (bounded by Fairview, University, Snelling and St. Anthony Avenues) is warranted given the close proximity to the stadium proper.
- C. Future development should enhance the visual appeal and beauty of the Midway. While architectural beauty is never clear cut, neighbors consistently shared their desire for aesthetically pleasing development that enhances the unique location of the superblock. They believe this highly valuable, highly visible site warrants a beautiful result.
- D. After the site plan is approved, UPDC seeks to work with the appropriate development partners in the creation of a Construction Mitigation Plan. Major construction projects in the Union Park area have frequently benefited from a construction mitigation plan that articulates what residents can expect in terms of noise, trash, traffic disruption and other issues that frequently arise at construction sites. The process of developing the plan should also result in an efficient line of communication between residents, the district council, and the appropriate construction partners.

- E. Minnesota United and design partners should pursue strategies that allow the stadium facility to be used as a community asset for events beyond soccer games. The district council understands that some portions of the new stadium (such as the field itself) may not be easily used for non-soccer functions. However, as demonstrated by the design of the CHS Field in downtown Saint Paul, there are many functions that could be appropriate uses for parts of the stadium structure (such as the concourses and meeting rooms) and adjacent areas of the site. We envision a stadium complex that will become a community resource in addition to a major sports venue.

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

Neighbors are proud of their local business owners and want to make sure the future of Midway Center includes a vibrant, healthy opportunity for small and distinctly local businesses to succeed. Today, the Midway Center and the greater Midway area is home to an eclectic mix of both national retailers and local entrepreneurs. This mix is essential to the quality of life for most residents, and is a quality they do not want to lose. Residents want to see and know that the City and the development partners share a commitment to our local businesses.

- A. The City of Saint Paul should develop effective measures (such as a dashboard or report card) to better understand and track the impact of redevelopment on local businesses. Together with a local partner (such as the Neighborhood Development Corporation or the Midway Chamber of Commerce), the city should be actively preparing to provide meaningful data around the health of small businesses in the Snelling Station Area and to provide direct outreach to better understand the specific challenges they may face during redevelopment.
- B. The City of Saint Paul should work with RK Midway to assure that culturally diverse entrepreneurs and existing small businesses are engaged and consulted prior to final site plan approval. UPDC believes the new Midway Center provides an exciting opportunity to explore the potential for non-traditional spaces or lease agreements that might be a benefit to entrepreneurs and the neighborhood. Pop-up space or market-style spaces, for example, may require a relatively small footprint within the context of the overall redevelopment plan, while creating numerous opportunities for small businesses to grow and thrive in the Midway Center. Such non-traditional strategies will be easier to implement if they are integrated into the overall planning process.
- C. The City of Saint Paul should explore what public financing tools may be available to support local businesses during the redevelopment transition. Redevelopment may result in significant disruption and costs for many small business owners. To address this, the city should pro-actively seek ways to educate business owners regarding existing local, state or federal programs that may be of value during the time of transition. It may also be necessary to develop new promotional tools to encourage public support for businesses that will see significant disruption as part of the redevelopment process.
- D. Developers and construction firms for the stadium and surrounding redevelopment should set specific targeted goals for the employment of local workforce and utilization of local businesses.

IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY

The issues surrounding transportation and safety such as congestion, pedestrian safety, bicycle access, parking, lighting, crime, and event management are critically important to the residents and businesses of Union Park. The existing Snelling-University intersection is busy, unsafe, and confusing. Some neighbors report feeling unsafe and fear increased criminal activity, while others are concerned with simply crossing the street. The addition of new employees, soccer games, special events, and increased traffic raises a tremendous challenge that must be given significant attention.

- A. Throughout the planning process, concerns about traffic, safety, and parking must be addressed clearly and specifically. Residents have consistently expressed meaningful fears about how additional vehicles and street activity will impact an already congested area. Many residents feel that these concrete issues have been ignored in

the pre-planning phases and yet these issues are critical to the day-to-day needs of people who live and work near the superblock.

- B. The approved site plan should include a safety plan. The safety (and perceived lack of safety) at the Snelling/University intersection and the Snelling LRT station are a concern for numerous residents. The redevelopment of Midway Center should actively seek to improve safety in the area — both from a crime perspective and a safe-streets perspective. This could include redesigned station platforms and connections between bus stops and transit stops that do not involve at-grade navigation of University Avenue, improved sidewalks, better wayfinding for pedestrians and bikers, changes to the policing practices in the area, new strategies to address panhandling, and enhanced lighting.
- C. Planning for the stadium and Midway Center should serve as a catalyst for a comprehensive review of transportation and safety issues for the entire Snelling Station Area. Without a comprehensive approach to the pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, train, bus, and parking issues centered on the Snelling-University intersection, there is an increased likelihood of harm for current and future users. Now is the time to fully evaluate what is not working at this difficult node and develop new strategies to accommodate an influx of daily and special-event visitors.

INCREASE PUBLIC AND GREEN SPACE

Today the superblock is entirely paved with concrete. Residents feel strongly that a new development must include adequate green space and public space to improve safety and enhance the experience of all visitors.

- A. The approved site plan should include a plaza or central gathering space open to the public. Such a space could be used for community events such as small concerts, farmers’ markets, art exhibits, or recreation. Green space in the area is extremely limited, with Dickerman, Iris and Hamline Parks being the nearest public spaces available to neighbors. While UPDC understands that it is not the responsibility of private investors to create new parkland, it is highly desirable for the comprehensive plan for the stadium and the Midway Center to include a large public space that positively enhances the experience of employees, residents, and guests of the area.
- B. The approved site plan should dramatically increase smaller green spaces throughout the entire superblock. Walking trails, bicycle paths and other green enhancements can also serve to make the redevelopment more inviting and safer for all modes of transportation. Providing clear wayfinding tools and substantial connections to the Light Rail Station will serve to enhance the experience of game day fans, new employees, retail customers, and local residents.
- C. Union Park District Council invites both Minnesota United and RK Midway to explore how “Snelling Commons” could expand public green space, improve pedestrian safety and provide an additional neighborhood amenity adjacent to the Midway Center. For over a year, UPDC has been researching and developing plans for the improvement of an unused tract of land along the west side of Snelling Avenue between St. Anthony Avenue and the Bremer Bank property (informally referred to as “Snelling Commons”). This adjacent property could provide unique opportunities to demonstrate public-private partnership and improve the experience of visitors and residents.

PROTECT TAXPAYERS

It goes without saying that any public investment in a sports facility is controversial. While many residents support the overall strategy of public investment in infrastructure as a catalyst for redevelopment on the rest of the site, others remain skeptical. As noted earlier, the Union Park District Council is neither endorsing nor objecting to the construction of the MLS stadium and the financial tools being used by the City.

UPDC seeks greater transparency from the City of Saint Paul to understand how the public investments in the redevelopment of the superblock will result in a net positive investment for residents. Neighbors are fearful their long-term financial interests may not be protected as redevelopment moves forward.

- A. The City should be preparing to measure the overall economic impact of the redevelopment of the superblock. UPDC seeks to learn how the city will measure economic impact and a return on the public investment being made through the redevelopment process. We understand there is a role for public dollars to meet certain development objectives (such as infrastructure) and provide leverage to assure that developers meet the goals of the city and neighborhood. Clarifying these measures early and tracking results will be an important demonstration of the city’s commitment to transparency and public access.
- B. UPDC seeks a written plan regarding the potential for the departure of Minnesota United. Neighbors seek assurances about what happens if Minnesota United is unsuccessful in their new location. While the existing management team of Minnesota United has demonstrated their commitment to the region and the local community, the professional sports industry as a whole is complex and volatile. Larger NFL, MLB, and NBA teams frequently threaten cities with moving unless significant demands are met while smaller professional sports teams often struggle to maintain their major league status and attendance figures. The future for Minnesota United may bring changes in the economic model, changes in leadership, or even changes in ownership. Given the proposed plan to transfer ownership of the stadium to the City, it seems only prudent that contingency plans and a clear understanding of potential future liabilities be articulated. Should the team not meet its financial goals, need to move or close, what will happen to the stadium and who is responsible for those financial liabilities?

UPDC looks forward to working with the City of Saint Paul, RK Midway, and Minnesota United to ensure that the redevelopment of the superblock and the new soccer stadium meet the diverse needs of local residents and businesses while also attracting new visitors to the Midway Center as a favorite destination at the heart of the Twin Cities.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Request of . . .
I. Enhance the quality of life in the Midway	
A. RK Midway should develop community outreach tools to create new lines of communication and partnership with the neighborhood	RK Midway
B. Minnesota United and neighbors should begin conversations now about the impact of the new stadium on neighborhood life	Minnesota United
C. Future development should enhance the visual appeal and beauty of the Midway	City of Saint Paul RK Midway Community Advisory Committee
D. After the site plan is approved, UPDC seeks to work with the appropriate development partners in the creation of a Construction Mitigation Plan	RK Midway/Minnesota United— Construction firm(s) City of Saint Paul
II. Support and utilize local businesses and workers	
A. The City of Saint Paul should develop effective measures to better understand and track the impact of redevelopment on local businesses.	City of Saint Paul (lead) with local partner(s)
B. The City of Saint Paul should work with RK Midway to reach out to culturally diverse entrepreneurs and existing small businesses prior to final site plan approval	City of Saint Paul (lead) with RK Midway
C. The City of Saint Paul should explore what public financing tools may be available to support local businesses during the redevelopment transition	City of Saint Paul
D. Developers and construction firms should set specific targeted goals for the employment of local workforce and utilization of local businesses.	RK Midway/Minnesota United— Construction firm(s)
III. Improve transportation and safety	
A. Throughout the planning process, concerns about traffic, safety, and parking must be addressed clearly and specifically.	All parties

B. The approved site plan should include a safety plan	City of Saint Paul with RK Midway and Minnesota United
C. Planning for the stadium and Midway Center should serve as a catalyst for a comprehensive review of transportation and safety issues for the entire Snelling Station Area	City of Saint Paul, Metro Transit, MnDOT
IV. Increase public and green space	
A. The approved site plan should include a plaza or central gathering space open to the public.	RK Midway/Minnesota United
B. The approved site plan should dramatically increase smaller green spaces throughout the entire superblock	RK Midway/Minnesota United
C. UPDC invites both Minnesota United and RK Midway to explore how “Snelling Commons” could expand public green space, improve pedestrian safety and provide an additional neighborhood amenity.	Union Park District Council (lead) RK Midway Minnesota United
V. Protect Taxpayers	
A. The city should be preparing to measure the overall economic impact on the redevelopment of the superblock	City of Saint Paul
B. UPDC seeks a written plan regarding the potential for the departure of Minnesota United.	City of Saint Paul

APPENDIX I: STEERING TEAM SCOPE

The goal of the Midway Center Community Visioning Steering Team is to prepare a report for the Union Park District Council including specific recommendations for the redevelopment of the Midway Center superblock no later than November 18, 2015.

In Scope:

While not all of these may be addressed in a final report, all are appropriate avenues of discussion for the steering team):

- Prioritizing redevelopment objectives from the perspective of residents, neighbors and local businesses
- Provide feedback and reaction to the existing planning documents and development strategies outlined in existing documents
- Gather quantitative and qualitative data from residents, neighbors and local businesses about the types of amenities needed/desired in the area and ideas to strengthen the Midway Center superblock identity as a destination
- Articulate the hopes and fears of residents, neighbors and local businesses regarding the potential redevelopment of the site
- Educate key partners (elected officials, RK Midway representatives, city and Met Council staff) about the data gathered during the community outreach process.
- Educate the community about the current status, opportunities for engagement and potential challenges of redevelopment at the site.
- Recommendations for future community engagement regarding the site

Out of Scope:

To the extent possible, the Steering Team's report should reflect goals and strategic objectives rather than specific, detailed recommendations. For example, the steering team may choose to recommend the importance of bicycle access and amenities, but will not recommend a specific route or configuration for how that might look. Specific topics the steering team will not address are listed below although feedback and conversations regarding these topics may be collected as additional data for future discussion:

- Recommendations regarding details of a proposed site plan such as specific street alignment, architectural style, detailed licensure restrictions or additional partners/vendors.
- Recommendations of major revisions or rewrites of existing planning documents/zoning status.
- Recommendations or discussion of complex traffic or parking challenges that reach beyond the Midway Center superblock such as the potential connection of Ayd Mill Road to I-94, reducing University Avenue to one lane, and altering the traffic configuration of Snelling Avenue.

STEERING TEAM MEMBERSHIP

Eric Molho, Chair (Union Park District Council volunteer)

Paul Bakke (Lex-Ham resident and Union Park District Council Land Use Committee member)

Colin Fesser, (Union Park District Council Land Use Committee member)

Tom Goldstein (Hamline Midway Coalition Development Committee chair)

Jennifer LeClaire (Hamline Midway volunteer)

David Rasmussen (Union Park District Council Board member)

Sean Ryan (Union Park District Council volunteer)

Julie Reiter, *ex officio* (Union park District Council Executive Director)

Anne White, *ex officio* (Union Park District Council Land Use Committee Chair)

MIDWAY CENTER/BUS BARN STATUS

The Midway Center/Bus Barn site is a superblock within the Union Park District Council comprised of 34.5 acres bounded by University Avenue to the north, St. Pascal Street to the east, St. Anthony Avenue to the south and Snelling Avenue to the west. This large site goes by several names in reference to its current, former and potential future uses. It is comprised of three separate parcels:

Midway Center is the largest parcel of land at 19.8 acres which includes roughly the northern half of the entire superblock. This parcel is owned by RK Midway and includes all of the existing businesses in operation on the site (e.g. Big Top Liquors, McDonald's, Perkins, Rainbow Foods, etc.)

HRA Option site includes 4.8 acres on the southeast corner of the superblock and is also owned by RK Midway. The reference to an "HRA Option" is based on an expired purchase option by the City of St. Paul's Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). This site is currently vacant and the purchase option by the city has expired. The city negotiated certain easements on this site prior to the expiration of the purchase option.

Bus Barn site includes 9.9 acres on the southwest portion of the superblock and is owned by the Metropolitan Council. The site was used for many decades as a service facility for Metro Transit buses and street cars (hence the 'bus barn' name). Met Council has recently determined that they must explore all options to sell this parcel without providing preferential standing to the existing owner of the remainder of the superblock (RK Midway). They have indicating that they will take on a market analysis and traffic study to explore the potential for the site as a stand alone sale.

Given its size the prime location, redevelopment of the Midway Center superblock has been under discussion and consideration for many years. Discussions accelerated when the Met Council demolished the street car barns in 2001 and have been raised again since the construction of the Green Line light rail concluded in 2014. All parties (RK Midway, City of St. Paul, Met Council and neighborhood interest groups) agree the site is prime for redevelopment.

Site Highlights

- 34.5 acre area bounded by University Ave., Snelling Ave., I-94, and Pascal St. It includes the Midway Shopping Center, and 15 acres of vacant property to the south.
- Metropolitan Council/Metro Transit owns 10 acres at the northeast corner of Snelling & I-94. RK Midway LLC owns the remaining property on the Snelling Site.
- Current Businesses: 41
- Parking Spaces: approximately 1,587 spaces (1,257 marked)
- Current Average Daily Traffic Volumes: Snelling = 35,000; University = 24,000
- Projected LRT Ridership: 2,900 boardings at the Snelling Station and 41,000 daily Green Line riders (by 2030)
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 0.32 for existing development, 1.0 required for new development
- Population (approximate travel times):
 - Within .5 mile = 3,712 (20 minute walk)
 - Within 1 mile = 23,132 (10 minute bike ride)
 - Within 2 miles = 79,539 (10 minute bus/LRT ride)
 - Within 5 miles = 393,696 (15 minute drive)

Redevelopment Goals

The three parties (Metropolitan Council, City of Saint Paul and RK Midway LLC) have agreed that redevelopment, when completed, should substantially achieve the following goals:

- Provide a model for transit-oriented development in the region
- Achieve the Snelling Station Area Plan goal of creating a mixed-use urban village
- Increase the city's jobs and tax base
- Demonstrate a high level of urban design with new public spaces and streets
- Encourage further intensification of the surrounding area
- Increase transit use and minimize traffic congestion
- Have the support of the community
- Recognize the value of income-producing buildings currently on the site
- Meet each party's financial objectives
- Leverage local cultural assets and surrounding amenities

Planning Documents

In addition to the overall objectives of the City of St. Paul, two major planning documents have recently outlined potential redevelopment strategies and goals for the superblock. These include the Snelling Station Area Plan, written in 2008 as part of the Green Line planning process. This document highlights the importance of the Midway Center site within the context of the greater Snelling/University neighborhood and proposes broad goals and concepts for future development. In addition the 2014 TOD Redevelopment Strategy written by the Urban Investment Group (UIG) defines specific steps that could launch the redevelopment process and recommends specific strategies for public/private partnerships to succeed.



APPENDIX II: COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING RECOMMENDATION (APPROVED AUGUST 2015)

Whereas the Snelling-Midway SmartSite, a 34.5-acre superblock at the intersection of University and Snelling Avenues is dramatically underutilized and partially vacant, and

Whereas the SmartSite includes over 9 acres of land owned publicly by the Metropolitan Council which has been a public eyesore and hindrance to the character and potential of the superblock for over ten years, and

Whereas the SmartSite offers a unique combination of high visibility traffic, existing public investment in public transit and a prime location within the center of the metropolitan region, and

Whereas substantial planning and public investment has built the case for a comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of the entire 34.5 acre site including the Snelling Station Area Plan and the “TOD Redevelopment Strategy Report of Findings and Recommendations”, and

Whereas the TOD Redevelopment Strategy found that, “the Site represents a significant opportunity for transformative TOD redevelopment due to a variety of conditions, including the Site’s ownership, access and visibility, land use regulations, central location, vibrant context, and adjacency to new enormous public investments in transit,” and

Whereas all approved planning documents related to the site call for shared resources and investments such as a street grid, parking and green space across all three existing parcels, and

Whereas the three parties (Metropolitan Council, City of Saint Paul and RK Midway LLC) have publicly agreed to a set of redevelopment goals including:

- Provide a model for transit-oriented development in the region
- Achieve the Snelling Station Area Plan goal of creating a mixed-use urban village
- Increase the city's jobs and tax base
- Demonstrate a high level of urban design with new public spaces and streets
- Encourage further intensification of the surrounding area
- Increase transit use and minimize traffic congestion
- Have the support of the community
- Recognize the value of income-producing buildings currently on the site
- Meet each party's financial objectives
- Leverage local cultural assets and surrounding amenities

Whereas without a coordinated approach to the redevelopment, there is substantial risk the site will be underutilized lowering the tax-base and potential for future growth in the area.

Now, therefore, the Union Park District Council and Hamline Midway Coalition endorse a strategic, comprehensive plan be developed between the City of Saint Paul, Met Council and RK Midway, LLC for the future development on the Snelling Midway Super-Block.

APPENDIX III: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF AUGUST 11 COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

On Tuesday, August 11, the Union Park District Council hosted a community meeting to discuss the redevelopment of the Bus Barn/Midway Shopping Center site, particularly in light of accelerating negotiations regarding the potential of a new Major League Soccer stadium potentially being built on the site. This conversation was not framed as a referendum on the stadium or other development ideas, but did create the start for further discussions and community engagement. To facilitate the meeting, four key areas were identified to structure the feedback:

- Traffic/Parking
- Financing
- Stadium Usage
- Surrounding Development

The meeting on August 11 generated thoughtful, meaningful conversation among residents. It did not, however represent the views of all neighbors nor seek to create any kind of consensus. The key themes listed below represent topics or questions that were raised. Union Park District Council strongly supports continued meaningful engagement with local neighbors with targeted outreach to our communities of color and recent immigrants.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING THEMES

- ❖ Neighbors at the meeting are worried about traffic and congestion particularly if a stadium is built. Event days (such as game days or State Fair days) will generate significant spikes in traffic and many residents fear gridlock.
- ❖ Public transit is well supported by participants and viewed as an essential piece to manage increased usage and density in the area.
- ❖ Not surprisingly, parking is a significant concern for neighbors. There are mixed views about how best to address and pay for parking. However based on the conversation, it appears safe to say that:
 - No one wants significant additional surface parking
 - Many neighbors are worried about the impact of additional development on already scarce neighborhood/street parking
 - Everyone supports the goal of shared parking
- ❖ Several residents present lifted up concerns that are not directly a part of redevelopment, but will clearly continue to fester as time goes on. These include the potential connection of Ayd Mill Road and the capacity of I-94 access routes.

FINANCING

- ❖ Both participants and facilitators of this community conversation struggle to fully understand the potential financing tools and options that may be part of any future development at this site. Conversations were difficult since so many different ideas were shared with few facts. The district council seeks additional education and examples to explain public financing tools and options for any major development.
- ❖ Public investment in the redevelopment of this site is contentious and the potential of a stadium on the site adds to the controversy. Many residents are adamantly opposed to any public funding supporting another stadium in the Twin Cities while others view a modest public investment as key to gaining amenities and community consideration in the planning process. Many neighbors recognize the opportunity for a net positive return on investment, but have no data or facts with which to gauge whether this project would generate such a return.
- ❖ Some neighbors fear that public investment would not benefit the immediate community directly. For example, they worry the stadium will only be visited by suburban fans (perhaps due to high prices) and that redevelopment would focus solely on catering to these fans. They worry the stadium and/or redevelopment would not address the needs and interests of our diverse neighborhood.

STADIUM USAGE

- ❖ Neighbors participating in the conversation had many hopes and fears about how a stadium specifically might impact the local community. With few details and many unknowns, it is difficult for neighbors to make a meaningful assessment of the overall impact of a stadium.
- ❖ Those present hoped the stadium would be able to accommodate more than just home soccer matches, with many asking how the facility would be used on dates the team isn't playing on site. Additional uses that were proposed included concerts, local high school or college soccer matches and supporting youth athletics. Some suggested the stadium complex could also include plazas or public spaces that could be used for community events such as festivals, farmers markets, public parks or local music.
- ❖ At the same time, many fears about how intense use of the site could have negative impacts on the immediate neighborhood were also presented. In addition to traffic and parking above, residents worried about noise and light. Making the overall complex welcome and friendly was noted through concerns about design, public safety and trash. There is significant fear the stadium alone would not be accessible to the community and therefore, the neighborhood would not benefit from it.
- ❖ Finally, some residents asked what would happen to a stadium if the team moved or became financially unsustainable. What contingencies would the city have in place to address this?

SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ There appeared to be strong support for comprehensive planning of the entire Bus Barn/Midway Center site. Union Park District Council has gone on record as strongly advocating a comprehensive approach to the entire 39 acres at this superblock, and the neighbors present support this holistic approach.
- ❖ Many residents appeared to favor mixed-use and transit oriented development, although the comments indicate there is a wide variety of interpretations about what is meant by "transit oriented development." Several ideas and suggestions were shared about the potential for development beyond the stadium. These included housing, retail and job centers.
- ❖ Several neighbors present represented a variety of concerns related to local businesses. They worry existing local businesses could be forced out through the redevelopment phase or due to higher property values (creating increased rent and property taxes). They want to make sure that any new development includes significant local businesses and not solely national chains.
- ❖ Public and green space was supported by several participants and viewed as an improvement to the existing sea of concrete on the site.
- ❖ Several residents asserted the stadium would be a catalyst for future development. They worry it will be many years before development of the site occurs without the stadium present. Those who didn't support this pointed out that if it was wrong and the stadium did NOT serve to accelerate additional development, we could be left with a sea of surface parking surrounding the stadium for many years.

KEY QUESTIONS

While answers to the questions below may not be known for some time, they represent some of the key issues the neighborhood has prioritized in conversations to date.

- How will the city pursue and aggressively lead a comprehensive planning process to create a holistic approach to managing the multi-year, mixed-use redevelopment of the entire superblock?
- What changes will be made to roads, streets, traffic controls and public transit to manage the challenge of special events on the superblock site? (i.e. 18,000 people arriving for a soccer match)
- How will parking be addressed to support the comprehensive development of the superblock site and protect neighborhood/residential streets from overflow?
- How will redevelopment of the superblock improve safety and access for bicycles and pedestrians?
- What specific public investment tools will be used to support the redevelopment of the site?
- What models indicate the public investment on the site will have a net positive impact on the city/neighborhood?
- What can or will be done to protect existing local businesses and make the redevelopment of the site attractive to new local entrepreneurs?

- What commitment can stadium developers make about working with the neighborhood regarding issues such as special events, noise, lights, and ongoing relationships with neighbors?
- If a stadium is built, how would it be used beyond MLS games? (i.e. concerts? Youth events? College or high school soccer? Community access?)

APPENDIX IV: SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Are there stores or services you have to leave the neighborhood for?	Other Retail	Nothing	Restaurants	Other Services	Movie Theater	Grocery	Pet Store	Bookstore	Fabric/Crafts	Home Improvement	Sporting Goods	Other Theater	Costco	Gardening	Upscale Retail
TOTAL	15	11	10	9	9	7	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2

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TOTAL	15	11	10	9	9	7	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2

What services/stores do you most frequently use at Midway Center?	Office	Big Top	Restaurants	Walgreens	Target	Cub	Grocery	Rainbow	None	Herbergers	Walmart
TOTAL	20	19	19	14	14	12	12	9	9	6	5

What fears or concerns do you have about changes to the Midway Center?	Traffic	Safety	Doesn't serve local needs	Parking	Gentrification/Rising Rent	Losing Local Businesses	None	Increased Taxes	Unattractive
TOTAL	32	23	20	13	8	7	7	5	4

APPENDIX V: LIST OF ADDITIONAL DATA AVAILABLE

1. Recorded conversation with Council Member Dai Thao
2. Notes from Meeting with Frogtown Neighborhood Association Board of Directors
3. All comments/notes received at August 11 community conversation event
4. Questionnaire raw data and comments