



September 5, 2023

TO: Interested Review Parties and EQB Distribution List

FROM: Joshua Williams, Principal Planner, on behalf of
Nicolle Goodman, Director of Planning and Economic Development, City of St. Paul

SUBJECT: Record of Decision for the Hamline Midway Library EAW

As the Responsible Government Unit (RGU), the City of Saint Paul has prepared an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the proposed Hamline Midway Library Project at 1558 West Minnehaha Avenue in Saint Paul, MN. The project includes the demolition of the existing library building which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The EAW was distributed to agencies on the current Minnesota Environmental Quality Board distribution list and members of the public who requested notification. The 30-day comment period began on June 20, 2023 and comments were accepted through July 20, 2023.

Comment letters were received from the State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Department of Transportation, US Army Corps of Engineers, Metropolitan Council, one public group of 83 signatories, one non-profit organization, and 35 letters, emails, or online comments from the public. Responses to comments are included in Appendix A of the Record of Decision with copies of the comment letters.

Based on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet and agency and public comments for the above Project, the City of Saint Paul as the RGU for this environmental review concludes the following:

1. The Environmental Assessment Worksheet and related documentation for the Hamline Midway Library Project were prepared in compliance with the procedures of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act and Minnesota Rules, Parts 4410.1000 to 4410.1700.
2. The record demonstrates that implementation of this Project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects, and that any adverse effects associated with this Project can be mitigated through ongoing public regulatory authority and permitting. Therefore, the City of Saint Paul

makes a Negative Declaration and does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this Project.

If you have any questions about these findings, please contact:

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Encl. Record of Decision for the Hamline Midway Library EAW



August 31, 2023

RECORD OF DECISION

Hamline Midway Library EAW

I. ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Minn. Rules Sec. 4410, the City of Saint Paul has prepared an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the proposed demolition of the Hamline Midway Branch library building (Project). This Findings of Fact and Record of Decision addresses the State of Minnesota environmental review requirements as established in Minnesota Rule 4410.1700. Saint Paul Public Libraries (SPPL) is the project proposer, and the City of Saint Paul is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU).

The EAW was filed with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) and circulated for review and comments to the required EAW distribution list. A Notice of Availability for the initial EAW was published in the EQB Monitor on June 20, 2023. The public comment period ended July 20, 2023.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS

As to the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on this project and based on the record in this matter, including the EAW and comments received, the City of Saint Paul makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions:

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project involves the demolition of the existing Hamline Midway Library, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), to make space for a new 10,454 square foot library building.

B. PROJECT HISTORY

- The project was subject to a mandatory EAW per Minnesota Rule 4410.4300 Subpart 31 – Historic Properties.
- The EAW was submitted to the EQB on June 13, 2023 and distributed to the EQB mailing list on June 15, 2023.
- Public notice containing information about the availability of the EAW for public review was posted on the City of Saint Paul website, distributed electronically via the City's Early Notification System, and was published in the Saint Paul Pioneer Press on June 20, 2023. A press release was also provided by the City of Saint Paul.

Hard copies of the EAW were available for public review at City of Saint Paul City Hall and Environmental Conservation Library.

- Notice of availability of the EAW was published on June 20, 2023 in the *EQB Monitor*. The public comment period ended July 20, 2023. Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Metropolitan Council, one public group of 83 signatories, one non-profit organization, and 35 letters, emails, or online comments from

the public. Copies of these comment letters are hereby incorporated for reference and included in **Appendix A**.

C. CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Minnesota Rule 4410.1700, subp. 1, states "An EIS [Environmental Impact Statement] shall be ordered for projects that have the potential for significant environmental effects." In deciding whether a project has the potential for significant environmental effects, the RGU must consider the four factors set out in Minnesota Rule 4410.1700, subp. 7. With respect to each of these factors, the City of Saint Paul finds the following:

1. MINNESOTA RULE 4410.1700, SUBP. 7.A – TYPE, EXTENT, AND REVERSIBILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

- a. The type of environmental impacts and mitigation efforts anticipated as part of this project include:

Historic Resources: The proposed project includes the demolition of the Hamline Midway Branch library building, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Demolition of the Hamline Midway Library would remove the building, a historic resource, from the Hamline Midway neighborhood. The existing library building is proposed to be demolished to make space for a new library building on the site. Articulated goals for the project include providing improved accessibility, additional gathering space, separation of quiet and loud spaces, enhanced play and learning space, technology-rich environments, and energy and carbon use reductions of 90% through 2050. A Phase 1a Cultural Resources study was completed for the property and determined that the demolition of the existing library building will result in an adverse effect. Based on consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) pursuant to Minn. Stat. 138.665 Subd. 2 and evaluation through the environmental review process, the City has determined that the adverse effects from demolition can be mitigated by the actions described herein. These mitigation measures were accepted by SHPO and follow Minnesota Historic Property Record (MHPR) guidelines. Mitigation measures agreed upon by the SHPO through coordination with the City of Saint Paul and SPPL include:

- Development and installation of a publicly accessible interpretive display in the new library to include information regarding the historic Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch and the neighborhood it served;
- Level II Minnesota Historic Property Record of the building to include representative 35mm photographs of the historic building for eventual inclusion in the Minnesota Historical Society's Manuscripts Collection; and
- Intensive level survey and evaluation of thirty-two (32) parcels within the "Paust's Rearrangement Study Area" as identified in the 2018 report titled *Hamline-Midway Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota*.

Zoning and Land Use: The project is consistent with the Land Use Chapter of the City of Saint Paul 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the plan overall. Specifically, the project site is located in an identified Neighborhood Node, a geography intended to focus both public and private investment in community amenities. The project site is zoned T2 – Traditional Neighborhood District and a public library is a permitted use for land zoned T2.

Soil Disturbance: The project will involve some soil disturbance of the 14,300 square foot parcel. Erosion control best management practices (BMPs) such as silt fence, inlet protection, and a stabilized construction entrance will be in place during construction to reduce sedimentation and prevent erosion from the site.

Stormwater: During demolition as well as subsequent construction, erosion control best management practices (BMPs) such as inlet protection will be in place to protect stormwater from latent sediments. The locations of BMPs will be reviewed as part of the required site plan review process. The project will minimally change land cover of the site with a total project disturbance of less than one acre. Infiltration is not proposed for this site due to the close proximity of adjacent buildings with below-grade occupied space. Based on preliminary plans, stormwater will be directed to a stormwater retention vault located in the rear of the building. The proposed system will provide 80% Total Suspended Solids (TSS) removal and 60% Total Phosphorus (TP) removal. This system will address the B3 requirements but will require a variance to rate control requirements. During plan review and permitting, the City requires all site improvements that disturb over one-quarter of an acre to provide stormwater management.

Fish and Wildlife: The site does not provide significant habitat and the project is not likely to have an adverse effect on fish or wildlife given the existing conditions of the site. The City will require that the site is landscaped to replace trees, and other vegetation which may benefit wildlife such as pollinators.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Based on guidance provided by the MN Environmental Quality Board for the preparation of EAWs and using data sources such as the EPA Simplified GHG Emission Calculator, US EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager Target Finder, and other sources noted in the EAW, the project's predicted net GHG emissions are estimated at -4 CO₂e (metric tons per year). The improvement for the development is expected at 50 years, which gives a total 50-year CO₂ (metric tons per year) of 1,500 over the life of the development. The current estimate for the existing building based on US Department of Energy estimations is 4.2 GHG (kg/sq. ft.) of emissions per year when compared to the proposed concept of 2.9 GHG (kg/sq. ft.).

The City will require that the project follow the Saint Paul Sustainable Building Ordinance (SPSBO) and the Saint Paul Overlay requirements. The proposed project will follow the Minnesota B3 building guidelines.

Hazardous Materials and Construction Debris: Project activities will generate waste and debris typical of demolition and construction operations. Debris resulting from demolition of the existing structure will need to be disposed of following local rules and in approved facilities. Per the erosion control plan, the site will not be allowed to produce fugitive dust during construction and will use BMPs to control sediments. If contaminated or hazardous materials are encountered during demolition or construction, the contractor will be required to take necessary steps to remediate and or safely dispose of those materials per local, state, and federal laws.

- b. The extent and reversibility of environmental impacts for the proposed project are consistent with those of a demolition project. Impacts will be minimized to the extent practical and allowed by law.
2. MINNESOTA RULE 4410.1700, SUBP. 7.B – CUMULATIVE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF RELATED OR ANTICIPATED FUTURE PROJECTS
- a. As a separate and unrelated project, a planned supportive housing facility is proposed for construction 0.5 miles to the south of the Project site along Snelling Avenue. This project has a tentative date for initiation of construction of summer 2023 and completion in 2024. The project includes the removal of two existing one-story storefronts and the construction of a new three-story building addition. There may be a temporary elevated amount of construction traffic to the area. No other nearby projects are in planning phases or under construction.

- b. The proposed Hamline Midway Library project is not expected to increase traffic long-term. Overall, cumulative impacts that cannot be addressed through the review and permitting processes are not anticipated.
3. MINNESOTA RULE 4410.1700, SUBP. 7.C – THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENVIRONMENTAL AFFECTS ARE SUBJECT TO MITIGATION BY ONGOING PUBLIC REGULATORY AUTHORITY
- a. The following permits or approvals will be required for the project:

Table 1. Permits and Approvals Required

<i>Unit of Government</i>	<i>Type of Application</i>	<i>Status</i>
<i>State</i>		
Minnesota Department of Health	Geothermal system filing	To be obtained
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services	Sewer Access Charge	To be obtained
State Historic Preservation Office	MN Stat. 138.665 Mediation	Completed
<i>Local</i>		
<i>Saint Paul Regional Water Services</i>	Water supply connection	To be obtained
City of Saint Paul	Building Permit	To be obtained
City of Saint Paul	Site Plan Review	To be obtained
City of Saint Paul	Right of Way Permit	To be obtained, if necessary

- b. The City of Saint Paul finds that the potential impacts identified as part of the proposed project can be addressed through the regulatory agencies as part of the permitting process, as allowed by law.
4. MINNESOTA RULE 4410.1700, SUBP. 7.D – THE EXTENT TO WHICH ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS CAN BE ANTICIPATED AND CONTROLLED AS A RESULT OF OTHER AVAILABLE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES UNDERTAKEN BY PUBLIC AGENCIES OR THE PROJECT PROPOSER, INCLUDING OTHER EISs.

The City finds:

- 1. The proposed project includes various measures to reduce or mitigate for adverse impacts to the environment and existing resources.
- 2. The project is subject to local, regional, state, and federal requirements.
- 3. The project proposer will secure any necessary or required permits and will adhere to all requirements of the permits, as allowed by law.

4. Considering the results of environmental review and permitting processes for similar projects, the City of Saint Paul finds that the environmental effects of the project can be adequately anticipated, controlled, and mitigated.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The Hamline Midway Library EAW and comments received have generated information adequate to determine that the proposed project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects that cannot be controlled or mitigated.

The EAW has identified areas where the potential for environmental effects exist, but appropriate mitigation measures can be incorporated into the project plans and the required approvals and permits to mitigate these effects will be obtained. The project will comply with all local, county, and federal review agency requirements.

Based on the criteria established in Minnesota Rule 4410.1700, and the Findings of Fact and Conclusions, the project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects to trigger the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Therefore, an EIS is not required for the project.

III. COMMENTS RECEIVED AND COMMENT RESPONSES

Pursuant to Minnesota Rules, part 4410.1700, the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) shall maintain a record, including the findings of fact, supporting its decision. The RGU shall include in the document a section specifically responding to each timely, substantive comment received. Substantive comments are those that relate to the environmental review and analysis of the proposed project.

The 30-day comment period for the EAW began on June 20, 2023, and comments were accepted through July 20, 2023. Comments from agencies and the public that were received during the comment period are summarized. Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Metropolitan Council, one public group of 83 signatories, one non-profit organization, and 35 letters, emails, or online comments from the public. The comment responses and full comment letters are included in **Appendix A**.

Responsible Government Unit Decision attested to by:

Nicolle Goodman
Nicolle Goodman (Aug 31, 2023 17:06 CDT)

Nicolle Goodman, Director of the Department of Planning and
Economic Development

Aug 31, 2023

Date

8/31/2023

Hamline Midway Library EAW

Response to EAW Comments

A. Overview

Pursuant to Minnesota Rules, part 4410.1700, the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) shall maintain a record, including the findings of fact, supporting its decision. The RGU shall include in the document a section specifically responding to each timely, substantive comment received. Substantive comments are those that relate to the environmental review and analysis of the proposed project.

An Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) is defined as a brief document designed to set out the basic facts necessary to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required for a proposed project. The primary purpose of the EAW is to inform the public about the proposed project and the project's potential impact on the environment. An EAW is not an approval process. Instead, the information disclosed in the EAW process has two functions: to determine whether an EIS is needed, and to indicate how the project can be modified to lessen its impact on the environment. Such modifications may be imposed as conditions of any future approvals.

The 30-day comment period for this EAW began on June 20, 2023, and comments were accepted through July 20, 2023. Comments from agencies and the public that were received during the comment period are summarized in this Appendix. Comments were received from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Metropolitan Council, one public group of 83 signatories, one non-profit organization, and 35 letters, emails, or online comments from the public. Full comment letters are also attached.

B. Comments from Agencies

1. State Historic Preservation Office

Comment	Response
<p>Since issuance of our initial comment letter on May 24th, we have continued consultation with the City and SPPL to reach agreement on a suitable course of action to mitigate for the loss of the historic property. We are currently in the process of formalizing agreement with the City and SPPL on proposed mitigation which is anticipated to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and installation of a publicly accessible interpretive display in the new library to include information regarding the historic Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch and the neighborhood it served; • Level II Minnesota Historic Property Record of the building to include representative 35mm photographs of the historic building for eventual inclusion in the Minnesota Historical Society’s Manuscripts Collection; and • Intensive level survey and evaluation of thirty-two (32) parcels within the “Paust’s Rearrangement Study Area” as identified in the 2018 report titled <i>Hamline-Midway Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota</i>. 	<p>Subsequent to the close of the comment period, the State Historic Preservation Office formally approved the mitigation measures developed in consultation with the City and SPPL and described in the comment..</p>

2. Minnesota Department of Transportation

Comment	Response
<p>The Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has reviewed the EAW and has no comments.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>

3. US Army Corps of Engineers

Comment	Response
<p>If the proposal involves activity in navigable waters of the United States, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers’ jurisdiction under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (Section 10).</p> <p>If the proposal involves discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers’ jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA Section 404).</p>	<p>The proposed project will not involve activity in navigable waters and will not discharge dredged or fill materials into a water of the US.</p>

4. Metropolitan Council

Comment	Response
The staff finds that the EAW is complete and accurate with respect to regional concerns and does not raise major issues of consistency with Council policies. An EIS is not necessary for regional purposes.	Comment noted.

C. Comments from the Public

Comments were received that expressed both support of and opposition to the project. Several themes related to the EAW were identified in the substantive public comments received. These themes are summarized below in **Table C.1**. If an individual comment letter repeated the same theme several times, it was noted once in number of comments. Comment themes related to the environmental review are included below. Responses to these themes are included for substantive comments. Comments that were within as well as outside the scope of the environmental review are also attached and included for the record.

Table C.1 Summary of Comment Themes

Code	Comment Theme	Number of Comment Letters	Number of Signatures
1	Carbon Reduction	11	93
2	Sustainability	7	89
3	Historic Preservation	6	88
4	Alternatives Analysis	10	92
5	Natural Environment	1	1
6	MERA Statute	2	84
7	Demolition Air Quality	1	1

Table C.2. Responses to Comment Themes

Comment Summary	Response
1. Carbon Neutral Goal	
Several comments discussed how demolition is carbon intensive and it will take 50 years to make up for embodied carbon released from tear down and rebuild of the existing building ("the most sustainable building is the one that is already built"). It was expressed that reuse is a positive carbon mitigation measure and the reduction of emissions is imperative to reducing further climate effects.	<p>It is generally the case for small building projects such as the proposed project that more than 50% of embodied carbon will be in the building's concrete foundation. Concrete is recognized as being very carbon intensive. The existing building's concrete foundation would require at least partial replacement to repair sections of poor foundation and to update the HVAC system regardless of whether the above-ground portion of the building is renovated or demolished.</p> <p>The proposed building incorporates design measures that will reuse and recycle materials to prevent them from going into a landfill. The</p>

proposed building will follow Minnesota's Buildings Benchmarks and Beyond ("B3") guidelines designed to make building projects more energy efficient and sustainable. For example, 75% of construction debris will be recycled and other materials will be reused in the proposed building's design.

During the anticipated life expectancy of the proposed building, a significant amount of its carbon footprint will come from energy used for lighting, heating, and cooling. The proposed building will be built to high energy efficiency standards which will dramatically reduce the energy required for lighting, heating and cooling on a per square-foot basis. For example, the proposed building will use 85% carbon-free electricity and no natural gas. In contrast, the existing building is not insulated. Insulating the existing building would likely require construction of additional walls, usually around the exterior of the building with new building materials which will hide the building's existing exterior elements.

Based on MN Environmental Quality Board ("EQB") guidance and data sets used to complete the EAW, the proposed building, when compared to the existing building, will result in a net reduction of -4 CO2 (metric tons per year) based on the US Department of Energy estimations. These calculations considered the energy use and materials of the existing and proposed buildings. Although the expected lifespan of improvement in the proposed building is calculated at 50 years, the expected lifespan of the proposed building will be greater than 50 years and therefore will produce a net benefit to carbon emissions in the long term.

There are no mandatory EAW or EIS greenhouse gas (GHG) emission thresholds. However, during a recent process undertaken by the EQB to integrate climate into environmental review, a threshold for projects that resulted in cumulative GHG emissions upwards of 100,000 tons per year CO2 equivalent was proposed but not adopted. That emission amount is substantially higher than the emissions that will result from the proposed project. As project proposer, the City will use B3 standards to ensure the energy efficiency of the proposed building and use 85% carbon-free electricity. Compliance with these standards will be ensured through the subsequent review and permitting processes for the proposed building.

2. Sustainability

Demolishing the building does not agree with the environmental and climate change mitigation plans and messaging of the City.	The proposed project will be required to follow the City’s Sustainable Building Ordinance and Saint Paul Overlay rules.. The project will be designed to Minnesota B3 guidelines.
Demolition will add more construction materials to landfills.	75% of waste from project demolition will be recycled. Some demolition debris will end up in a landfill, however, construction debris would be the result of both the proposed project and a building renovation or expansion. The proposed new library building is being designed to a high energy efficiency standard that will result in less carbon emissions long-term.
3. Historic Preservation	
Several comments discussed how demolishing the library will have an adverse effect and that Section 15 of the EAW does not meet the requirement to discuss any anticipated effects to the historic property, as well as measures that will be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to historic properties. These comments expressed that the draft EAW does not address the impact that allowing the demolition of this historic structure will have on historic preservation efforts in St. Paul.	<p>The EAW and Phase Ia Cultural Resources Report identify that the demolition of the existing library will have an adverse effect to the historic resource. In consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the City has determined that this adverse effect can be mitigated. The City and SPPL consulted with SHPO on a course of action to mitigate for the loss of the historic property per Minn. Stat. 138.665 Subd. 2. Mitigation measures proposed by SHPO and accepted by SPPL include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and installation of an interpretive display in the new library to include information regarding the historic Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch and the neighborhood it served; • Level II Minnesota Historic Property Record of the building to include representative 35mm photographs of the historic building for eventual inclusion in the Minnesota Historical Society’s Manuscripts Collection; and • Intensive level survey and evaluation of thirty-two (32) parcels within the “Paust’s Rearrangement Study Area” as identified in the 2018 report titled <i>Hamline-Midway Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota</i>. <p>The City will require SPPL to meet these mitigation measures.</p>
Several comments were related to the idea that historic buildings connect people to personal human history, they preserve architecture and save craft and building skills of historic nature, or that they provide a continuity that bridges generations, creating connectivity and adding to a community’s resilience, and if the building is demolished these attributes will be lost.	The design of the new library will connect to the old building and will reuse building materials and certain character-defining features of the old building such as the front entry archway, incorporating them in the new design. Various mitigation measures developed in consultation with SHPO pursuant to Minn. Stat. 138.665 Subd. 2 will document the historic nature of the building associated with the neighborhood.

<p>Preservation is supported by the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.</p>	<p>The 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan was prepared as required by the Metropolitan Land Planning Act and was adopted by the Saint Paul City Council on November 18, 2020. The Heritage and Cultural Preservation Chapter of the 2040 Saint Paul Comprehensive sets forth goals and specific policies which support the preservation and management of historic resources. Policies under Goal 4 of the Heritage and Cultural Preservation Chapter addresses City investments that involve historic and cultural resources and broader City priorities. Specifically, Policy HP-16 under Goal 4 directs the City to “Balance the preservation of a historic and/or cultural resource and new development by considering” various factors including “potential for displacement of area residents and businesses; evolution of the neighborhood and how neighborhood change is occurring; long-term benefit-cost analysis and impact; and appropriateness of mitigation activities should the resource be compromised or lost.”</p>
<p>4. Alternatives Analysis</p>	
<p>Many comments mention that renovation and expansion are viable alternatives to demolition and were not discussed in the EAW. These comments also included themes related to how the EAW did not discuss the greenhouse gas generation comparisons for each alternative and considering the embodied energy of an existing building.</p>	<p>This EAW evaluates the environmental effects which may be associated with the demolition of the existing library and does not evaluate alternative projects such as the renovation or expansion of the library.</p>
<p>5. Natural Environment</p>	
<p>Comments included concern about removal of trees</p>	<p>The project will remove two existing trees and will plant four new trees.</p>
<p>The project will cause disruption to surrounding nature.</p>	<p>As discussed in Sections 10 and 14 of the EAW, most of the surrounding area is urban housing or businesses with few natural areas. There is currently 0.12 acres of lawn space at the existing library parcel. Upon completion of the project, new planters and landscaping will provide native and ornamental trees, shrubs, and forbs that provide a pollinator benefit.</p>
<p>.6. MERA Statute</p>	
<p>Demolition of historic resources is not permitted unless the owner of the building can demonstrate that there is <i>no feasible and prudent alternative</i>.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The MERA statute and its applicability to this project are presently in litigation under Ramsey County District Court File No. 62-CV-23-3046 State of Minnesota by Renovate 1558 Association v. The City of Saint Paul and the Saint Paul Public Library. However, the purpose of this EAW is to evaluate the environmental effects which may be associated with the proposed demolition of the existing library building and is not an evaluation of or exploration into alternative projects.</p>
<p>Under MERA, it is deemed “in the public interest to...protect air, water, land and other natural resources located within the stat from pollution, impairment, or destruction”. A historic resource is a protected natural resource.</p>	
<p>Under MERA, the City failed to explore alternatives to demolition of a historic resource.</p>	

7. Demolition Air Quality

A comment expressed concerns over the amount of pollution that demolishing will have on the neighborhood.

The contractor will be required to control fugitive dust during demolition of the existing building as will be outlined in their erosion control plan. If hazardous or contaminated materials are encountered during building demolition, they will be remediated following local and state regulations.

RENOVATE 1558
REIMAGINING THE HAMLINE MIDWAY LIBRARY
www.Renovate1558.org

July 20, 2023

Josh Williams
Principal Planner,
Planning & Economic Development
1400 City Hall Annex,
25 West Fourth Street
St. Paul, MN 55102
HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

Re: Proposed demolition and reconstruction of the Hamline Midway Library

Dear Josh:

On behalf of Renovate 1558 and other signatories to this document, we submit the following public comment in response to the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) issued by the city as the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) in the above matter.

BRIEF OVERVIEW

As noted on page 16 of the Blondo Consulting report included in the EAW, the “Hamline Midway Library was historically known as the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch....It was built in 1930 along with the Merriam Park Branch library through a trust established from the estate of Henry Hale, a wealthy Saint Paul philanthropist. Hale was a lawyer and real estate investor, who moved to Saint Paul with his wife in 1856. They lived in the Lafayette Park neighborhood starting in 1867 where they became heavily involved in the community.”

In 2018, after more than a decade of disinvestment in the Hamline Midway Branch, including an attempt to shutter the building in 2009 that was met with fierce neighborhood opposition, the Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL) “established a Strategic Planning Team in partnership with the communities served by the library to develop a Strategic Direction plan.” While this process was purportedly designed to “inform strategic planning goals,” the random nature of “empathy interviews,” community pop-up meetings, and limited public engagement actually served to minimize neighborhood participation. In fact, as internal emails between library staff and city officials demonstrate, the goal of SPPL

leadership from the start of the planning process was always to construct a new building to replace the existing Hamline Midway branch, and any alternatives to that outcome were dismissed out-of-hand. Similarly, neighborhood opposition to a building teardown—which proved to be substantial—was simply labeled as “not representative” of the community, contrary to overwhelming public support in favor of renovation.

Despite these tactics—and deliberate efforts by the Saint Paul Mayor’s office and SPPL leadership to undermine any efforts aimed at preservation of the existing building—on January 30, 2023, the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch, was successfully listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). While this public recognition has not deterred the mayor or his administration from doggedly pursuing demolition of a now historically-recognized building, the library’s NRHP status requires a mandatory EAW be completed by the RGU before any alteration or deconstruction of the building can happen.

PURPOSE OF EAW

As detailed on the [Minnesota Environmental Quality Board website](#), the “environmental assessment worksheet (EAW) is a brief document designed to lay out the basic facts of a project necessary to determine if an environmental impact statement (EIS) is required for the proposed project. In addition to the legal purpose of the EAW in determining the need for an EIS, the EAW also provides permit information, informs the public about the project, and helps identify ways to protect the environment.”

EAW INHERENTLY FLAWED & BIASED

As will be demonstrated in the following sections, the EAW for the Hamline Midway Library is wholly inadequate, relying almost exclusively on SPPL or city administration talking points, glossing over feasible alternatives to demolition (including renovation or relocation), failing to address the true community impacts when historic buildings are removed, and misrepresenting the likely cost of constructing a new building on the 1558 Minnehaha Avenue site. Because of these deficiencies, the RGU has produced an EAW that is incomplete and inaccurate, does not sufficiently address mitigation considerations, and is the product of bias.

Due to its myriad flaws, the EAW wrongly concludes that no Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is necessary. However, it is clear that the proposed teardown of the Hamline Midway Library will have significant environmental effects, given that the project contemplates the complete demolition of a historic resource. Thus, an EIS must be prepared that will accurately assess the far-ranging impacts that demolition of an NRHP-listed property will have on the community. We also believe the EIS will show the city to be

in violation of its obligations under the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA) to protect historic and cultural resources from destruction.

I. Accuracy and Completeness of Information

From the outset, the EAW misrepresents the quality of public engagement conducted by SPPL, the level of community support for a new building to replace the current library, the condition of the existing building, and the inflation-adjusted cost for removal and replacement of the historic Henry Hale Library. As such, the EAW does not accurately represent either the basic facts or the overall scope of the project, undercutting the EAW's purpose and value.

a. Flawed Public Engagement

Contrary to statements contained in the Blondo Consulting "Phase 1a Cultural Resources Assessment for the Proposed Saint Paul Public Library- Hamline Branch," the Hamline Midway Library has *not* "undergone extensive public comment and review to determine the future of this community library." In fact, the community engagement process that SPPL staff and LSE architects created deliberately minimized public interaction, with just two in-person gatherings held and public comment limited to one-on-one conversations and placing sticky notes on pre-arranged topic boards. SPPL also took the unprecedented step of forming an "invite-only" cohort of handpicked "Community Ambassadors" that met in private. Not only was the cohort composed primarily of city employees and individuals not residents of the Midway neighborhood, no contact information for the ambassadors was shared with the public despite the expectation that the ambassadors would serve as liaisons with community members about the library planning process. (A community member and library ally who was invited to the rarified Ambassador's table was so alarmed by the closed-door process that she elected not to participate.)

As part of its strategy, SPPL simply ignored the opinions of the nearly 3,000 people who signed our change.org petition opposing demolition, the hundreds of signatures we gathered from library patrons and those living in the surrounding neighborhood who favor renovation and preservation, and letters of support for renovation from Historic Saint Paul, the Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, and the cofounders of the East Side Freedom Library.

b. No Proof of Public Consensus for a New Library

While it may be true that SPPL "engaged more than 3,000 additional people through a series of virtual and in-person open houses, pop-up events, community meetings, and

surveys” in 2021 and 2022, it is ridiculous for SPPL to assert that any kind of meaningful public consensus about the library had been reached when the online survey it designed failed to ask the most important question facing the community: do you favor renovation and expansion of the library or demolition and rebuild? Furthermore, there is no evidence that the pop-up events, including one held unannounced at Cub Foods, only surveyed Saint Paul residents or folks who actually patronized the Hamline Midway Library.

Unfortunately, Blondo Consulting did not attempt to validate this information; its principal investigator merely cited SPPL’s own claims that “there was overwhelming support for libraries that maximize accessibility for all community members, are environmentally responsible, reflect the cultures of the community, and provide new spaces for families and teens to play and learn....”

No EAW can be deemed to provide complete and accurate public information about a project when it simply repeats unsubstantiated claims offered by the entity proposing the project, particularly when there is *no reliable data that SPPL can produce* to confirm that the people SPPL allegedly surveyed believed the above goals could only be achieved with a new rather than renovated building.

What the Blondo Consulting cultural assessment in the EAW also fails to disclose is that in March of 2021, as part of the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB), 318 people completed a survey indicating their preference for which projects should receive CIB funding, with 69% ranking “renovation of the Hamline Midway Library” as their highest priority, compared to 48% who preferred a “rebuild” of the library. More importantly, survey respondents overwhelmingly ranked the “rebuild” option as the lowest priority among the choices for CIB funding.

Despite this feedback, SPPL submitted a proposal in mid-April of 2021 seeking CIB funding just for demolition and rebuild of the existing library. Only after intense pushback from the neighborhood did SPPL “revise its proposal” to include the option for “Renovation and expansion of the current building.”

This information was all part of the public record, yet no mention is made in the EAW of the results from this independent survey. Further, no mention is made anywhere that a group like Renovate 1558 exists—or that organized opposition to demolition of the Hamline Midway Library formed nearly three years ago. Instead, the talking points of SPPL are routinely treated as fact, with the EAW simply becoming an extension of the publicity campaign SPPL has waged the past three years falsely claiming that only a brand-new building can possibly meet the future needs of the Library and its patrons.

c. Negative Exaggerations of Building Condition

On page 3 of the EAW, it is stated that the “project involves the demolition of the existing building, including foundation removal which is in poor condition and needs to be replaced.” No substantiation is given for this statement, nor is any consultant report cited that backs up this claim.

On page 2 of the Blondo Consulting Cultural Assessment, it is written that the Hamline Midway Library’s “outdated heating, ventilation and air conditioning system does not meet modern standards, and it is the only library in the city’s system that does not have an integrated air exchanger.” The quote is attributed to *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* reporter Fred Melo. Melo’s source? SPPL’s application for CIB funding to build a new library.

Later, on the same page, Melo is again quoted, writing that “Wet walls and floors have been an issue, as is restroom access, which is located in the basement-like lower level, far out of view of library staff on the main floor.” Melo’s source for this quote? A “preliminary assessment” attributed to no entity or consultant.

While it may be common practice that local newspaper reporters simply quote statements from city sources as fact, for a professional report to do the same is both sloppy and misleading. It is also insufficient to satisfy the purpose of an EAW, which is to disclose information necessary to determine whether an EIS is needed. Interestingly, in the same article quoted above, Melo writes:

Calling those concerns exaggerated, an organized group of historic preservationists and neighborhood advocates (“Renovate1558.org”) have accused the library system of prioritizing a complete rebuild over a historically-sensitive renovation. Some have even called for preserving the existing building as is for new uses while moving library services off-site, perhaps adjoining a recreation center.

Not surprisingly, the above passage does not appear in the Blondo Cultural Assessment.

But if unattributed statements are treated as facts, how can an EAW be considered “accurate and complete” if only SPPL is allowed to control the information flow?

Had the author of the Blondo report been after accuracy, she could have discovered that contrary to the statements printed by Melo, the facility condition assessments that SPPL commissioned for the Hamline Midway Library did not find the foundation to be in “poor condition” or that water filtration was a grave problem that could only be solved through demolition. In fact, in a May 5, 2021 email to SPPL leadership, an HGA consultant who reviewed that firm’s earlier condition assessment reported that the basement water

problem resulted from paving and grading issues—not damage to the foundation—and that “spalling concrete” and “exposed rebar” in one room could be repaired.

It is also important to note that the exaggerated focus by SPPL on the allegedly “poor condition” of the library building was a strategic decision by SPPL leadership to “demonize” the structure in the minds of patrons and neighbors in order to justify the push for demolition and rebuild rather than renovation. For example, in an April 8, 2021 email to Library Marketing and Communications Manager Stacy Opitz, who was preparing the “case review” document for the three libraries slated for “transformation,” former Library Director Catherine Penkert advised Opitz to stress that the \$21.1 million budget would be used to “transform 3 crumbling neighborhood locations... Crumbling isn’t the right word but you get where I’m going – emphasize the old and falling down.”

Subsequently, when the case review document was released to the public, only the description of the Hamline Midway Library featured the words “constraints,” “poorly-functioning,” “significant issues,” and “problems,” while descriptions of the other libraries merely referenced the “improvements” that were necessary to update those buildings. Similarly, a March 29, 2021 email from Barb Sporlein, former SPPL Deputy Director of Operations, to Planning Director Luis Pereira regarding the condition of the Hamline Midway Library, asserted that “every building component is failing and in critical condition—all must be replaced or upgraded.” However, a condition assessments report by the Ameresco company found only the air conditioning HVAC pumps and chillers to be in “critical condition”; all other building components were described as in “fair” or “good” condition.

d. Demonizing the Opposition

One of the unfortunate consequences in many battles over historic preservation is that they have the power to divide communities, an outcome that can tear at the fabric of civil society and neighborliness. While such rancor can result from developers pushing to tear down single-family homes in favor of more lucrative McMansions or multi-family properties, false charges leveled against the opposition by city officials seems inimical to how local governments should function. Yet this kind of demonizing of the opposition is exactly what city officials have orchestrated against Renovate 1558, with a “whisper campaign” hatched within SPPL in the fall of 2021 alleging that members of our neighborhood group had disparaged those pushing for a new library, culminating in a letter from Deputy Mayor Jamie Tincher (included as a part of this public comment) in which she claims that “Saint Paul Public Library and LSE professionals – a team of nearly all women and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color – have been cursed out, intimidated, demeaned, and bullied in this process while performing their professional duties.”

Obviously, any such behavior would be reprehensible, but at no point has any evidence been produced that this disrespectful behavior ever took place, let alone that it was the actions of someone identified with our group. It is no accident that Tincher's accusations were included in a response she sent to the Board Chair of the Hamline Midway Coalition who, in consultation with Renovate 1558, had requested that SPPL postpone plans to present only two design options at an upcoming public meeting, allow more time for public engagement before any final decision on the "design direction" was made, and for greater transparency and cooperation between the city and the district council. Tincher wrote that "interrupting the process does not bring us any closer to improving the library for the community and for the staff who work there," with the underlying message that the opinions of a "disrespectful" group like ours had no validity.

While we have no definitive proof as to who within SPPL instigated the smear campaign, these false allegations made by Tincher were repeated by staff at Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library, LSE Architects, and even the office of Councilmember Mitra Jalali. While personally attacking the opposition in this fashion may not be seen as damaging the natural environment, spreading false rumors is just as devastating as seeking to destroy a historic resource. As such, no EAW involving the Hamline Midway Library would be complete without revealing the depths to which city officials stooped in an attempt to undermine those who disagreed with them.

e. Understating True Costs for a New Library Building

In March of 2020, SPPL issued a "Facilities Direction Report" in which it projected the cost of a rebuild of the Hamline Midway Library to be \$5.835 million. A little more than a year later, SPPL submitted a request to the CIB Board for funding of \$8.1 million, an increase of nearly 40%. While some of that cost spike may have been due to modifications or additions to the project between 2020 and 2021, inflation-driven expenses in the past three years have reportedly increased project costs in Saint Paul by as much as 30%.

Yet more than two years later, with inflation running at 7% annually in 2021 and 2022 and wages up dramatically during that same period, the projected project cost remains fixed at \$8.1 million? That's completely implausible. Realistically, the cost of building a new library has now risen to somewhere between \$10.5 and \$12 million. Continuing to use a project estimate from April 2021 not only misleads the public, it dramatically understates the budget implications and other community impacts that will result from cost overruns that are being ignored.

II. Potential Impacts and Alternatives that Warrant Further Investigation

a. Feasible and Prudent Alternatives to Demolition

Under MERA, it is deemed “in the public interest to . . . protect air, water, land and other natural resources located within the state from pollution, impairment, or destruction.” As a building listed on the NRHP, the Hamline Midway Library is considered a historic resource, and historic resources are protectable natural resources within the MERA statute. By law, demolition of a historic resource is not permitted unless the owner of the building can demonstrate that there is *no feasible and prudent alternative*, such as renovation, repurposing, or selling/leasing the protected resource to another interested party. Because the EAW contemplates a project that would result in the complete destruction of a protected natural resource, it necessarily has significant environmental effects, and an EIS must be prepared to consider alternatives to the proposed project and explore methods for reducing adverse environmental effects. With respect to this project, there are numerous alternatives to destruction that should be considered through the preparation of an EIS.

In this case, at least one feasible alternative to demolition has already been identified—the so-called “**Option A**” renovation plan (see below) presented by LSE Architects, the firm hired by SPPL to develop concepts for a “reimagined” library as part of SPPL’s “Transforming Libraries” initiative.



“Option A” rendering of Hamline Midway Library, courtesy of LSE Architects

1. "Option A" would **preserve most of the existing structure**, expand the footprint at the rear of the building, and address accessibility issues in the front.

Option A was also cited as a feasible alternative by Sarah Beimers, Manager of the Environmental Review Program at the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). In a letter dated May 24, 2023, Beimers wrote: "It is our opinion that Option A – the rehabilitation of the existing historic library building with construction of a new addition at the rear – could be designed to meet the programming needs and preserve the building's status on the National Register."

But the letter went much further than that general statement. Beimers offered a step-by-step list of recommendations on how an expanded library could be achieved with Option A, suggestions that were conveniently ignored in the preparation of the EAW.

Because we view these recommendations as providing a blueprint for how the needs of the Hamline Library could be achieved within the existing building, we have reproduced the text of this "alternative analysis" in its entirety below (and in section II-b):

Utilizing existing library building information from the May 2022 predesign report, our comments on Option A are outlined below and are based upon this option's potential to be designed consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Standards). If designed consistent with the Standards, Option A would avoid adverse effect to the designated historic property under Minn. Stat. 138.665.

- **Size and Floor Plan:** It is not surprising that the neighborhood is in need of additional library and community space. Libraries are used differently than at the time this building was constructed. Accordingly, a major addition is a reasonable design response and other historic libraries in many Minnesota communities have addressed these needs through sensitive design and construction of building additions. Standards 9 and 10 provide guidance on how to design an addition to a historic building that meets contemporary use needs and avoids negatively impacting its integrity. While the overall footprint and size of the addition in Option A may be a bit larger than what would be considered appropriate under the Standards, overall, the proposal for this type of addition is acceptable.

- **Physical Plant Condition:** Option A includes rehabilitation of the historic library building which we assume would include upgrading of outdated heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, as well as electrical and plumbing upgrades. These are acceptable and typical scope items that, while sometimes challenging, can be resolved in a historic building rehabilitation project.

- **Community Engagement & Community Informed Library Design:** The SPPL has outlined the summary and results of engagement activities with the community during the design

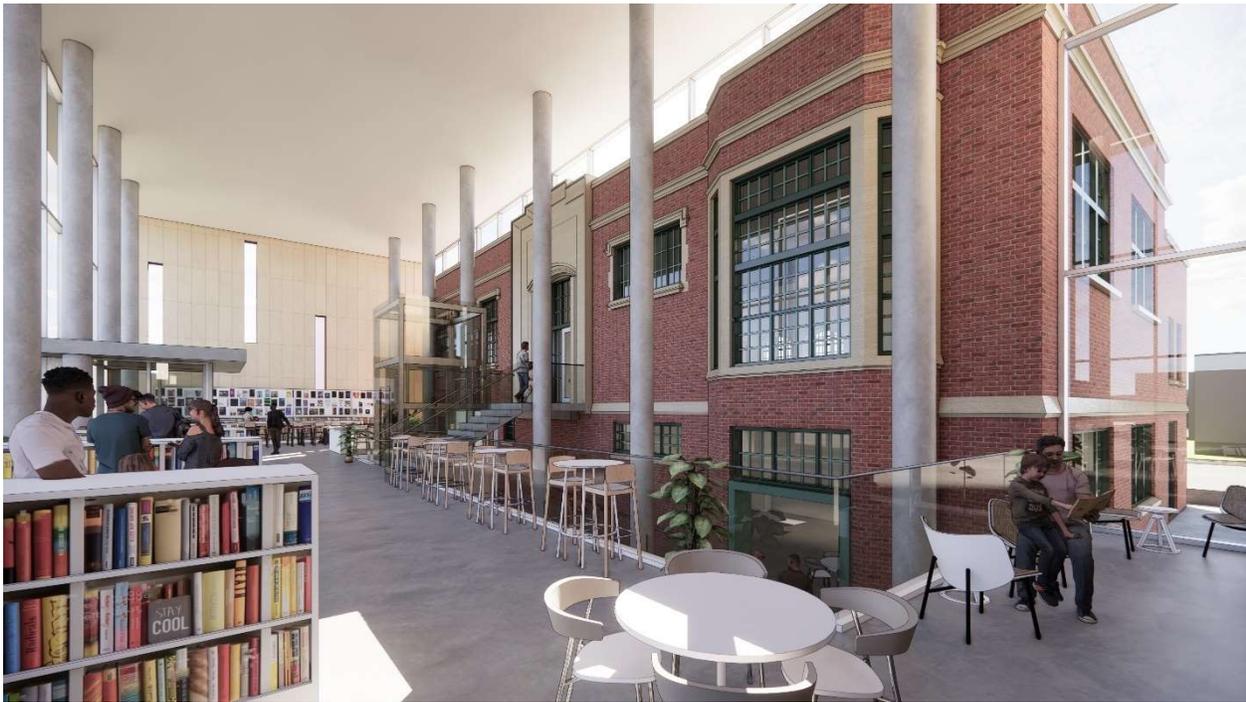
process, however, it's not clear from the materials provided that the historic significance and status of the Library (noted in the 2018 Hamline-Midway Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey) was presented at the start of engagement, Page 3 of 4 SHPO Number: 2023-1390 05/24/2023 and given continuing equal weight and consideration in either the community's or SPPL's consideration of alternatives.

- **Accessibility:** A building's accessibility to all is very important and we certainly agree accessibility improvements must be done to ensure continued use of a historic building within the community. The proposed Option A included an entry ramp and landscape which make the main entry fully accessible and appeared to meet Standards. Based upon the building analysis and documentation, we did not see that the historic building has any other ADA issues that cannot be overcome through interior modifications meeting the Standards.

Of note, the documentation provided by the SPPL on April 24th did not explore leasing or selling the Library and constructing a new facility elsewhere in the neighborhood as an alternative to demolition. There are examples in the City where schools, fire stations, and another library have been leased or sold in order to preserve them

While the SHPO analysis focused on Option A, there are other expansion alternatives (one of which is highlighted below) that LSE Architects chose not to explore.





2. As suggested by the above renderings, which were unveiled by Renovate 1558 at a public forum we hosted on April 19, 2022, the library footprint and programmable space could be expanded by adding a **glassed-in front, supported by new brick walls extending northward on the east and west ends of the building**, and eliminate the need to remove any exterior portion of the current building.

As noted in the Blondo report, a local precedent for this approach already exists. In 1972, when Hamline University was constructing the Giddens Learning Center, the project “absorbed the Old (Carnegie) Library in its design” and the front façade of the old library “was left largely intact and is used as an interior entryway within the Giddens Learning Center.”

3. In 2020, a group of concerned neighbors began exploring the idea of **relocating the Hamline Midway Library** to a larger site that would allow for expansion without demolition of the existing building. One possibility for such a move would be to collocate a new library with the existing Hancock Recreation Center.

Precedent exists for this option as well, with the Hillcrest Library and Rec Center and the Arlington Hills Library and Community Center two examples in Saint Paul where the city has successfully collocated facilities together on city-owned land. However, when this idea was brought to SPPL leadership, it was dismissed as “impractical” because such an arrangement did not fit with the Parks & Rec Department’s five-year budget. While the degree of “inconvenience” may be the guiding principle for how city departments operate, it is not a permissible defense under MERA for failing to explore alternatives to demolition of a historic resource.

4. Even if collocation were to be found not feasible, in the last couple of years several nearby buildings have become vacant and, in theory, might be available for lease or purchase. Among them are the **former CVS outlet**, which includes an ample parking lot and is conveniently located adjacent to the light rail station at Snelling and University. (Had the city been more proactive, it might have secured the three-years’ vacant **Hamline Hardware building** as a new library location. Just a stone’s throw from the current library, the presence of a “community resilience center” in the former hardware store site could have helped stabilize a struggling Snelling Avenue business district, now served by the A-Line rapid transit bus but still reeling from the civil unrest in 2020 that damaged or destroyed several buildings in the area.)

Unfortunately, because the city has remained focused on tearing down the library building in spite of its NRHP designation and overwhelming neighborhood support for renovation, no discussion or exploration of other alternative sites has been pursued. The city has also been unwilling to consider repurposing the existing building, an option for which there is also precedent: the former Arlington Hills branch library, one of three Carnegie Libraries in Saint Paul, which was leased to community members who successfully transformed the “Beaux-arts style” building into the now-thriving **East Side Freedom Library**.

5. While the city may not find a similarly-motivated community group willing to take on the responsibility of upgrading the Hamline Midway Library building, there are

likely several **private entities** that would be interested, given that they could avail themselves of **federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits**. A sale or lease of the building could also bring in funds to help defray the cost of a new building sited elsewhere.

Clearly, these potential alternatives need to be investigated further if the public and decisionmakers are going to have an accurate view of the present real estate landscape—a point echoed by Beimers in her analysis above.

b. The Greenest Building is One that is Already Built

In January 2022, the Saint Paul City Council declared that we are in the midst of a climate emergency and pledged to achieve carbon neutrality in city operations by 2030 and citywide by 2050.

Renovation of an existing building is the greenest, most environmentally responsible option for addressing climate change because of the negative impacts from embodied carbon involved in any new construction. That's why SPPL's emphasis on the supposed advantage of a new building's low carbon emissions is misplaced, because it completely ignores the significant spike in greenhouse gases that happens at the start of a project—as well as the embodied carbon in all the new building materials used. By doing so, SPPL makes new construction seem like the most sustainable option, when the "greenest building" is actually "the one that is already built."

This perspective is also shared by Sara Beimers of SHPO, whose letter referenced earlier debunks the notion that a new building is more "sustainable" than one, such as the Hamline Midway Library, that has been in existence for more than ninety years:

- **Sustainability:** The SPPL has indicated that a rehabilitated historic library under Option A would not meet current state or city sustainability standards or ordinances. However, it is important to note that a building's past energy performance is not included in any carbon mitigation calculations for the future and is not part of the existing building's embodied energy, as was indicated in the SPPL's memo. The "embodied energy" of an existing building is calculated solely in the materials the building is already built of. Therefore, the reused building immediately has a smaller carbon release than the new building, as it needs far fewer new materials.

The reuse of an existing building with energy upgrades (such as insulation and improved systems) is called out in Minnesota's Climate Action Framework as a positive carbon mitigation measure under Action Item 4.2.3. The carbon released to rehabilitate an existing building is almost always less than the carbon release of demolition (throwing away a reusable resource), the subsequent creation of new construction materials, and the

construction and transport of materials to make the new building. The carbon release for the new construction, especially a building with large amounts of glass, which is a carbon intensive material that has very poor energy performance, is not a positive carbon mitigation measure.

III. An EIS is required

By design, an EIS "covers social and economic influences, as well as environmental impacts, and looks at alternate ways to proceed with the project." Because data used to inform the EAW may be significantly biased, and this project touches on all factors included in an EIS—including discussions of an alternative approach, like those inexplicably dismissed by previous SPPL leadership—an EIS is the right vehicle to uncontroversially reveal the best outcome for this project.

Respectfully submitted,



On Behalf of Renovate 1558*, its members, supporters, and allies listed below

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Neighborhood Resilience Centers:

a case statement for infrastructure investment in Saint Paul's libraries

TRANSFORMING LIBRARIES

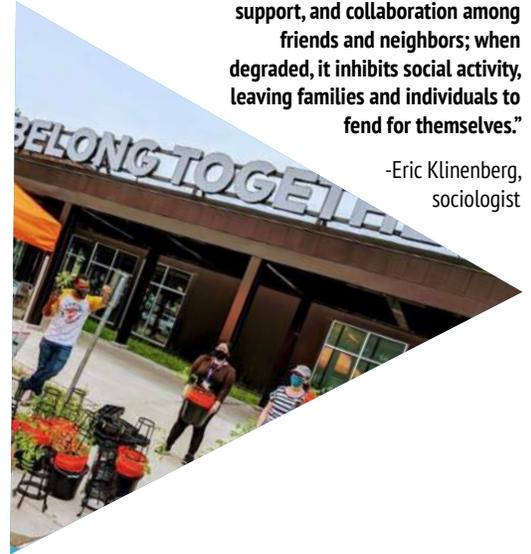
Imagine gathering spaces in our communities for neighbors to meet and connect, for job seekers to access WiFi and resume help, for children to discover and learn through play, and for community members to work, study, and access services. These free, accessible spaces that welcome everyone exist in our public libraries. They are neighborhood resilience centers.

Libraries are essential to our social infrastructure. Through extensive community dialogue, Saint Paul Public Library learned community members—across demographics and age groups—see their library as a space for exposure to new ideas and people and a place to connect with others.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we want to welcome and invite community members back into public spaces and into safe connection with each other. People will need time and space to process, heal, and transform. We have an opportunity to engage community members, across similarities and differences, to redesign the library spaces they want and need—now and for the next generation.

“When social infrastructure is robust, it fosters contact, mutual support, and collaboration among friends and neighbors; when degraded, it inhibits social activity, leaving families and individuals to fend for themselves.”

-Eric Klinenberg, sociologist



We dream of a library that is reflective of our beautifully diverse communities, a library that says out loud and clear that new and long-time residents, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, youth and members of the disability community are vital contributors to the story of our community.

We dream of a library that invites participation of people of varying abilities with dignity, accessibility, and ease.

-Hamline Midway Library Association

\$21.1 million capital investment

Transform three well-worn libraries and improve technology and play and learn space at all library locations

Technology-Rich Spaces

Libraries play a critical role in digital access and equity. Technology within library spaces must evolve to keep pace with the needs of community members.

All 13 Saint Paul Public Library locations and their meeting rooms will be enabled with technology to facilitate work and collaboration with outlets, projectors, video capability, and more.

\$1.5 million



Schaumburg Library



Anoka County Library



Free Library of Philadelphia

Spaces to Play and Learn

Investments in design can transform libraries from “shhh” to vibrant, interactive family learning centers.

All 13 Saint Paul Public Library locations will transform children’s areas to include spaces for quiet and loud play that spark curiosity, imagination, and wonder for children, teens, and all ages, supporting the social and cognitive development.

\$2 million

More on the changing role of libraries:

[TEDx: Reimagining the Public Library to Reconnect Community](#) | [Libraries as the Original Coworking Space](#)
[Brookings: Playbrary: A new vision of the neighborhood library](#) | [Breaking the Model: Community Centered Library](#)

OVER

Neighborhood Library Investments

These three libraries, situated across Saint Paul, are well-loved, well-used, and well worn. The buildings are outdated, struggle to support their high use, and have not been renovated in more than 30 years.

Hamline Midway Library



Built in 1930 | Last renovated in 1990

Continue to engage community to decide whether to renovate/expand or rebuild the Hamline Midway Library, a facility in disrepair, to create a vibrant community hub that works for all neighbors. Create spaces for books and collections, connection and gathering, learning and play, co-working, and more.

A community-informed redesigned library would address the building's space and technology constraints; poorly functioning mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; restroom conditions; significant accessibility issues; moisture and water infiltration problems; and more.

\$8.1 million

Hayden Heights Library



Built in 1955 | Last renovated in 1979

Transform Hayden Heights Library, a dated and well-worn building, into a dynamic, technology-enabled community space and resource hub in Saint Paul's Greater East Side neighborhood.

Renovations needed include but are not limited to: new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; windows, lighting, flooring, shelving and other furnishings; redesigned meeting spaces; improved technology capabilities; and exterior facade, parking lot, and landscaping improvements.

\$5.8 million

Riverview Library



Built in 1917 | Last renovated in 1989

Update historic Riverview Library to better meet the community's needs, building upon the cultural history of the West Side. Create a technology-rich, community gathering place and resource hub.

Renovations needed include but are not limited to: mechanical, electric, and plumbing systems; windows, lighting, flooring, shelving, service desk, and furnishings; redesign community room and staff work areas; improved technology capabilities; update restrooms and maintenance area; and improve exterior paving, concrete, and landscaping to better meet community needs today and in the future.

\$3.7 million



For more information, visit our Facilities Direction page at www.sppl.org.

MARCH 2021 ST PAUL CIB PUBLIC SURVEY	VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH	VOTES CAST	% HIGH & VERY HIGH
SPPL Hamline Midway Library Renovation	14	29	55	98	122	318	69%
Parks Citywide Tree Planting	4	22	73	83	136	318	69%
SPPL Riverview Library Reno	8	19	83	107	101	318	65%
SPPL Hayden Heights Library Reno	10	24	79	116	89	318	64%
North End Community Center	14	35	87	121	61	318	57%
PW Bruce Vento Elementary Safe Route to School	10	36	95	120	57	318	56%
Parks Outdoor Court Restoration	10	40	111	123	34	318	49%
Parks Children's Play Area Improvement	6	45	111	110	46	318	49%
SPPL Hamline Midway Library Rebuild	74	44	46	64	90	318	48%
Fire State #7	7	24	125	113	29	298	48%
Parks and Libraries Capital Asset Revitalization	7	38	123	86	64	318	47%
PW Randolph Bridge	15	58	108	100	37	318	43%
PW Marshall - Snelling to Albert Sidewalks	20	55	108	97	38	318	42%
Hayden Heights Play Area	10	48	130	100	30	318	41%

Opitz, Stacy (CI-StPaul)

From: Penkert, Catherine (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Friday, April 9, 2021 3:35 PM
To: Beth Burns
Subject: Fw: case statement for review
Attachments: capital-investment-case-statement.pdf

From: Opitz, Stacy (CI-StPaul) <Stacy.Opitz@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, April 9, 2021 10:33 AM
To: Penkert, Catherine (CI-StPaul) <catherine.penkert@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: RE: case statement for review

Hi Catherine,

I have incorporated all edits (I missed your previous edit on getting rid of the "re" framing so incorporated that into this one).

I will give HMLA a heads-up on their quote being used in this (and the removal of "more" from it).

Let me know if you have any final edits or tweaks.

-Stacy

Stacy Opitz
Library Marketing and Communications Manager
651-266-7006
she/her/hers

From: Penkert, Catherine (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 10:45 AM
To: Opitz, Stacy (CI-StPaul) <Stacy.Opitz@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: Re: case statement for review

This is headed in a really good direction. Love the use of photos. Thank you!

"These free and welcoming spaces that are accessible to all exist. They're called libraries." - reads as a little snarky. Maybe something like:

"These free, accessible spaces that welcome everyone exist in our public libraries, and the time is now to invest in making sure they're dynamic spaces for a new generation."

Small copy edit to website on back page - G in .orG is capitalized in the draft.

Maybe we should add Facilities Direction as banner on our homepage?

Other comments:

- HMLA quote - can we strike the "more" in the opening line - "we dream of a library that is ... reflective of our"? I would like to get the qualifier out of there if possible.
- Wondering if there's a need to make the \$21.1M reference clearer - description of the full package behind the \$21.1 on the front page.
 - Something like "\$21.1M = Transform 3 crumbling neighborhood locations + updates to technology and play at every library in Saint Paul"
 - Crumbling isn't the right word but you get where I'm going - emphasize the old and falling down.
 - Similarly, wonder if tech and play should emphasize 13 locations - make clear the reach of those items.
- Did you get my note in the email I sent with handwritten comments about the headline? Would like to get out of the RE/defining and RE/designing frame and move into transformational/transformative/future-oriented language.
- Maybe top line headline - the one in red - becomes "Neighborhood Resilience Centers: a case statement for infrastructure investment in Saint Paul's libraries"
- Back page - maybe there's intro text that includes a summary note about these 3 neighborhood branches being in significant disrepair and desperate need of modernization.

From: Opitz, Stacy (CI-StPaul) <Stacy.Opitz@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Thursday, April 8, 2021 10:07 AM
To: Penkert, Catherine (CI-StPaul) <catherine.penkert@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: case statement for review

Hi Catherine,

Attached is the case statement for your review.

- I did not work on HM's yet – waiting for decision to do that.
- I looks a little like a circus to me so I'm going to give design one more refinement.
- Will ask Therese to help with QR code.

Thanks!
Stacy

Stacy Opitz
Library Marketing and Communications Manager
Saint Paul Public Library
90 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-7006
stacy.opitz@ci.stpaul.mn.us
she/her/hers

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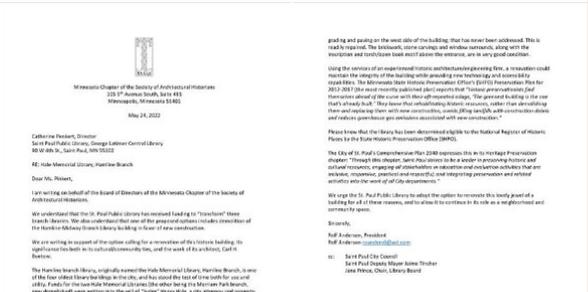
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0 new today
- Badge requests**
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Tom Goldstein
Admin · May 24 at 3:48 PM

Thank you Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians for your timely letter that spells out in detail exactly how a thoughtful renovation of the existing HM Library building can be achieved. The letter also reinforces our point that SPPL leadership has been doing the exact opposite by exaggerating the extent of building issues at every turn.



The letter text includes:

grading and paving on the west side of the building that has never been addressed. This is not to mention the broken, crumbling and broken concrete, along with the asbestos and lead paint that still covers the exterior, and is very problematic.

Using the content of an unredacted letter sent to the Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, a resolution could be reached on the strength of the letter with approval of the technology and accessibility issues. The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been in the past 2017 (the most recently published SHPO report that "without preconditions, the restoration of the east side of the building is not possible. The general building is in the state of already built" they have that unchallenging historic resources, rather than demolishing them and starting from scratch with new construction, such as the building, and reconstruction, and various preservation and conservation and other issues.

Please know that the library has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

The City of St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan 2040 expresses this in its Heritage Preservation chapter. "Through this chapter, some that intend to be a major or important historic and cultural resources, engaging of stakeholders in education and outreach activities that are inclusive, transparent, and open to all, and that engage preservation and cultural activities in the work of SHPO equipment.

We urge that St. Paul Public Library to adopt the option to renovate this lovely part of a building for all of these reasons, and to allow it to continue to its role as a neighborhood and community space.

Sincerely,
 Paul Anderson, President
 Paul Anderson, president@stpl.org

cc: St. Paul City Council
 St. Paul Public Library
 St. Paul Public Library
 St. Paul Public Library

Changes to public groups

Learn about key updates to yo

- Membership**
People can join rigl control who can pc
- Visitors**
By default, people v post.
- New tools**
There are now mor group safe.



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Paul Busch
I have to say that this has soured me on The Friends of the SPPL.
Like Share 2d Edited 2

Tom Goldstein Author Admin
Paul, with good reason. They have been 100% behind the teardown/rebuild option, working hand-in-glove with SPPL leadership. Seems like they've forgotten that their mission is to serve the St. Paul community, not library administration. Wonder if their Board of Directors is even paying attention.
Like Share 2d 3

Greg Giles
Tom Goldstein As a member of The Friends' staff (and speaking personally, not on behalf of any organization), it's simply not true that we've been "100% behind the teardown/rebuild option". And yes, our board has been very involved, including personally attending some of the feedback sessions that have been held since 2019 about the future of this branch and the other two branches being renovated.
Like Share 22h Edited

Tom Goldstein Author Admin
I stand behind my comments, and have seen at least one

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and equity, but chose instead to remain silent while "feedback sessions" which allowed little meaningful public input were passed off as "community engagement." I think Paul Busch is one of many folks who will become soured about the Friends organization if this decision stands.

Like Share 21h

Greg Giles
Tom Goldstein We do support whatever decision the library came to, and you are simply mistaken when you say that this was a fait accompli. I've actually been in those conversations, you haven't. The Friends exist to invest in the library, and have since 1945. We do not dictate what decisions the library makes, and we shouldn't. I am very pleased that, a mere 12 years after the previous administration planned to close this branch, we instead now have \$8.1 million invested in the community. I am pleased that the library spent three years engaging with over 1,000 Midway residents for their views on the library, and are pleased that there's going to be a library that will serve all residents of the community. Personally, Hamline-Midway was my first St. Paul library - since 1986. I was originally in favor of remodeling, but with time I have come to accept that this choice is the best option. You disagree, and you and your group were heard. I know that this

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Tom Goldstein Author Admin
You merely proved my point. YOU were in those conversations, not folks from the neighborhood; not people who patronize the library; not architectural historians who know how to thoughtfully renovate buildings to meet modern needs. The community engagement process that you're holding up as exemplary was a sham, as was the cherry-picking of responses by SPPL to justify an outcome that anyone who was following the issue knew was pre-ordained more than a year ago, as evidenced by the original CIB request from SPPL that sought funds only for a new building.
Like Share 18h

Greg Giles
Tom Goldstein 1,000 people were consulted. Including you. Including your group who showed up to shout at and harass library staff and the architects. Including hundreds of folks from the neighborhood. Including library patrons who actually patronize the library, not just show up to protest.
I was never asked for and never gave my opinion on options because it's not my call. The conversations I was in were people reporting ON the community feedback sessions, and there was no pre-ordained decision.

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Roy Neal Admin
Greg Giles

The only shouting I recall was from a council member at a open community forum Renovate 1558 hosted—and we let them say her peace, even though we disagreed wholly. **See our live stream post**

I'm unsure why honest and open criticism or feedback from the very community where the building sits is met with bitter defensiveness by SPPL and its uncritical supporters.

We have over 3,000 signatures on a petition. Those voices were ignored. Our clear response to misinformation posted to SPPL's FAQ have been ignored. We've talked with many library users who have felt ignored. We vowed to be their voice. Community input at CIB meetings and elsewhere that did NOT support a tear down were intentionally minimized by SPPL. We have tons of evidence of that. Many people who answered SPPL's biased surveys actually support renovation, even though some of the surveys didn't offer that as an option. Why was that, I wonder...

Like Share 17h

Tom Goldstein Author Admin

Posting a "laugh" emoji and engaging in an ad hominem attack is further indication of the weakness in your

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unacceptable to us. Your repeating those allegations here seems like nothing more than a brazen attempt to link our efforts to preserve the library with the inexcusable actions by someone who remains unknown to us. What a shame that you would engage in the same rumor mongering.

Like Share 18h

Greg Giles
Tom Goldstein So you're denying that it happened? You're saying that SPPL staff and LSE architects made it up? Really?

Like Share 18h

Greg Giles
Tom Goldstein And yes, I did literally laugh out loud reading your comment, because your leap is so absurd. So the laugh emoji is appropriate.

Like Share 18h

Greg Giles
Roy Neal I did watch your live stream post. As I've said, I've been very involved in the issue since the first meetings on this three years ago, and actually changed my mind on what I thought was the right option. You disagree with the decision made by staff, which is your right. However, I think some of the things you point to to justify your decision are

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Tom Goldstein Author Admin
Greg Giles, I think that continuing to link this alleged incident with Renovate 1558 despite our clearly stating that we condemn such behavior and have no knowledge of who this individual might be is nothing more than "guilt-by-association" tactics and unprofessional. It also reflects rather poorly on you and your organization.
Like Share 17h

Roy Neal Admin
Greg Giles Name one thing that's "incorrect" please.
Like Share 17h

Greg Giles
Roy Neal I've listed several in my comments here.
Like Share 17h

Greg Giles
Tom Goldstein "Alleged". I'm glad you condemn the behavior, even if you refuse to acknowledge that it happened.
Like Share 17h

Tom Goldstein Author Admin
Greg Giles, perhaps you should take the time to understand why alleged is the appropriate term here. You stated that "our group showed us to chat at and have...

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Roy Neal Admin
Greg Giles Name one thing that's "incorrect" please.
Like Share 17h

Greg Giles
Roy Neal I've listed several in my comments here. 😊
Like Share 17h

Greg Giles
Tom Goldstein "Alleged". I'm glad you condemn the behavior, even if you refuse to acknowledge that it happened.
Like Share 17h

Tom Goldstein Author Admin
Greg Giles, perhaps you should take the time to understand why alleged is the appropriate term here. You stated that "our group showed up to shout at and harass library staff and the architects." That's absolutely untrue. Someone may have done what you claim occurred, but we have no knowledge who that person might be. Continuing to attribute this alleged behavior to Renovate 1558 is disingenuous, unprofessional, and appears to have no purpose other than to discredit efforts to preserve and renovate the Hamline Midway Library building, for which there is overwhelming support within the community.

Reimagining the Hamline Midv

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Opitz, Stacy (CI-StPaul)

From: Jane Dederling <JDederling@hga.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 6:12 PM
To: Penkert, Catherine (CI-StPaul); Sporlein, Barb (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Mia Blanchett
Subject: Follow up on Hamline Midway Library
Attachments: 20190917_095200.jpg; 20190917_094150.jpg

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

Catherine & Barb -

It was great to speak with you last week and to learn about ALL the events happening for St. Paul Public Library. It is presenting some very exciting opportunities for SPPL!

As we discussed, I went back to look into the info we had documented for Hamline Library during our existing building assessment. I reviewed the images, notes, the assessment records and spoke to our friend Jennifer McMaster re: our observations at Hamline. As I remembered – there were some moisture issues and one room with spalling concrete and exposed rebar. It was our opinion at that time that the moisture could be attributed to the paving and grading at the building. With regard to the exposed rebar, Jennifer had also spoken to one of our structural engineers who felt the condition of the concrete in this room could be repaired.

The accessibility issues appear to be more costly and difficult to address and lastly – she felt it might be difficult to expand to the front due to the architecturally charming façade and the precedent of similar setbacks along the street. I hope this information will be helpful in your decisions regarding future investment in Hamline Midway Library.

Thank you again for giving us a call. We look forward to putting our team together in hopes we can continue to work with you both in the future!

All my best~
Jane

Jane Dederling, IIDA, Assoc. AIA, LEED AP
Vice President | Interior Design

HGA

333 East Erie Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202
D 414.278.3423
hga.com

Opitz, Stacy (CI-StPaul)

From: Richardson, Mike (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 3:24 PM
To: Sporlein, Barb (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Re: Can't believe I didn't think of this earlier given I'm a planner!! - SPPL needs some help re area plan consistency
Attachments: Hayden Heights Library CIB Plan Info.docx

Hi Barb,

See plan guidance for Hayden Heights attached. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,



SAINT PAUL
MINNESOTA

Mike Richardson

Senior City Planner
Pronouns: he/him/his
Department of Planning and Economic Development
25 West 4th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102
P: 651-266-6621
mike.richardson@ci.stpaul.mn.us
www.StPaul.gov

From: Sporlein, Barb (CI-StPaul) <Barb.Sporlein@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 2:44 PM
To: Pereira, Luis (CI-StPaul) <Luis.Pereira@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Richardson, Mike (CI-StPaul) <mike.richardson@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Wade, Michael (CI-StPaul) <Michael.Wade@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Williams, Josh (CI-StPaul) <josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Gause, George (CI-StPaul) <George.Gause@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Subject: RE: Can't believe I didn't think of this earlier given I'm a planner!! - SPPL needs some help re area plan consistency

Thank you all. I have been in conversation with George on certain aspects. Look forward to learning more from all of you. Give me call if you want to talk through anything for context. FYI:

Hayden Heights was built in 1987 and has not been renovated since it was built. Great location, ample sq ft, good footprint and two off street parking lots. With exception of boilers installed last year, every single building component needs replacement and upgrade.

Riverview built in 1917 was last renovated in 1989. Great location and setting, designated historic structure, good footprint. MEPs not touched. Every single building component needs replacement or upgrade.

Hamline Midway Library was built in 1930, last remodeled in 1985 with accessibility improvements in 1990 (back entry and lift to auditorium). Great location and setting, very challenging footprint and sq ft., not designated and identified as resource in neighborhood survey. Every building component is failing and in critical condition – all must be replaced or upgraded. Not currently open to public other than materials pick up due to condition of HVAC.



April 15, 2022

Hamline Midway Coalition
Board of Directors

Dear Mr. Foss and Hamline Midway Coalition Board of Directors:

We have received your letter and requests regarding the Hamline Midway Library design project.

Process Thus Far

Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL) has been working since 2019 to identify capital investment priorities, build the case for investment, and secure resources to advance projects that improve the lives of residents in Saint Paul. Community input has been integral throughout. The Hamline Midway Library is one of three libraries identified as highest priority for investment in Saint Paul.

This year, the community engagement process has already engaged over 800 Hamline Midway Library residents and users through surveys, pop up meetings, virtual and in-person events, hands-on tabletop design activities, and more. HMC has been invited to be part of this – invited to help promote, attend, and lead engagement events and activities. In addition to community engagement, the schematic design process includes detailed building assessments that give us a detailed understanding of issues and options.

The guiding question of SPPL and LSE's process might be stated as, **"How might we – within the allocated resources – create the best possible Hamline Midway Library that delivers a safe, inviting, affirming, and comfortable library for people of all cultures, abilities, and communities?"** Within this big vision, LSE as the architecture and design partner has been exploring a variety of architectural concepts that respond to the wide variety of opinions in the community.

Saint Paul Public Library and LSE professionals – a team of nearly all women and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color – have been cursed out, intimidated, demeaned, and bullied in this process while performing their professional duties. This is not acceptable. We all share a goal of bringing many voices to the table. We all share a goal of investing in the Hamline Midway Library as a public space. We invite the Hamline Midway Coalition to support us in holding boundaries for respectful and welcoming civil discourse that honors the full range of perspectives neighbors have on this topic.

Libraries are a source of trusted information, and SPPL's Transforming Libraries webpage thoroughly and publicly documents the facts of the process and project thus far.



Scope for this Project

As City government, we frequently receive feedback – including from Project Ambassadors on this effort – that it is critical for us to be clear on what is in scope for consideration when we seek community input. Library and City administration have been clear and consistent that the following items are not under consideration on this project:

- The City purchasing new or additional property.
- Moving the library to another location.
- Re-starting the community engagement process.
- Exceeding the existing budget for engagement.

The Library and the City operate in a resource-constrained environment, particularly around capital investments. Each of these suggestions adds significant costs in an environment when construction costs are escalating dramatically over time. Interrupting the process does not bring us any closer to improving the library for the community and for the staff who work there.

Recommendation

The invitation to the open house on April 23 is open to everyone. That event is the opportunity for everyone to review together what has been heard so far from community members regarding the priorities and features of a transformed Hamline Midway Library; review and provide feedback on the updated building design concepts that respond to community input and the community-informed vision for libraries in Saint Paul; and learn more about the high-level costs associated with each building concept.

This feedback will inform decision-making on direction. Because SPPL has not yet decided on direction, allowing this exploration and input process to unfold is necessary to come to a decision. We hope you all attend and advertise this event

Thank you for your collaboration on this project and your work on behalf of the Hamline Midway neighborhood.

Jaime Tincher
Deputy Mayor

Cc: Catherine Penkert, Director of Saint Paul Public Library

I am writing to protest the demolition of the Hamline-Midway Library.

Bridget Allan Ales <bridgetales2@gmail.com>

Thu 7/20/2023 10:29 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Why preserve old architecture?

To offer a window to the building skills and community efforts 100 + years ago.

My forebears arrived from Sweden in 1915, went through Ellis Island and initially settled in Swede Hollow. My Great Grandfather used his expert painting skills to start his life in the USA.

These historic buildings connect me to my personal human history.

Re-purposing old buildings adds character and charm to the neighborhood and grounds us as people.

Please find a way to re-purpose some or all of the current building, and add onto this historic treasure instead of complete demolition.

Thank you

Bridget Allan Ales
St. Paul, MN 55105

Comment: In Favor of New Library

Alex Brandell <brandell@bu.edu>

Wed 7/19/2023 10:44 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hello,

I am a resident living in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood. My home is near the Hamline/Sherburne Ave. intersection. Our neighborhood would greatly benefit from a new library being built. The current library is under-utilized due to its age and lack of modern resources. A new facility would be a benefit to our neighborhood by promoting reading and education for the many families who live here and providing community space and resources for residents. I am strongly in favor of a new library being constructed in Hamline-Midway.

Thank you,

Alex Brandell, OTD

they/he

715-297-2572

We are looking forward to the new library!

Richard Campo <derby.campo@gmail.com>

Fri 7/14/2023 11:28 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Dear Mr. Josh Williams,

My name is Richard Campo and I have lived in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood since 2007. The Hamline-Midway library has been a fixture of our community - it's so valuable!

I have been distressed by the actions of a small group that have resisted a new library building at every turn in the process. As a parent and full-time employee, I don't have the privilege of time to advocate for a new building. The same goes for everyone I know on my block and in the neighborhood. We just want a nice, new library. We appreciate your hard work and the hard work of all the St. Paul city and library staff that have been dedicated to delivering a new library to our community.

It is very sad that a small group of advocates can stand in the way of progress for our community. Many children, including my own, have had long-term learning setbacks because of the pandemic. Are we really going to delay, or possibly deny, a new library that is so vitally needed because some people like the look of an old building? This is madness!

If you don't hear from lots of folks that share this perspective, trust me, we're here. We don't have time and don't know what to do. Like I said, we just want a nice library for our kids and everyone else in the community.

Thank you for listening,
Richard

Hamline Midway Library - EAW report

Connolly, Michael J <michael.connolly@usbank.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 2:32 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Mr. Josh Williams

Principal Planner

1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W 4th Street

Saint Paul. MN 55102

I am writing you regarding the EAW report on the Hamline /Midway Library. Environmental standards have been created and set in place for good reason, they should not be ignored. The recently released EAW revealed that it will take 50 years to make up for embodied carbon released from tear down & rebuild of the Hamline Midway Library. According to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) "even with energy efficiencies, it takes an extremely long time to make up the carbon release of new construction. Building reuse avoids the release of new carbon into the atmosphere and reuses existing embodied carbon. We cannot allow the project to proceed at this time. It appears that the City is trying to rush into demolition before the legal process has time to sort out these important issues.

Michael Connolly

993 Chatsworth t. N

St. Paul MN 55103

U.S. BANCORP made the following annotations

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Comment on draft EAW for the Hamline-Midway Library

Tom Darling <tsdarling@earthlink.net>

Wed 7/19/2023 10:36 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

To Josh Williams

Principal Planner, Planning and Economic Development

1400 City Hall Annex, 25 West Fourth Street, St. Paul, MN 55102

Mr. Williams: Please see my comments on the draft EAW for the Hamline-Midway Library. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Comments regarding deficiencies in the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Hamline-Midway library.

My name is Tom Darling. I live in St Paul. I have now waded through the draft Environmental Review Worksheet (EAW) for the Hamline Midway Library. I cannot say that I have read every word or studied it exhaustively but I have tried to understand it. The draft EAW has left me with serious concerns about it including the items that you have asked the public to address. Namely its: "accuracy and completeness of information, potential impacts that warrant further investigation and the need for an EIS". As to the last item, I did not see the criteria for the need for an EIS spelled out so I will not comment on that item.

Accuracy and Completeness of Information.

The draft EAW is fundamentally deficient in this area because it does not tell the real story. Likely because the real story although simple is simply harmful for the city. To tell the story properly one must start with the basic facts.

Fact one, the city proposes to demolish the Hamline-Midway Library. That is the issue. Contrary to the artful framing in the draft EAW, the issue is not that the city wants to build a new library. It can build a new library without destroying the existing Hamline-Midway Library building. The true issue is that the city wants to destroy an existing library.

Fact two, the library the city proposes to tear down is a very special library. The Hamline-Midway library is historic. It is on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. It is, and for decades has been, a vital part of the fabric of the neighborhood. It is beloved by many many people. So beloved that those people have been fighting for years to save it. So beloved that they have been fighting against stiff odds. Fighting against a mayor who attempted to prevent the library from being placed on the Register even though it deserved to be there. Fighting against a council member who has pushed and pushed for demolition. And, as the draft EAW demonstrates, fighting against a city bureaucracy. Those fighters are a real community. I mention that because the draft EAW repeatedly uses the word "community" as supposed support for destroying the library. However the draft EAW omits the essential explanation that when it uses the word "community" what it really means is: "those people—however few--who support what the city wants to do." The hardy souls who are fighting to preserve the library are a community that should be listened to.

Fact three, Demolition is not the only option. The Hamline-Midway Library does not need to be

destroyed. LSE Architects, the architects hired by the city, in its Pre-Design Report presented two options. The first of those options was: "Option A is the renovation and expansion to the 1930, two story building."

In conclusion, the real story is that the city wants to demolish a much-loved historic library even though it could be renovated and expanded and be fully fit for purpose. The draft EAW should tell that story.

Potential impacts that warrant further investigation.

The draft EAW does not address the impact that allowing the demolition of this historic structure will have on historic preservation efforts in St Paul. As described above there is no reason to destroy the library. There is, however, a very compelling reason to allow it to live: historic preservation. If the city is successful in destroying this library despite its acknowledged historic significance simply because the city wants to build something new on the same site then the city will be emboldened to attempt to exercise its power on other historic properties in the future. We saw that same disdain for historic preservation in the city's middle-of-the-night attempt to allow the Justus Ramsey House to be demolished. Happily, that attempt was thwarted. We are seeing a similar disregard as the city attempts to push through a bicycle trail on Summit Avenue irrespective of Summit's historic designation and significance. Fortunately, the fight for Summit Avenue continues. Also, against stiff odds.

I have personal experience with the city getting it wrong on historic preservation that is informative. In 1978 my wife and I moved into the Ramsey Hill neighborhood. Our first house was old and in bad repair. The city had given up on it and it was one of many houses in a two square block area slated by the city to be torn down to be replaced by new modern up to date structures for the future. To use the phrase used by Council Member Jalali in advocating for the destruction of the Hamline-Midway library, the city wanted to destroy those homes because that was what it thought was "what's best when taking the long-term view of our city". The city was completely wrong about that. The answer was not to destroy those homes. The answer was to repair and renovate and restore them. That was best "taking the long-term view of our city". Fortunately, hundreds of people saw that and worked to save those homes and that neighborhood. As a result, the city did not destroy those homes and they became an important building block for bringing Ramsey Hill back and making it one of the gems of our city. That was what was best in the long-term view of our city. That is one of the reasons why historic preservation is so important. The draft EAW should address this impact on historic preservation. It does not.

The lessons learned from Ramsey Hill are directly applicable to the Hamline-Midway library. Destruction is simply the wrong answer to any "problems" presented by the Hamline-Midway library. Instead, repair, renovate and restore. The city will be better for it. It will be best in the long-term view of our city.

Let me end with a bit of unpleasant nostalgia. Before I moved to St Paul, I grew up in White Bear Lake. We had a wonderful old library full of history and character that gave me great joy. The city destroyed it. Although the city eventually built a new library building it was just that: a new building without history and without character. The city was diminished by the loss of the old library. Similarly, the Hamline-Midway library is historic, it has character, it is part of the fabric of its neighborhood and moreover, it can be functionally improved. Destroying it will diminish St Paul.

--

Tom Darling

tsdarling@earthlink.net



Virus-free. www.avast.com

New library

Diaz-Garcia, Vairo <vairo.diaz-garcia@go.inverhills.edu>

Thu 7/20/2023 1:15 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

I heard you guys are planning on building a new library, and I just wanted to say kudos on that. I personally would like to see a huge science fiction and fantasy section. Comics are a big favorite of mine.

Anyways, I'm sure there are others out there that would benefit from new facilities and equipment. I personally use the scanners at my local library quite often for school work, as well as the quiet rooms .

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I look forward to visiting the new Library once it's finished.

Best wishes,

V

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Public comment on Hamline Midway Library

Steve Dropkin <steve@dropkin.net>

Wed 7/19/2023 8:12 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

I am dismayed by the St. Paulites who are impeding the progress of the new HM library.

While I understand a wish to preserve St. Paul's past -- it cannot be replaced once lost -- as are the people living in them, cities are living organisms, and the city needs to adapt to peoples' needs, like handicapped accessibility and computer availability and such. Neither of those factors was under any consideration when the HM library was built. But they are now and those who need ramps and larger bathroom stalls and Wi-Fi and access to computers should not be pushed to the background by the wish to maintain a fair but not exceptional instance of St. Paul's architectural history.

Volkswagen managed to build a new Beetle that reminded people successfully of the old one. Target did not feel the need to preserve their first store (in Roseville) in amber, building new yet not abandoning the principles with which they built that first store in the 60s. It should be possible to incorporate architectural elements of the current HM library into the new design and present that continuation of St. Paul history without disregarding the needs of a neighborhood so much different than the one that existed when the building was first opened.

Please continue with the approved plans for the library.

Comment on Hamline Midway Library EAW

Adria Fernandez <feznander@gmail.com>

Fri 7/14/2023 1:05 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hi Mr. Williams,

I've read the Environmental Assessment Worksheet for the Hamline Midway Library rebuild, and I believe that the assessment presented seems fair, and the rebuilt library will be an important amenity for the neighborhood. I urge you not to let the process get waylaid by frivolous obstruction campaigns, which could result in our neighborhood being without a library for years.

Adria Fernandez
1427 Charles Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104

Do not make this mistake

Tess Galati <tessgalati@gmail.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 2:38 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Dear Mr. Williams,

I write to you as a concerned citizen and as the consultant who designed and wrote the online “Local Planners’ Handbook” for Met Council. You know as well as I that professional planners across the country are reimagining the appropriate use of city space. The industrial age plan of neighborhood-to-feeder road-to-destination is no longer feasible in the age of global warming and empty offices.

In my half a century as a citizen of St. Paul, I have watched wonderful buildings and their surrounding trees go down while ugly blocks and hot sidewalks are erected on their space. This is not an appropriate tradeoff except to for construction companies and rock quarry owners. The old Faust building on the Southwest corner of University and Dale is a case in point. When Mark, head of the Met Council planning department, congratulated himself for its replacement with a library, he and I had a long conversation. I’m sorry that he did not see his error until after the wrecking ball had swung.

From the standpoint of trees lost, construction materials buried in landfills, disruption to surrounding nature, and overwhelming of built space, the replacement of the Hamline Midway Library with another ugly and senseless box pockmarked with windows is ridiculous.

Please do not make this mistake.

Yours sincerely,
Tess Galati, Ph.D.

historic architecture should be preserved

Alice Gebura <gebun001@umn.edu>

Tue 7/18/2023 10:36 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

While a resident of Harvard, Mass. our public library (the Hapgood building) was deemed once again in its history to be insufficient. Built in 1887, it was added onto in 1902 and remodeled again in 1983. In 2007 the library moved to an 1878 school building with renovations and an addition for the purpose (this project won an architectural award). The original library is now the home of a non-profit arts center. You can read a bit of history about the building here:

<https://historicharvard.wordpress.com/2015/04/15/a-renewed-appreciation-for-our-old-library-the-hapgood-memorial-building/>

Why preserve old architecture? 1 - they are living museums of craft and building skills long gone 2 - imbued with history, they add character and charm to the neighborhood

I am writing to protest the demolition of the Hamline Midway Library. Demolition is easy and new construction is cheap. I'm glad the planners in Harvard, Mass. neither dismiss the importance of historic architecture nor succumb to doing what is easiest and cheapest. The City of Saint Paul especially recently lacks creativity and appreciation in its planning and the Midway Library is a glaring example. I find it hard to believe there are no alternatives to tearing it down. Maybe an architect from Massachusetts should be hired.

--

Alice Gebura
487 Portland Ave
Saint Paul

comments on EAW

bethany gladhill <bethany@gladhillrhone.com>

Mon 7/17/2023 10:29 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Please accept these comments as part of the public comment process for the EAW on the Hamline-Midway library. These are my views as a resident of the city, as a frequent library user, and as a historic preservation professional.

There are any number of concerns that I have with the public process for the building; I was at most of the public meetings and reviews the comments and most of them were strongly in favor of re-use over demolition. The community engagement process was problematic, with sentiments from unidentified pop-up surveys of under 30 people at grocery store given the same weight as 300 person multi-hour sessions.

Section 15 of the EAW regarding Historic Preservation is unacceptably brief and does not meet the requirement to:

**Discuss any anticipated effects to historic properties during project construction and operation.
Identify measures that will be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to historic properties**

though it should be noted that Appendix C, the Cultural Resources Assessment by Blondo Consulting affirms that demolition of the library will have an Adverse Affect.

The efforts outlined by the city to re-use some elements of the existing library, such as minor re-use of some of the wood from the stage and re-using some brick to create a chevron pattern not present in the original building are almost offensive in their misinterpretation of adaptive use.

Finally, the EAW does not take into effect the environmental effect of demolition in carbon mitigation. A number of recent studies have indicated that even the most efficient building (and let's be clear here, the design for the new library would not meet many efficiency standards) will never, during its lifetime, make up for the carbon sink of demolition; whether in the lack of re-use of existing elements, the environmental effects of demolition equipment, and the carbon cost of new materials such as extensive concrete and walls of glass.

It should be abundantly clear to the city, before now but certainly in the EAW process, that this endeavor is ill-advised and intensely problematic.

Bethany Gladhill
she/her/hers
Arts and Non-Profit Management Consultant, MAHP in Historic Preservation
bethany@gladhillrhone.com
612.414.3790 mobile

web - www.gladhillrhone.com
blog - <http://prologuist.blogspot.com>
twitter - @bethanyg

Renovate, Not Demolish Hamline-Midway Library, EWA comments & Costs

Stephen Greenwood <sjgreenwood@comcast.net>

Wed 7/19/2023 2:04 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

 1 attachments (19 KB)

Renovate Hamline Library - July 19 2023.docx;

July 17, 2023

Dear Mr. Williams,

For the public record, attached is my letter "Renovate, Not Demolish Hamline Library, EWA comments & Costs".

Sincerely,
Stephen Greenwood

July 19, 2023

To: Josh Williams

Re: Renovate, Not Demolish Hamline Library, EWA comments & Costs

I am writing this letter in support of renovating the historically designated Hamline-Midway Library at a cost of about \$3 million; rather than demolishing a historically designated building and construct a new library at a cost of \$8 million. I did read the report "CITY OF SAINT PAUL PUBLIC LIBRARY FACILITIES DIRECTION" March 13, 2020 by HGA about the Hamline Library, which states the following (page 43):

FOCUS BRANCH RECOMMENDATIONS Hamline Midway Library

Hamline Midway Library was built in 1930, with a renovation in 1990. This two-story library should be considered for a full renovation or replacement. The current building is approximately 8,200 SF. Site capacity may be maxed out to accommodate a one-story library of approximately 10,000 GSF – 12,500 GSF.

Branch specific recommendations and changes:

- *Entry is not ADA accessible. Accessible entry is around side of the building.*
- *Replace steps and lift down to Auditorium level*
- *Repair water infiltration on west exterior wall of Auditorium*
- *Reorganize and refresh staff work room, break room and restroom spaces*
- *Update restrooms on Lower level*
- *Add convenience power and data*
- *Replace majority of Mechanical and Plumbing systems*
- *Review structure and spalling concrete at room in basement; repair concrete"*

The estimated upgrade cost is \$2.86 million (p. 49)."

The HGA consultant report gives the option of either renovation or replacement. The report does not state 'that a new building' is required. This documents that there is a viable alternative to demolition, by the Cities own consultant. Also, it saves St. Paul taxpayers about \$5 million. All the new library added extras: wellness room, play areas, teen area, outdoor reading space, meeting rooms etc. are '**Gold Plating and/or Bells & Whistles**', which are not essential for the primary function of the library. These items can be found in the surrounding community. I support the general recommendations by HGA to renovate the Historic Hamline-Midway library in their 2020 report.

Given the fact that there is a proposed St. Paul tax increase, I am opposed to wasteful public spending of tax payer money. In the 40 years, I have lived in St. Paul, I have never seen any St. Paul public library that was over-crowded and/or full to near capacity. The only libraries I ever seen at near capacity were the University of Minnesota libraries during finals week, when all the students were studying for final exams. Expenditures of an additional \$5 million spending for 'Gold Plating' of a new library, in an era of

proposed tax increases is poor government management, which is irrespective of any ‘historical designation’.

Also, the simple fact that demolition and construction of a new building generally will generate more greenhouse (GHG) gases. I request that a comparison of the amount of greenhouse gases generated for each alternative be done; which should include greenhouse gases generated by:

- GHG generated during manufacturing processes to make bricks, glass, ceramics & concrete for the new building.
- GHG generated during construction site work by bulldozers, cranes, etc.
- GHG generated by taxpayers working to pay for the additional \$5 million in Capital and also the millions in interest costs, which is not free.
- GHG reduction with a new building vs. renovated building, with new HVAC, equivalent solar panel, insulation.
- What is the yearly energy usage between the new library verses a renovated library with upgraded HVAC, solar panel, insulation etc. This calculation is needed for GHG calculations.
- What is the ‘**payback period**’ in terms of energy reduction for the \$8 million dollar capital project (be sure to include interest costs)? This is not an EWA calculation, but rather a project management calculation, but does easily relate to GHG emissions. Be sure to include all calculations of the energy payback period for public review.

The items listed above do not appear to be included in the EAW GHG analysis. The cost differential of \$5 million dollars must be paid for by taxpayers, whom generate greenhouse gases going to and from work and during their work. In any renovation, the energy efficiency of the remodel library could easily be improved (via upgraded HVAC, solar panel installation etc.) were these items taken into the GHG evaluation? It appears to me that the GHG emission comparison is incomplete and/or inaccurate; please submit all GHG and energy saving calculations.

On the political side, if a Republican administration was going to demolish a historic structure, the Democrats would be complaining about the loss of historic buildings. However, since St. Paul is basically a one party, Democratic rule, there is not much opposition to demolition of a historic structure.

The City of St. Paul in the last few years has approved the demolition of three (3) historic structures: St. Andrew Church, Ramsey House and the Hamline-Midway Library. At the State SPHO meeting on St. Andrews historic designation back in August 2020, one of the SHPO members said about the demolition of St. Andrews “...This is cultural genocide...” and repeated it. Now, the St. Paul City Council and City staff have struck out – three times now on historic designation. In my opinion, the City of St. Paul is now ‘**a city of cultural genocide**’. I have lost my confidence in the City of St. Paul to properly and fairly evaluate renovation alternatives to demolition of historic structures; thus, not comply with the intent of MERA laws on protecting the environment and historic structures.

Sincerely,

Stephen Greenwood
1111 Argyle St
St. Paul, MN 55103

Comments to Hamline-Midway EAW

Allyson Hartle <allyhartle@comcast.net>

Wed 7/19/2023 9:48 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

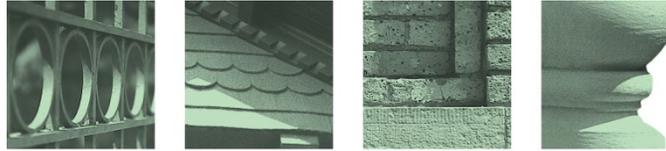
Dear Mr. Williams:

Please accept these comments regarding the Hamline-Midway Library EAW. While there are numerous deficiencies in that document, I will focus only on some of the more concerning deficiencies.

First, let me provide some brief background. I lived in the Hamline-Midway Neighborhood for four years when attending Hamline University and later again for a number of years in my 30's. I am quite familiar with the building and the site. While Hamline University, established in 1854, has built many new buildings, it's commitment to honoring history by preserving "Old Main" which sits in the heart of its campus, testifies to the importance of historical preservation: many structures contributing to the historical context have been retained, and provide irreplaceable character to the newer structures. Not only has Hamline respected its history as the oldest institution of higher learning in the state, it has also embraced a sustainable culture that will pay aesthetic dividends for generations to come. More specifically:

1. Sustainability must be more than a catch phrase uttered without meaning or commitment. Preserving the Hamline-Midway Library building intact but allowing the original to be incorporated into the design of any new structure, provides the best of all worlds, not to mention the importance of not adding construction debris to already over-crowded landfills.
2. Engagement has become an Orwellian myth, substituting 'here's what we intend to do' for 'we care and want to reflect the wishes of the community.' The EAW fails to acknowledge the completely inadequate community engagement process, and worse, this double-talk has enraged neighbors and residents throughout the City, causing further damage to already fragile credibility of the bureaucracy.

Allyson Hartle
322 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55102



HISTORIC SAINT PAUL

July 19, 2023

Josh Williams
Principal Planner,
Planning & Economic Development
1400 City Hall Annex,
25 West Fourth Street
St. Paul, MN 55102
[HamlineMidwayLibrary EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

Dear Mr. Williams:

As an organization with a mission to “preserve and promote the cultural heritage, character, and vitality of Saint Paul neighborhoods,” Historic Saint Paul submits the following public comment in response to the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) issued by the city as the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) in regard to the proposed demolition and reconstruction of the Hamline Midway Library.

The current Hamline Midway Branch Library was formally listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) under the property’s historic name, the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch in January of 2023. The property is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Education given the strength of community involvement in its construction and the way in which the building served the community as a library and center for neighborhood activities.

Historic resources are vital to city building and the civic life of communities. They provide a continuity that bridges generations, creating connectivity and adding to a community’s resilience. The Hamline Midway Branch Library clearly is a place that holds many community memories, which is why there has been an outpouring of support for its preservation. Significant places and spaces have that effect. Because of their significance and importance to the public, historic resources are protected by regulatory processes which ensure thorough consideration is given to their reuse and that public undertakings with potential adverse impacts to them are avoided.

In April of 2022 Historic Saint Paul urged the Saint Paul Public Library System (SPPL) to give careful consideration to the preservation of the current structure in its plans to expand the Hamline Midway Library to meet the growing needs of the community. We believed then and now that the evolving needs of a community library do not have to lead to the destruction of a treasured neighborhood landmark.

During the planning process, LSE Architects, the architectural team working with SPPL, developed conceptual plans for options to expand programming on the site and meet current community needs. They included an option to demolish and reconstruct the library with a new building, and an option, “Option A”, that included repurposing the existing structure and an addition that would address accessibility and increased programming needs. Unfortunately, the reuse option was never authentically explored and vetted as a viable alternative.

In its May 24 letter to the SPPL, Sarah Beimers of the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) offered input into the EAW process. Below are excerpts from the SHPO correspondence that provide perspective on the information included in the EAW, from professionals with a background in cultural resource management.

On Design:

"It is our opinion that Option A – the rehabilitation of the existing historic library building with construction of a new addition at the rear – could be designed to meet the programming needs and preserve the building's status on the National Register." And "If designed consistent with the Standards, Option A would avoid adverse effect to the designated historic property under Minn. Stat. 138.665."

On Community Engagement & Community Informed Library Design:

"The SPPL has outlined the summary and results of engagement activities with the community during the design process, however, it's not clear from the materials provided that the historic significance and status of the Library (noted in the 2018 Hamline-Midway Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey) was presented at the start of engagement and given continuing equal weight and consideration in either the community's or SPPL's consideration of alternatives."

On Sustainability:

"The SPPL has indicated that a rehabilitated historic library under Option A would not meet current state or city sustainability standards or ordinances. However, it is important to note that a building's past energy performance is not included in any carbon mitigation calculations for the future and is not part of the existing building's embodied energy, as was indicated in the SPPL's memo. The "embodied energy" of an existing building is calculated solely in the materials the building is already built of. Therefore, the reused building immediately has a smaller carbon release than the new building, as it needs far fewer new materials."

The reuse of an existing building with energy upgrades (such as insulation and improved systems) is called out in Minnesota's Climate Action Framework as a positive carbon mitigation measure under Action Item 4.2.3. The carbon released to rehabilitate an existing building is almost always less than the carbon release of demolition (throwing away a reusable resource), the subsequent creation of new construction materials, and the construction and transport of materials to make the new building. The carbon release for the new construction, especially a building with large amounts of glass, which is a carbon intensive material that has very poor energy performance, is not a positive carbon mitigation measure."

Not including these important considerations/calculations in the planning process and EAW information renders the analysis inaccurate and incomplete.

Under the MERA statute, demolition of a historic resource is not permitted unless the owner of the building can demonstrate that there is *no feasible and prudent alternative*. As the adverse impact of demotion of the current structure is irreversible and will deny the community ongoing benefits of a National Register designated resource, we recommend entering into an EIS process that would ensure thorough consideration of a reuse alternative.

Sincerely,



Carol Carey
Executive Director

Public Comment on Hamline Midway Library EAW

Carol Carey <ccarey@historicsaintpaul.org>

Thu 7/20/2023 1:31 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

 1 attachments (229 KB)

HSP__Hamline Midway Library_ EAW_7.20.2023.pdf;

Dear Mr. Williams:

As an organization with a mission to “preserve and promote the cultural heritage, character, and vitality of Saint Paul neighborhoods,” Historic Saint Paul submits the attached public comment in response to the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) issued by the city as the Responsible Government Unit (RGU) in regard to the proposed demolition and reconstruction of the Hamline Midway Library.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carol Carey
Executive Director

Historic Saint Paul
75 West 5th Street Suite 400
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-222-3049
www.historicsaintpaul.org

EAW

J. Jabs <jabs.ja7@gmail.com>

Thu 7/20/2023 3:27 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hello Josh,

I'm not sure what to write but....

We would love to see the library saved.

It is a beautiful part of our community.

With everything that was damaged or destroyed over the last couple years.

It seems like a shame and not very earth friendly. Please have it remodeled or find a different location.

Save our History!

Please save the Hamline Midway library building.

Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW)

Thank you

The Hokes

1720 Hubbard AVE

Saint Paul, mn 55204

Public Comments - Hamline Midway Library

Ali Johnson <joh04675@gmail.com>

Fri 7/14/2023 11:35 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hello Mr. Williams,

I would like to submit for public comment my rejection and disapproval of the SPPL's blind perusal of destruction of the Hamline Midway Library as reflected in the EAW completed for this property.

In reviewing the EAW both Blondo Consulting and the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) provide opinions that the most prudent course of action for the Hamline Midway Library is Option A provided by LSE architects last year.

Option A - the rehabilitation of the existing historic library building with construction of a new addition at the rear.

- Blondo Consulting notes the proposed project will have adverse effects and advises developing mitigation plan with SHPO.
- SHPO advised 5/24/23 that Option A, the rehabilitation of the existing historic library building with construction of a new addition at the rear could be designed to meet the programming needs and preserve the building's status on the National Register.
- MN SHPO detailed how Option A would meet all size, condition, community engagement, accessibility and sustainability concerns with the current Hamline Midway Library.

As a neighbor and frequent partaker in public resources in the Hamline Midway neighborhood I am incredibly dismayed that SPPL would foolishly lean towards the wasteful removal of an existing building in clear disregard of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act, community feedback and professional guidance.

--

Thank you,

Ali Johnson
1542 Breda Ave
Saint Paul, MN

demolishing the HM library

karen kormann <kkormann94@gmail.com>

Tue 6/20/2023 2:12 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

We live close to this building and have great concerns over the amount of pollution that demolishing will impact the neighborhood. Is this of concern to the EQB?

If so, will they be made public?

We already have a highly polluted area, and deconstruction will be devastating.

What are the Board's concerns re: this and are you interested in public input?

Thank you,

Karen Rom
kkormann94@gmail.com

I support a new library

Olivia Kuenster <oliviakuenster@yahoo.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 2:28 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hello - I am writing to show my support for a new Hamline-Midway library. I am new to the Saint Paul area and live a block away from the Hamline campus; recently I walked to the library's location in hopes of enjoying some literature and was very sad to see it closed for the foreseeable future. Reading is my favorite pastime, and it would be quite a shame to not have a library in the vicinity of my home. Everyone deserves access to knowledge and the ability to gather and connect with their community.

Viabile alternatives not allowed

Sonja Mason <sonjalmason@gmail.com>

Mon 7/17/2023 9:36 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

The EAW process seeks to look at potential damages to the environment— including damage to historic resources— and to identify mitigations.

The obvious mitigation has not been allowed to the table: renovate and preserve the library.

The most sustainable building is the one that is already built. Preservation is sustainable, preservation is supported by the 2040 Comp Plan, and preservation of this structure is overwhelmingly by the community.

Sent from iPhone (please excuse the typos.)

Hamline Midway Library-EAW report

Marietta McCullough <mcculloughm@mmsaschool.org>

Wed 7/19/2023 11:18 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Mr. Josh Williams

Principal Planner

1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th st.

Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Williams,

The EAW report regarding the Hamline/Midway Library Demolition contains very troubling information regarding carbon emissions. As I'm sure you now know from reading the report, it will take over 50 years to make up for embodied carbon released from the tear down and rebuild of the library building. In light of the serious climate conditions that are wreaking havoc throughout the world, I would think that the City of St. Paul would be doing all it can to limit its culpability in releasing carbon into the atmosphere. This is information that the general public needs to hear. The historic building could be renovated and expanded without tearing the whole thing down. It's time to stop this madness of "Out with the old, in with the new." I, my children and grandchildren, have all used the Hamline Midway Library and have enjoyed our experience there. We don't need all the bells and whistles.

Please do what's right for our city and stop the demolition.

Sincerely,

Marietta McCullough

1251 N. Victoria St.

St. Paul, MN

--



July 11, 2023

Josh Williams, Principal Planner
City of St. Paul
25 West Fourth Street
1400 City Hall Annex
St. Paul, MN 55102

RE: City of St. Paul – Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) – Hamline Midway Library
Metropolitan Council Review No. 22878-1
Metropolitan Council District No. 14

Dear Josh Williams:

The Metropolitan Council received the EAW for the Hamline Midway Library project in the City of St. Paul on June 15, 2023. The proposed project is located at 1558 W Minnehaha Avenue. The proposed project is a redevelopment of the existing Hamline Midway Library into a new 10,454 square foot library building.

The staff review finds that the EAW is complete and accurate with respect to regional concerns and does not raise major issues of consistency with Council policies. An EIS is not necessary for regional purposes.

This concludes the Council's review of the EAW. The Council will not take formal action on the EAW. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Patrick Boylan, Principal Reviewer, at 651-602-1438 or via email at patrick.boylan@metc.state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Janson for

Angela R. Torres, AICP, Senior Manager
Local Planning Assistance

CC: Tod Sherman, Development Reviews Coordinator, MnDOT - Metro Division
W. Toni Carter, Metropolitan Council District 14
Patrick Boylan, Sector Representative/Principal Reviewer
Reviews Coordinator

N:\CommDev\LPA\Communities\St. Paul\Letters\St. Paul 2023 Hamline Midway Library EAW 22878-1.docx

MnDOT Development Review: EAW23-004 Hamline Midway Library

Schutt, Jake (DOT) <Jake.Schutt@state.mn.us>

Thu 7/13/2023 11:02 AM

To: Josh Williams <josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us>; Marika Staloch <marika.staloch@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Swenson, Jason (DOT) <Jason.Swenson@state.mn.us>; Kastner, Brandi (DOT) <Brandi.Kastner@state.mn.us>; Thorsen, Jesse (He/Him/His) (DOT) <Jesse.Thorsen@state.mn.us>; Dunlap, Sara (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <sara.dunlap@state.mn.us>; Samuelson, Michael (DOT) <Michael.Samuelson@state.mn.us>; Sherman, Tod (DOT) <tod.sherman@state.mn.us>; Xiong, Faith (She/Her/Hers) (DOT) <Faith.Xiong@state.mn.us>; Kratz, David (DOT) <David.Kratz@state.mn.us>; Muhic, P Cameron (DOT) <cameron.muhic@state.mn.us>; Craig, E (DOT) <buck.craig@state.mn.us>; Lundquist, Mark (DOT) <mark.lundquist@state.mn.us>; Kowski, Michael (DOT) <michael.p.kowski@state.mn.us>; Schowalter, Lance (DOT) <lance.schowalter@state.mn.us>; Ries, Natalie (DOT) <natalie.ries@state.mn.us>

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

Dear Marika Staloch and Josh Williams,

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for **Hamline Midway Library**.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) has reviewed the above-referenced EAW and has no comments.

Cordially,

Jake Schutt

Principal Transportation Planner

MnDOT Metro District

(651) 234-7785

Jake.Schutt@state.mn.us

[talk.dot.state.mn.us/hwy169study]North Metro Highway 169 Corridor Multimodal Study



Hamline Midway Library comment

scot nortrom <scotnortrom@gmail.com>

Tue 6/27/2023 10:45 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Good day, Mr. Williams,

I am writing to express my support for renovation or repurposing and relocating of the Hamline Midway Library. I believe that the greenest building is the one already built and that preservation is the environmentally responsible decision. I've seen first-hand how people love our library building, and future generations should have the opportunity to enjoy it. I also believe that demolitions are bad for everyone and that 21st century library needs can be met without demolishing this library.

Thank you for your consideration,

Scot Nortrom
1910 Berkeley Ave, St Paul, MN 55105

New Hamline Midway Library

Dave P. <alphaviking1@yahoo.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 7:56 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hi Josh,

I live in the Como Park neighborhood of St. Paul and I am a frequent user of the old Hamline Midway Library. I'm writing this letter in support of the new Hamline Midway Library. The old library worked for early 20th century needs, however, it's no longer a useful space due to it's cramped quarters and inaccessibility for handicapped persons.

The new Hamline Midway Library will meet the needs of this area of the city for the 21st century. It is much larger than the old library and is accessible for all. In addition, it will have meeting rooms and modern technology. I'm confident that a majority of neighbors favors a new library and we should not let a small vocal group derail plans for a wonderful addition to the city.

Sincerely

Dave Peterson

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

I support the Hamline Midway library rebuild

Luke Peterson <peterson.lukeb@gmail.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 7:20 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hello,

I am writing to express my support for the Hamline Midway library rebuild project. As a close neighbor to the library, it is important to me that the rebuild proceeds. The rebuild plans do a great job of making the library more accessible, appealing, and functional to all. I am personally looking forward to having better study and workspaces available. It's a shame the beautiful old building must go, but a simple renovation is not nearly enough to make the library a cornerstone of the neighborhood. The rebuild must proceed.

Thank you,

Luke Peterson

1616 Blair Ave

 Delete  Archive  Reply  Reply all  Forward     

Please build new library



 Retention: Inbox and Inbox sub-folders (6 months) Expires: Mon 1/8/2024 3:51 PM

CP Carrie Pomeroy <carriepomeroy@icloud.com>

To: *CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW

Wed 7/12/2023 4:51 PM

Dear Mr. Williams,

As a longtime resident and Hamline Midway Library patron and volunteer, I strongly support demolishing the outdated library building and building the new building as soon as possible so local people can benefit again from library services nearby.

Best,

Carrie Pomeroy

Sent from my iPhone

 Reply

 Forward

Hamline-Midway Library

Tim R <tjrank68@gmail.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 10:17 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

To Mr. Williams and members of the Planning Committee,

I am a lifelong resident of St. Paul and have lived in the Hamline/Midway neighborhood for over a decade. I love my community and I love my neighbors, and I want all members of this area to have access to as many contemporary educational, research and entertainment tools as possible. I am writing in support of the construction of the new library in the HaMidway area.

I understand the importance of historical landmarks in this city, and how this city's roots play a crucial role in our modern identity. Despite St. Paul's deep and vibrant past, it is also marred by inequality, inequity and uneven access for minorities to state-of-the-art informational institutions like libraries. These institutions are the bedrock for an informed citizenry, and a keystone for upward mobility through unfettered access to learning and educational resources. We cannot, and should not, allow vestiges of what was impede that which could be: a new era of progress and advancement of our Hamline/Midway community.

Holding on to the patina of the past in lieu of creating a substantively brighter future for our progeny would be a grievous mistake. I urge you and your colleagues to move forward with the construction of the new library. If not for us, for our children and the future of our beloved neighborhood.

Most sincerely,

--

Timothy J. Rank, Esq.

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Please do not demolish the library

Cynthia Rapacz <cynthiarap@gmail.com>

Tue 6/20/2023 10:38 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

To whom it may concern,

It is beyond reason,

Why the city officials continue to conduct these malicious acts of destroying history. This is wasteful of taxpayers dollars. It's an environmental waste and it's destroying history.

My ancestors are also Polish immigrant who fled from the Nazis. We can all appreciate what immigrants of all kinds brought to America and have built. It doesn't matter what cloth we are made from. You do not understand that my grandfather, and great grandfather made this city. They are Polish immigrants!

We all have fled from the Nazis to make this our home. They have survived the depression. You do not understand the history upon which you stand. To bring this great city down to rubble; this is more than a travesty. It is something you will never bring back. You will never see you again. He will never have again. Because you are the person and people who destroy things and people who make great things.

Cynthia Rapacz: proud to be Polish I have never been white! Do not pigeonhole myself into a category to which I do not belong. I am a person, I love culture. I am many things.

You may not remember, but people still do. Remember that the brick and mortar were built by their parents and their grandparents. There Great grandparents built these walls that you are going to destroy. Starving through the depression doing whatever they could to feed their family they built St. paul. Many were immigrants. Who just arrived and didn't speak English. These are those who built St. paul. Built the streets, the buildings scrub the floors. They are my grandparents, my great grandparents. They're my family their people I know. And you want to destroy it...

And you want to build yours with our money?

Because this is how it feels and St. paul right now. Fix it.

Restorative Justice Consultant
Cynthia Rapacz

45 Albert Street S
Unit 1
St. Paul, Mn 55105

--

Cynthia Rapacz
Creative Consultant
612.205.7839

6/28/2023

Dear Mr. Williams,

Midway is a really
bad area! Save money
and tear down that old, too
small library. Replace it
with a new, larger library.
Renovation is a waste of
public money for this project.

Thank you,
Larry Reisch



FW: Message from "PE-14Copier"

Josh Williams <josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Wed 7/12/2023 4:51 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

 1 attachments (258 KB)

20230712162505327.pdf;

Address was cut off on scan.

Larry Reinsch
1905 Berkeley Ave.
Saint Paul, MN 55105-1631

-----Original Message-----

From: PE-14Copier@ci.stpaul.mn.us <PE-14Copier@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2023 4:25 PM

To: Josh Williams <josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Subject: Message from "PE-14Copier"

This E-mail was sent from "PE-14Copier" (MP C6503).

Scan Date: 07.12.2023 16:25:05 (-0500)

Queries to: PE-14Copier@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Hamline Midway Library Environmental Assessment

Cecelia Roeder <ceceliaroeder@gmail.com>

Thu 6/29/2023 12:00 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hi there,

Just wanted to leave a comment that I appreciated the Environmental Assessment that was put together. As a resident of the Hamline Midway neighborhood and a library patron at this branch, I'm excited to see the plans come together. The renderings look wonderful. Kudos!

-- Cecelia Roeder

Support for new Hamline Midway Library

Maddie <madelinerudawski@gmail.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 12:48 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Hello Mr. Williams,

I am writing today to express my support for the construction of a new library for the Hamline Midway neighborhood. Having a library in our community is essential for so many reasons, and having a library that is welcoming and accessible for *all* our neighbors is even more important in a time when truly free public spaces are disappearing and libraries are under attack. Libraries serve a multitude of needs for their communities, and it makes sense that a new building needs to be built to continue serving its community. I support the build of the new library and cannot wait to utilize its services.

Thank you for your consideration,

Madeline Rudawski

Midway Resident

Reuse is the most environmentally friendly option

Amy <amysanders@gmail.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 8:47 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

The current building should be expanded and renovated. This is the most carbon-friendly option. Demolition and replacement with a building using a lot of glass is not a win for the environment.

Thank you.

July 20, 2023

Josh Williams
Planning & Economic Development
City of Saint Paul
1400 City Hall Annex
25 West Fourth Street
St. Paul MN 55102

RE: Environmental Assessment Worksheet
Hamline Midway Library Demolition
1558 Minnehaha Avenue
Saint Paul, Ramsey County
SHPO Number: 2023-1390

Dear Josh Williams,

Thank you for providing our office with a copy of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) for the above-referenced project.

As stated under EAW Question 15. *Historic Properties*, the Hamline Midway Library, historically known as the **Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch**, is a designated historic property which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in January 2023. The historic library is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Education given the strength of community involvement in its construction and the way in which the building served the community as a library and center for neighborhood activities.

In addition to the summary paragraph provided under Question 15, the EAW included the report titled *Phase Ia Cultural Resources Assessment for the Proposed Saint Paul Public Library – Hamline Branch EAW, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota Township 29N Range 23W Section 34* (dated June 12, 2023) as prepared by Blondo Consulting, and our initial consultation response letter to the Saint Paul Public Library Director dated May 24, 2023.

As acknowledged and documented in the EAW, our office has been engaged in consultation with the City of Saint Paul (City) and Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL) pursuant to our responsibilities under the Minnesota Historic Sites Act (Minn. Stat. 138.665). Before carrying out an undertaking (project) that has the potential to affect a designated historic property, the state agency or political subdivision of the State has a responsibility to consult with our office in an effort seek ways to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects the undertaking may have on the historic property.

Since issuance of our initial comment letter on May 24th, we have continued consultation with the City and SPPL to reach agreement on a suitable course of action to mitigate for the loss of the historic property. We are currently in the process of formalizing agreement with the City and SPPL on proposed mitigation which is anticipated to include:

- Development and installation of a publicly accessible interpretive display in the new library to include information regarding the historic Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch and the neighborhood it served;
- Level II Minnesota Historic Property Record of the building to include representative 35mm photographs of the historic building for eventual inclusion in the Minnesota Historical Society's Manuscripts Collection; and
- Intensive level survey and evaluation of thirty-two (32) parcels within the "Paust's Rearrangement Study Area" as identified in the 2018 report titled *Hamline-Midway Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota*.

We will continue consultation with the City, SPPL, and any other interested parties regarding resolution of the adverse effect to the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch. Please contact me at 651-201-3290 or sarah.beimers@state.mn.us with any questions or concerns regarding this comment letter.

Sincerely,



Sarah J. Beimers
Environmental Review Program Manager

H-M library - comment

Sharon Sudman <sudman@mninter.net>

Tue 6/20/2023 12:08 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Destroying this beautiful library is not only unconscionable from an environmental standpoint, but from a neighborhood standpoint. It's perfectly usable and we have enjoyed it for our many community meetings and found it completely adequate. Maybe a few accessibility updates are in order, there always are, aren't there. Mayor Carter should be ashamed to be pushing the destruction of this neighborhood heritage site for no good reason.

.....

Sharon Sudman
399 Macalester St.
St. Paul MN 55105
651-699-7132 h
651-698-5552 w
651-247-2382 c

Hamline Midway Library EAW

Jeffery <jthole@juno.com>

Thu 7/13/2023 9:38 AM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Mr. Josh Williams

Principal Planner

1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W 4th Street

Saint Paul. MN 55102

Environmental standards have been created and set in place for good reason, they should not be ignored. The recently released EAW revealed that it will take 50 years to make up for embodied carbon released from demolition & rebuild of the Hamline Midway Library. According to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) "even with energy efficiencies, it takes an extremely long time to make up the carbon release of new construction. Building reuse avoids the release of new carbon into the atmosphere and reuses existing embodied carbon." But as the SHPO Environmental Review Program Manager has also noted, St. Paul Public Schools did not explore leasing or selling of the Library or construction of a new facility elsewhere in the neighborhood as an alternative to demolition. We can not allow the project to proceed at this time. It appears that the City is trying to rush into demolition before the legal process has time to sort out these important issues.

Jeffery Thole

810 W Idaho Ave.

St. Paul, MN 55117



April 15, 2022

Hamline Midway Coalition
Board of Directors

Dear Mr. Foss and Hamline Midway Coalition Board of Directors:

We have received your letter and requests regarding the Hamline Midway Library design project.

Process Thus Far

Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL) has been working since 2019 to identify capital investment priorities, build the case for investment, and secure resources to advance projects that improve the lives of residents in Saint Paul. Community input has been integral throughout. The Hamline Midway Library is one of three libraries identified as highest priority for investment in Saint Paul.

This year, the community engagement process has already engaged over 800 Hamline Midway Library residents and users through surveys, pop up meetings, virtual and in-person events, hands-on tabletop design activities, and more. HMC has been invited to be part of this – invited to help promote, attend, and lead engagement events and activities. In addition to community engagement, the schematic design process includes detailed building assessments that give us a detailed understanding of issues and options.

The guiding question of SPPL and LSE's process might be stated as, **"How might we – within the allocated resources – create the best possible Hamline Midway Library that delivers a safe, inviting, affirming, and comfortable library for people of all cultures, abilities, and communities?"** Within this big vision, LSE as the architecture and design partner has been exploring a variety of architectural concepts that respond to the wide variety of opinions in the community.

Saint Paul Public Library and LSE professionals – a team of nearly all women and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color – have been cursed out, intimidated, demeaned, and bullied in this process while performing their professional duties. This is not acceptable. We all share a goal of bringing many voices to the table. We all share a goal of investing in the Hamline Midway Library as a public space. We invite the Hamline Midway Coalition to support us in holding boundaries for respectful and welcoming civil discourse that honors the full range of perspectives neighbors have on this topic.

Libraries are a source of trusted information, and SPPL's Transforming Libraries webpage thoroughly and publicly documents the facts of the process and project thus far.



Scope for this Project

As City government, we frequently receive feedback – including from Project Ambassadors on this effort – that it is critical for us to be clear on what is in scope for consideration when we seek community input. Library and City administration have been clear and consistent that the following items are not under consideration on this project:

- The City purchasing new or additional property.
- Moving the library to another location.
- Re-starting the community engagement process.
- Exceeding the existing budget for engagement.

The Library and the City operate in a resource-constrained environment, particularly around capital investments. Each of these suggestions adds significant costs in an environment when construction costs are escalating dramatically over time. Interrupting the process does not bring us any closer to improving the library for the community and for the staff who work there.

Recommendation

The invitation to the open house on April 23 is open to everyone. That event is the opportunity for everyone to review together what has been heard so far from community members regarding the priorities and features of a transformed Hamline Midway Library; review and provide feedback on the updated building design concepts that respond to community input and the community-informed vision for libraries in Saint Paul; and learn more about the high-level costs associated with each building concept.

This feedback will inform decision-making on direction. Because SPPL has not yet decided on direction, allowing this exploration and input process to unfold is necessary to come to a decision. We hope you all attend and advertise this event

Thank you for your collaboration on this project and your work on behalf of the Hamline Midway neighborhood.

Jaime Tincher
Deputy Mayor

Cc: Catherine Penkert, Director of Saint Paul Public Library

Oppose destroying

Roddie Turner <roddieturner@gmail.com>

Wed 7/19/2023 2:49 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Please do not allow a historic building to be lost in St. Paul. Preservation and history are critical to knowing who we are culturally, and the loss of that identity is not worth a shiny new building. In every way, the cost is too high.

Sincerely,

Roddie Turner

452 Laurel Avenue

St. Paul

Sent from my iPhone



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT
332 MINNESOTA STREET, SUITE E1500
ST. PAUL, MN 55101-1323

06/21/2023

Regulatory File No. MVP-2023-00683-JST

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT

Josh Williams
1400 City Hall Annex, 25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

To Whom It May Concern:

We have received your submittal described below. You may contact the Project Manager with questions regarding the evaluation process. The Project Manager may request additional information necessary to evaluate your submittal.

File Number: MVP-2023-00683-JST

Applicant: Maureen Hartman

Project Name: Hamline Midway Library / Pre-App

Project Location: Section 34 of Township 29 N, Range 23 W, Ramsey County, Minnesota (Latitude: 44.9626354164926; Longitude: -93.1661754730382)

Received Date: 06/15/2023

Project Manager: Joseph Toth
(651) 290-5532
Joseph.Toth@usace.army.mil

Additional information about the St. Paul District Regulatory Program can be found on our web site at <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/missions/regulatory>.

Please note that initiating work in waters of the United States prior to receiving Department of the Army authorization could constitute a violation of Federal law. If you have any questions, please contact the Project Manager.

Thank you.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District
Regulatory Branch

MVP-2023-00683-JST 20230705 pre-app Hamline Midway Library

Toth, Joseph S CIV (USA) <Joseph.Toth@usace.army.mil>

Wed 7/5/2023 11:16 AM

To: Marika Staloch <marika.staloch@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Cc: Brown, Meghan J CIV USARMY CEMVP (USA) <Meghan.J.Brown@usace.army.mil>; Josh Williams <josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

 1 attachments (250 KB)

2023-00683-JST 20230705 pre-app.pdf;

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

Good morning,

We have reviewed the report referenced in the subject line for the Hamline Midway Library project proposed by Saint Paul Public Library and I am attaching a pre-application letter containing information pertinent to this project. If you have any questions, please reach out to either the phone number and/or email listed within the letter. Thanks!

Joseph Toth (he/him/his)
USACE Regulatory Specialist
St. Paul District Office
332 Minnesota Street, Suite E1500
St. Paul, MN 55101
Office Phone: (651) 290-5532
Work Cell: (651) 242-1321



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ST. PAUL DISTRICT
332 MINNESOTA STREET, SUITE E1500
ST. PAUL, MN 55101-1323

July 5, 2023

Regulatory File No. MVP-2023-00683-JST

Saint Paul Public Library
c/o Maureen Hartman
90 W 4th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Maureen Hartman:

This letter is in response to correspondence we received from Saint Paul Public Library regarding the Hamline Midway Library project located in Section 34, Township 29 North, Range 23 West, Ramsey County, MN. This letter contains our initial comments on this project for your consideration. The purpose of this letter is to inform you that based on the Environmental Assessment Worksheet: Hamline Midway Library, a Department of the Army (DA) permit would not be required if there are no impacts to aquatic resources for your proposed activity. In lieu of a specific response, please consider the following general information concerning our regulatory program that may apply to the proposed project.

If the proposal involves activity in navigable waters of the United States, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (Section 10). Section 10 prohibits the construction, excavation, or deposition of materials in, over, or under navigable waters of the United States, or any work that would affect the course, location, condition, or capacity of those waters, unless the work has been authorized by a Department of the Army permit.

If the proposal involves discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, it may be subject to the Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA Section 404). Waters of the United States include navigable waters, their tributaries, and adjacent wetlands (33 CFR § 328.3). CWA Section 301(a) prohibits discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, unless the work has been authorized by a Department of the Army permit under Section 404. Information about the Corps permitting process can be obtained online at <http://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/regulatory>.

The Corps evaluation of a Section 10 and/or a Section 404 permit application involves multiple analyses, including (1) evaluating the proposal's impacts in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (33 CFR part 325), (2) determining whether the proposal is contrary to the public interest (33 CFR § 320.4), and (3) in the case of a Section 404 permit, determining whether the proposal complies with the Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines (Guidelines) (40 CFR part 230).

If the proposal requires a Section 404 permit application, the Guidelines specifically require that "no discharge of dredged or fill material shall be permitted if there is a practicable alternative to the proposed discharge which would have less adverse impact on the aquatic ecosystem, so long as the alternative does not have other significant adverse environmental consequences" (40 CFR § 230.10(a)). Time and money spent on the proposal prior to applying

Regulatory Division (File No. MVP-2023-00683-JST)

for a Section 404 permit cannot be factored into the Corps' decision whether there is a less damaging practicable alternative to the proposal.

If an application for a Corps permit has not yet been submitted, the project proposer may request a pre-application consultation meeting with the Corps to obtain information regarding the data, studies or other information that will be necessary for the permit evaluation process. A pre-application consultation meeting is strongly recommended if the proposal has substantial impacts to waters of the United States, or if it is a large or controversial project.

If you have any questions, please contact me in our St. Paul office at (651) 290-5532 or Joseph.Toth@usace.army.mil. In any correspondence or inquiries, please refer to the Regulatory file number shown above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Toth".

Joseph Toth
Regulatory Specialist

cc:
Josh Williams (RGU, City of Saint Paul)

Hamline Midway Library Environmental Assessment Worksheet comment

Mark E. Vesley <mvesley@minncle.org>

Wed 6/28/2023 4:42 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

Mr. Williams:

Demolition and new construction are intrinsically less environmentally friendly than re-use of existing structures. It will take many, many years for any energy savings from a new building to offset the effects of demolition and the external costs of new construction. Preserving the existing library building is the greener option. Thank you.

Mark Vesley
1341 Spencer Road West
Saint Paul, MN 55108

Hamline Midway Library EAW Comments

Warns Benita and Michael <warns@pclink.com>

Thu 7/20/2023 5:05 PM

To:*CI-StPaul_HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW <HamlineMidwayLibrary_EAW@ci.stpaul.mn.us>

 1 attachments (13 KB)

libraryEAWcomment.docx;

Please find attached our comments concerning the EAW for the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch building. We expect that these comments will become a part of the official public record concerning this project.

Michael and Benita Warns
1440 Lafond Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104-2438
warns@pclink.com

Mr. Williams:

We wish to go on record as opposing demolition of the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch because of the adverse impact demolition would have on both the environment and the cultural resources of our community.

According to the EAW, "The proposed project has undergone extensive public comment and review to determine the future of this community library. Two design options were presented to the public by LSE Architects, and one was ultimately chosen." I was at those meetings where the designs were unveiled. The final design for the demolish/rebuild option, as shown in the rendering on Page 46 of the EAW, looks nothing like the demolish/rebuild option originally presented. The rendering shows a building with an extensive glass exterior. The glass façade primarily faces north and west. In winter, the prevailing northerly winds will cause chilling near the glass, causing increased load on the heating system and thus, less energy efficient, which will have a negative impact on the environment. In summer, the afternoon hot sun will have a greenhouse effect on the interior of the building, causing increased load on the cooling system and thus, less energy efficient, which will have a negative impact on the environment. The design is inappropriate for our climate.

As for the "extensive public comment and review" around this project, it is important to note that nowhere were any of the written comments published that did not support the City's preferred option. I attended several of these "community input" meetings and I saw many written comments supporting preservation of this building, but they were never published in the findings. All written comments should have been published verbatim, in the interest of full disclosure and transparency. This was not done.

Many comments supported selling the building to an entity that would take advantage of available Historic Tax Credits for preservation/rehabilitation of the Henry Hale Memorial Library building, then the proceeds of the sale used to acquire an appropriate property to build a new library. This option was never explored. In a May 24, 2023 letter from the State Historic Preservation Office, Sarah Beimers outlined the SHPO review of the proposed project including both options originally presented to the public. She wrote, "Of note, the documentation provided by the SPPL on April 24th did not explore leasing or selling the Library and constructing a new facility elsewhere in the neighborhood as an alternative to demolition. There are examples in the City where schools, fire stations, and another library have been leased or sold in order to preserve them."

Ms. Beimers further wrote, "In summary, it is our opinion that Option A – the rehabilitation of the existing historic library building with construction of a new addition at the rear – could be designed to meet the programming needs and preserve the building's status on the National Register." This option was supported by the 3,000+ people who signed a petition opposing demolition.

As a part of the EAW process, Blondo Consulting was hired to determine the cultural resources impacted by the alternatives. Their conclusion? "As this involves the complete demolition of the library, Blondo Consulting recommends the proposed project will have an adverse effect to the National Register of Historic Places listed Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch."

Reuse is the most environmentally responsible option whenever possible. In the case of the Henry Hale Memorial Library, Hamline Branch, it is possible and at least two viable alternatives to demolition exist – rehabilitate the existing building and add space via a building addition, or sell the building and use the proceeds to acquire appropriate property to build a new library facility. Both of these options would preserve this important historic building for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

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