Twin Cities CHIROPRACTIC & Rehabilitation, P.C.

506 North Lexington Pkwy
St. Paul, MN 55104

Office: 651.224.1921
Fax: 651.224.1936

January 11th, 2021

City of St. Paul Planning and Zoning Commission
St. Paul, MN

RE: **Alatus, LLC – 411-417 Lexington Parkway N. – Wilder Foundation Site**

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to you on behalf of Twin Cities Chiropractic and Rehabilitation, P.C., located at 506 Lexington Parkway North, St. Paul, MN (half block from project site) regarding Alatus, LLC's redevelopment project proposed for 411-417 Lexington Parkway N, St. Paul, MN.

Twin Cities Chiropractic and Rehabilitation, P.C., has been located at the above address for nearly 20 years.

Chris Osmundson from Alatus has presented the preliminary concept plan and we fully support and are eager to see the project move forward and be completed.

It is our understanding that Alatus, LLC is proposing a 288-unit multifamily development located on what is currently the vacant lot owned by Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

We also understand this may bring 350 customers within walking distance of our business. We can appreciate this use of this vacant land. It is our understanding that this site has been vacant for 10+ years with at least two failed prior development proposals. We can verify that over those years, in the winter, the site has been used to deposit large amounts of snow, which in the spring becomes an eyesore for months as snow is melting away.

To summarize, we are in full support of this project and believe that it is a great use of the vacant land.

Sincerely,

Scot Sorum, D.C.

Scot Sorum
Name

Owner
Owner/Operator
Title

The Lexington-Hamline Community Council

January 13, 2021

To the Members of the Zoning Committee of the Saint Paul Planning Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the Lexington-Hamline Community Council to express concerns about the site plan for the “Lexington Station Apartments”.

The excessively high pricing, the lack of affordable units, and the absence of family housing make this development inaccessible to most of our community members. In addition, this project will impact the surrounding residents through rising property values leading to displacement through gentrification. Our neighborhood is already feeling the effects of gentrification through the addition of Allianz Field and other recent large-scale developments that lack affordable units such as The Vintage at Selby and Snelling.

A project of this size is an abrupt departure from the scale of nearby housing and is inappropriate for the site. The City’s Lexington Station Area Plan (LSAP) calls for the urban grid to be complete by extending Fuller Avenue to the west of Lexington Parkway. The grid completion would not be possible with the construction of the “Lexington Station Apartments". Fuller Avenue should be extended before a new building is constructed on the site and allow for smaller parcels to be developed at a more appropriate scale. The plan should also conform to the 14’ sidewalk minimum for the “Mobility Enhancement Area” referenced in the LSAP to accommodate pedestrian activity.

We ask that the City would prioritize the inclusion of affordable housing and the completion of Fuller Avenue before approving development for this site.

Amy Gundermann

Amy Gundermann, Executive Director
Lexington-Hamline Community Council

Cc: Councilmember Dai Thao, Ward 1

1168 Selby Avenue ● Saint Paul, MN 55104 ● tel: 651.645.3207 ● lexham@lexham.org ● www.lexham.org

(612) 332-4471
(612) 338-2194
TheAllianceTC.org
2525 Franklin Ave E, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55406

ADVANCING REGIONAL EQUITY

January 13, 2021

Dear members of the Saint Paul Zoning Committee,

As a coalition of community-based organizations and advocacy groups in the Twin Cities region dedicated to racial equity and sustainability in growth and development, the Alliance has long worked with city leaders and community based organizations to advance shared goals around equitable development in St. Paul. In solidarity with member organizations, ***we oppose the Alatus development at University Avenue and Lexington Parkway for the following reasons:***

It does not align with the Lexington Station Area Plan
While the Lexington Station Area Plan calls for increased mobility and safety for people walking, biking and taking transit, this development violates the minimum sidewalk width and blocks the path of a proposed East-West bikeway and pedestrian route. Like the destruction and ongoing impact of the I-94 freeway that devastated the Rondo community, this development compounds and perpetuates a legacy of environmental racism that has limited safe, affordable and sustainable transportation options and puts the burden of pollution and high-speed streets on our Black and brown communities.

It is not affordable to neighborhood residents
In the Frogtown/Thomas-Dale neighborhood, nearly half (48%) of households earn less than $35,000 and, from 2000 to 2017, median income declined by close to 8%. More than two-thirds of our households are renters, paying a median rent of $775, and even at that level more than half are housing cost-burdened. The new Alatus property will nearly triple the median rent — with monthly costs so high that they exceed the "Fair Market Rent" set by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, potentially putting the whole building out of reach for residents with Section 8 vouchers.

It actively advances displacement and gentrification
Atalus says "the goal of revitalizing communities through transformative real estate development" by "develop[ing] and deliver[ing] outstanding luxury apartment and condominium products."
We know those "outstanding products" aren't for us and "revitalizing" means remaking our neighborhood for outside interests, people with "disposable income." It means development with displacement.

It is contrary to St. Paul's commitment to racial equity in it's Comprehensive Plan and the espoused values of city leaders
Leaders from the City of St. Paul consistently state their commitment to racial equity and affordable housing. But, in the overwhelming number of projects that occur on private land without public subsidy, city staff and department leaders have been unable to advance those shared goals . Equity calls for action to disrupt and root out systems of harm and racism; inaction condones and perpetuates these systems. We need policies and practices that integrate equity in meaningful and actionable ways throughout the development process.

We call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.

Sincerely,

Joo Hee Pomplun
Executive Director

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Caty Royce <caty@frogtownmn.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:25 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary
Subject: Wilder Alatus Project

We oppose the Lexington Apartments/ Alatus development for these reasons:

Is not affordable to neighborhood residents
In the surrounding neighborhoods (Midway, Rondo, and Frogtown) a large percentage of the households earn less than $35,000. The residential areas within a half mile of the Lexington Station are over two-thirds renters, where nearly half are already cost-burdened. The proposed rents for this project triples the median rent- with costs so high they exceed the "Fair Market Rent" set by HUD, putting the whole building out of reach for residents with Section 8 vouchers.

Actively advances displacement and gentrification
Atalus says "the goal of revitalizing communities through transformative real estate development" by "develop[ing] and deliver[ing] outstanding luxury apartment and condominium products." We know those "outstanding products" aren't for us and "revitalizing" means remaking our neighborhood for outside interests, people with "disposable income." It means development with displacement.

Does not align with the Lexington Station Area Plan
While the Lexington Station Area Plan calls for increased mobility and safety for people walking, biking and taking transit, this development violates the minimum sidewalk width and blocks the path of a proposed East-West bikeway and pedestrian route. Like the destruction and ongoing impact of the I-94 freeway that devastated the Rondo community, this development compounds and perpetuates a legacy of environmental racism that has limited safe, affordable and sustainable transportation options and put the burden of pollution and high-speed streets on our Black and brown communities.

Is contrary to St. Paul's commitment to racial equity in it's Comprehensive Plan and the espoused values of city leaders
Leaders from the City of St. Paul consistently profess their commitment to racial equity and affordable housing. But, when it comes to decisions about real projects they fall back on inequitable policies and practices and the almighty free market as forces they are powerless to change. We hear from our city leaders that they have no leverage in a private land sale without subsidy. Equity calls for action to disrupt and root out systems of harm and racism; inaction condones and perpetuates these systems.

We call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.

***Caty Royce*, Frogtown Neighborhood Association**
651-236-8699

"There is never a moment in the future in which we will work out our salvation. The challenge is in the moment; the time is always now." James Baldwin

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Tia Williams <tia@frogtownmn.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:55 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary
Subject: Oppostion to the Lexington Apartments and Alatus development

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Dear PED-Zoning Committee Members,

We, the Frogtown Neighborhood Association, oppose the Lexington Apartments/Alatus development proposal for the below reasons:

Proposal is not affordable to existing neighborhood residents. In the surrounding neighborhoods (Midway, Rondo, and Frogtown) a large percentage of the households earn less than $35,000. The residential areas within a half mile of the Lexington Station are over two-thirds renters, where nearly half are already cost-burdened. The proposed rents for this project triples the median rent- with costs so high they exceed the "Fair Market Rent" set by HUD, putting the whole building out of reach for residents with Section 8 vouchers.

Actively advances displacement and gentrification. Atalus says "the goal of revitalizing communities through transformative real estate development" by "develop[ing] and deliver[ing] outstanding luxury apartment and condominium products." We know those "outstanding products" aren't for us and "revitalizing" means remaking our neighborhood for outside interests, people with "disposable income." It means development with displacement.

Does not align with the Lexington Station Area Plan. While the Lexington Station Area Plan calls for increased mobility and safety for people walking, biking and taking transit, this development violates the minimum sidewalk width and blocks the path of a proposed East-West bikeway and pedestrian route. Like the destruction and ongoing impact of the I-94 freeway that devastated the Rondo community, this development compounds and perpetuates a legacy of environmental racism that has limited safe, affordable and sustainable transportation options and puts the burden of pollution and high-speed streets on our Black and brown communities.

Proposal is contrary to St. Paul's commitment to racial equity in it's Comprehensive Plan and the espoused values of city leaders. Leaders from the City of St. Paul consistently profess their commitment to racial equity and affordable housing. But, when it comes to decisions about real projects they fall back on inequitable policies and practices and the almighty free market as forces they are powerless to change. We hear from our city leaders that they have no leverage in a private land sale without subsidy. Equity calls for action to disrupt and root out systems of harm and racism; inaction condones and perpetuates these systems.

We call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.

Respectfully,

Tia Williams
Co-Director, Frogtown Neighborhood Association

"This is not about perfection, but practice. Falling down and getting back up. Spectacular failures and learning how we can be and do better. Resiliency in the face of fear: Humility in the face of Ego: Faith in the face of hopelessness, This is about understanding organizing as a spiritual practice that is just as much about our souls as it is about our goals." Mia Mingus

Tia Williams
Co-Director
Frogtown Neighborhood Association/ District 7
(cell) 651-206-4408

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Cosa Lloyd <sam69.humboldt@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:45 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary
Subject: Opposition to the Lexington Apartments and Alatus Development

Dear PED-Zoning Committee Members,

We, the Frogtown Neighborhood Association, oppose the Lexington Apartments/Alatus development proposal for the below reasons:

Proposal is not affordable to existing neighborhood residents. In the surrounding neighborhoods (Midway, Rondo, and Frogtown) a large percentage of the households earn less than $35,000. The residential areas within a half mile of the Lexington Station are over two-thirds renters, where nearly half are already cost-burdened. The proposed rents for this project triples the median rent- with costs so high they exceed the "Fair Market Rent" set by HUD, putting the whole building out of reach for residents with Section 8 vouchers.

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Does not align with the Lexington Station Area Plan. While the Lexington Station Area Plan calls for increased mobility and safety for people walking, biking and taking transit, this development violates the minimum sidewalk width and blocks the path of a proposed East-West bikeway and pedestrian route. Like the destruction and ongoing impact of the I-94 freeway that devastated the Rondo community, this development compounds and perpetuates a legacy of environmental racism that has limited safe, affordable and sustainable transportation options and puts the burden of pollution and high-speed streets on our Black and brown communities.

Proposal is contrary to St. Paul's commitment to racial equity in it's Comprehensive Plan and the espoused values of city leaders. Leaders from the City of St. Paul consistently profess their commitment to racial equity and affordable housing. But, when it comes to decisions about real projects they fall back on inequitable policies and practices and the almighty free market as forces they are powerless to change. We hear from our city leaders that they have no leverage in a private land sale without subsidy. Equity calls for action to disrupt and root out systems of harm and racism; inaction condones and perpetuates these systems.

We call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.

Respectfully,

Cosandra Lloyd
Board Chair, Frogtown Neighborhood Association

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Faith Dietz <faithinthemidway@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 12:04 PM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary
Subject: Opposition of Alatus development

Good day

I oppose the Lexington Apartments/ Alatus development for these reasons:

Is not affordable to neighborhood residents
In the surrounding neighborhoods (Midway, Rondo, and Frogtown) a large percentage of the households earn less than $35,000. The residential areas within a half mile of the Lexington Station are over two-thirds renters, where nearly half are already cost-burdened. The proposed rents for this project triples the median rent- with costs so high they exceed the "Fair Market Rent" set by HUD, putting the whole building out of reach for residents with Section 8 vouchers.

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Backdoor meetings and decisions
When the community came out and disagreed and pushed back on this development, PED conversation stopped with community. On Christmas Eve, Alatus submitted paperwork to proceed when they thought no one would be paying attention and our officials went along with it. We the community are pushing back on this development that will further push gentrification forward.

I call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.

Faith Dietz
651-402-9357

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Isabel Chanslor <isazales@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:39 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary; Midway Rise Up
Subject: Midway RiseUp! Message of Opposition to the Lexington Apartments/ Alatus development

From Midway RiseUP!

We are a St. Paul group that is over 30+ strong and we oppose this development.

We oppose the Lexington Apartments/ Alatus development for these reasons:

Is not affordable to neighborhood residents
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We are a group that is over 30 residents strong who are working towards getting the Midway and surrounding neighborhoods protected from ever encroaching gentrification and increase the environmental equity of our community and city!

Is contrary to St. Paul's commitment to racial equity in it's Comprehensive Plan and the espoused values of city leaders
Leaders from the City of St. Paul consistently profess their commitment to racial equity and affordable housing. But, when it comes to decisions about real projects they fall back on inequitable policies and practices and the almighty free market as forces they are powerless to change. We hear from our city leaders that they have no leverage in a private land sale without subsidy. Equity calls for action to disrupt and root out systems of harm and racism; inaction condones and perpetuates these systems.

We call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.
Gracias,

isabel Chanslor
Independent Consultant for NonProfits and Small Businesses

651 587 3782
isazales@gmail.com

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: kristin howatt <kristinhowatt@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 11:50 AM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary
Subject: Apartment building in Midway.

I am a homeowner in the midway neighborhood and I am writing to share my concern with the proposed apartment building being built on Lexington Avenue next to Wilder.

Our neighborhood needs more affordable housing, not more luxury apartments. I oppose this new building that is being considered.

Please use our neighborhood space to create more affordable housing.

Thank you,
Kristin Howatt

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Karen J Larson <karenjcomic@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 12:10 PM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary
Subject: Development without Displacement

To Whom It May Concern:

We oppose the Lexington Apartments/ Alatus development for these reasons:

Is not affordable to neighborhood residents
In the surrounding neighborhoods (Midway, Rondo, and Frogtown) a large percentage of the households earn less than $35,000. The residential areas within a half mile of the Lexington Station are over two-thirds renters, where nearly half are already cost-burdened. The proposed rents for this project triples the median rent- with costs so high they exceed the "Fair Market Rent" set by HUD, putting the whole building out of reach for residents with Section 8 vouchers.

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We call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.

Respectfully,

Karen J Larson
Organizer/ Frogtown Resident
karenjcomic@gmail.com

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Jens Werner <jens@summit-university.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 12:14 PM
To: *CI-StPaul_PED-ZoningCommitteeSecretary
Cc: Xiong, Mai Chong (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Lexington Station Apartments: 20-102-273

To Whom it May Concern,

I am reaching out to express strong opposition against the proposed site plans for the Lexington Station Apartments/ Alatus Development.

The developer submitted their plans and triggered this hearing over the holidays, and unfortunately our organization has not had time to call a special Board meeting to weigh in on the site plans specifically. The developer submitted this application after nearly a year without communication with us (or the other District Councils that were engaged in 2019).

In October of 2019 our board of Directors voted to oppose the project that was presented, and to oppose the application for public funding of the project. Since the project has not changed since that point (in response to the concerns we raised), that opposition still stands.

Furthermore, upon recent review of the Lexington Station Area Plan, we found many places where the project does not align or support the City's and Community's vision for that area. This departure from the goals that have been formally identified and set through deep community engagement is very concerning, and should require community support to move forward, which it does not have at this time.

- The city intends to extend Fuller Ave further East to establish a safer East/ West route from Midway to the Capitol for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed project would build over this area, making these plans impossible moving forward.

- The area that this project is in is identified as an "Mobility Enhancement Area". The Lexington Station Area Plan calls for, at minimum, 14 foot sidewalk enhancements in this area. The proposed project only shows 12 foot sidewalks, and this should require a variance.

For these reasons, the submitted site plans should not be approved:

Is not affordable to neighborhood residents
In the surrounding neighborhoods (Midway, Rondo, and Frogtown) a large percentage of the households earn less than $35,000. The residential areas within a half mile of the Lexington Station are over two-thirds renters, where nearly half are already cost-burdened. The proposed rents for this project triples the median rent- with costs so high they exceed the “Fair Market Rent” set by HUD, putting the whole building out of reach for residents with Section 8 vouchers.

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We call on the Zoning Committee to reject the Alatus proposal based on these points and for the city to commit to engagement with directly impacted residents and neighborhood organizations to ensure community-driven development at this site.

--
Jens Werner
Executive Director
Summit University Planning Council
651-228-1855
www.summit-university.org

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Sign up for our newsletter!