



West 7th/Fort Road Federation
974 West 7th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

651-298-5599
FortRoadFederation.org

March 7, 2016

Bill Dermody
St. Paul PED
25 West 4th Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

RE: Victoria Park Apartments Phase 3 Chase Real Estate

Dear Bill,

The Federation opposes the plan submitted by Chase Real Estate because it substantially modifies the Victoria Park Master Plan.

Whereas the Master Plan included a number of different housing styles to provide an urban vitality mix to the design of the neighborhood, this development changes the plan from townhouse to a 4 story apartment development.

There still remains two major parcels in the Plan that are not developed.

We urge the Planning Commission to stop the alteration of the Master Plan before the development becomes a monotonous set of 4 plus story buildings in a "traditional urban neighborhood."

Sincerely,



Ed Johnson, Director

From: Jane Lagerquist [mailto:jglager@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2016 2:24 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Regarding the CHASE application for the building next to Nova

Dear Mr. Dermody,

Thanks for considering our comments for the proposed variance by Chase.

Our children are students attending Nova Classical Academy. I have concerns for this proposed new building plus the variance that they are requesting to have a 4th floor added. Here's an itemized list of my concerns.

- An Apartment building will give a view of smokers, place drinking within 100 feet of a school.
 - Create a possible unsafe narrow walk way next to the school.
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 - Exiting from the underground parking will be putting cars in direct traffic of our carpool/drop off traffic, and will be a potential safety hazard to our school children.
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- a 4th floor will put a good deal of classrooms in a shadow, and give a view of a brick wall.
 - 52 (approx.) units would increase the cars in the area. Their underground parking is an additional cost to residents. Surely not everyone in the apartment complex will only have 1 car, and always pay for a parking spot inside.
 - All the residential units in the area and Nova are only 3 stories high. To have this one new building taller than all the rest would look inconsistent, and ill planned.
 - The neighborhood Master plan - had shown these buildings and neighboring residential buildings to be mostly townhomes. But the residential buildings built so far have mostly been apartment buildings, with a greater density of people. This has increased the outdoor parking shortage immensely already.
 - Sholom home is planning on building expansion in the neighborhood as well which will increase the need for employee parking, and visitors.
 - Its still unclear how the new park and athletic fields will effect event parking.
 - That residents can see directly into the classrooms from windows in the courtyard area. This would be an ideal location for voyeurism, either direction,

We are pleased with many of the neighborhood improvements to the West 7th area. But please make these improvements and decisions thoughtfully made, so that the quality of life for existing residents, employees, and children already in the neighborhood are not poorly impacted with safety issues, difficult parking and high density of people.

Thank you,
Jane Lagerquist

2016 palace ave. St paul

From: Naomi Kritzer [mailto:naomi.kritzer@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2016 12:39 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Victoria Park development - public comment

I am very concerned about the proposed development by Chase in the Victoria Park neighborhood.

My Grandmother lives in Sholom Home, and my children attend Nova Classical Academy, so I am in and out of the Victoria Park neighborhood daily, as is my mother when she visits my Grammie. I have looked at the Master Plan written for the neighborhood and compared it to what's actually been built. One of the goals for the neighborhood was a *mix* of housing, including free-standing owner-occupied houses, condo units, "mansion" style apartments, and townhomes, and yet at this point it is overwhelmingly rental apartments.

And I want to see some of that planned, promised, the smaller-scale housing built! I want families to have the opportunity to own homes in this neighborhood, because that will add stability and give us residents who are committed to the neighborhood for the long term. (I am not opposed to rental housing; I am opposed to a monoculture. And that's basically what we've got.)

We are reaching the breaking point in terms of cars that come through: in addition to the residents of the existing apartments, we have employees of Nova and Sholom Home, parents who bring their kids to and from school, and the city is planning to build a park, which I'm really looking forward to, which will also bring many people into the neighborhood. Especially at pickup and dropoff times for Nova and shift changes for Sholom Home, traffic in the neighborhood is already really terrible, and requires a lot of cooperation and patience. Adding the cars to go with fifty more units of housing is going to create significant safety problems as well as conflict and frustration for everyone involved.

But fundamentally I think adding more apartment housing is going to be bad for the neighborhood. This was never intended to look like downtown, with 100% large apartments, and that's where we're heading. Let's get back to the Victoria Park Master Plan and think about how to add variety. Thank you.

Naomi Kritzer
St. Paul resident

1305 Pinehurst Ave, Saint Paul, 55116

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Kimberly Dumitrica <kdumitrica@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 10, 2016 11:13 AM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul)
Subject: please deny variances to Victoria Park Master Plan

Dear Mr. Dermody,

I live in Saint Paul and my children attend school in Ward 2 at Nova Classical Academy. I am writing about my concerns for the development surrounding their school. Deviations have been taken from the original Victoria Park Master Plan, and more variances are being asked for. These variances concern me, and it is my understanding that a vote will be taken soon. Please do not approve any further variances to the Victoria Park Master Plan.

Apartment complexes have already been built where town homes were originally planned. There is currently undeveloped land adjacent to Nova Classical Academy. It was originally planned to be town homes, and now a variances are being requested, and the developers plan to change from town homes to higher density apartments. While I am in favor of development of the area, I have concerns for these changes. A possible short term gain in taxes, should not outweigh the long term benefits of housing diversity, traffic flow, and/or safety.

parking/traffic- Parking and traffic during drop off and pick up is already difficult, especially once roads narrow due to snow. I am against a variance for additional street parking. I am also concerned about the increase in street parking required from apartments having more than one resident, as well visitor parking. Apartments will require a greater need for street parking than the town homes originally planned. There will also be an increase in traffic from the new park not yet built and from the proposed Shalom home expansion. Please consider a traffic study with possible changes from 2-way to 4-way stop signs and changing some streets to one-way. The ability for traffic to flow is critical for safety, especially during school start and end times.

building height— I am against a variance for a fourth level to the proposed apartment complex. The school building next door is only three levels per building code. There are many reasons height limits are set, and I feel it should be followed, especially right next to a building that follows the building height codes. This added height will further the density of people in the area above what was originally planned.

underground - The proposal includes an underground parking garage. Nova Classical Academy does not have a basement. It has been my understanding that this is due to the toxicity of the land. The acceptability of digging and building underground should be reviewed.

security—I am concerned for students' safety to have people living so close to a school. Additionally, I am concerned about residents smoking and having alcohol within a few feet of a school building. It is my understanding that a patio is planned at the apartment complex facing the school, which is a tobacco free zone.

Please deny the conditional use permit and the height and parking variance, along with any other variances to the Victoria Park Master Plan. I also highly recommend the completion of a traffic (during school start/end times) and possibly an environmental impact study.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Dumitrica
2187 Berkeley Ave.
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: kate tetmeyer <andykateruby@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:56 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul)
Subject: chase dev.

Chase development is coming to the city with a proposal to build a four story 52 unit apartment building next door to Nova Classical Academy. I have the following concerns:

Chase has incrementally, over the last seven years, deviated from the original Victoria master plan first approved by the city 12 years ago. These approved changes have increased the population and traffic to the area 5 fold with, as far as I know, no reassessment of the impact on the traffic flow into or out of the limited circuit of roads; or on the sewer/water run off capacity. This latest proposal will be one story higher than the previous apartment buildings already constructed by Mr. Chase.

I understand that Mr. Chase has the right to build on land zoned for high density residential units and that the city would enjoy having those units on the tax roll, however, that desire will not magically increase the amount of road, nor create new ways in or out of this secluded area off West 7th. As planned, the building's underground parking (which, assuming these high rent units will rent to two or more occupants, will only handle one half to two thirds of the cars needing spots) will exit directly into Nova's drop off/pick up line during the time that people will presumably be going or coming home from work. In the following years Nova will have more high school drivers and the planned city park will bring in more walkers, bikers and drivers. It is time to reconsider the overall development of this area.

I am requesting that the planning committee not pass Mr. Chase's proposal until a traffic assessment can be conducted DURING PICK UP OR DROP OFF time and/or the proposal not be granted for more than the three stories of the rest of development.

Sincerely, Kate Tetmeyer

From: Ben Granberg [mailto:bgran2243@hotmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 01, 2016 8:11 AM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Victoria Park

Dear Mr Dermody,

I am concerned about the Victoria Park development and the traffic congestion at the school. I am employed and spend much of my time out of town and I am unable to make any of the zoning meetings. Please do not grant a variance for additional housing units in Victoria Park. Making the units taller will only result in more traffic congestion

Traffic there is horrible right now as a result of bad planning just a few years ago. It is only expected to get worse with this development, the Shalom Home expected development and with Nova planning to additional students also. Currently the roads are almost unpassable around the school and behind Mississippi Market at the beginning and the end of the school day. At best it is a one way street. The situation is made worse as the streets get narrower during the winter due to the snowbanks and parking.

I don't see how the city can plan on making this worse by adding twice as many cars. Right now there is very limited emergency vehicle access, blocking fire and police access to the school. Why are there not any crosswalks marked at the intersections? How can there be a school with no marked crosswalks or signs?

The school tries to do there part by having untrained people directing traffic. Does the city even know that untrained people are directing traffic on the streets of St Paul, because of the city is unwilling to act.

What's going to happen eventually is someone is going to get injured by the traffic in front of the school. At the very least please block the variance of the development if it goes before the city council. The city can also help by clearly marking crosswalks, and better plowing in the winter.

Sincerely,

Ben and Michelle Granberg
1659 Hartford Ave
St Paul, MN 66116

Langer, Samantha (CI-StPaul)

From: Robin Cerio <robincerio@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 10:12 PM
To: Dermody, Bill (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Public comment

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Mr. Dermody -

Rebecca Noecker gave me your name as the person to send public comment to regarding the development of Victoria Park. More specifically, my public comment is for the Zoning Committee meeting on March 10th at 3:30 in the City Council Chamber.

I am writing you today about the proposed apartment building on the corners of Mercer Street, Kay Avenue, and Victoria Way. I ask you to deny the height variance and the dedicated parking spots for the proposed building. Further, I ask that development of the remaining area stay in line with the original Victoria Park Master Plan to maintain economic and housing diversity, along with a pedestrian friendly neighborhood.

I am the parent to two Nova Classical Academy students and an avid volunteer at the school. As part of my volunteer commitments, I am at the school at many different times throughout the day. As a result of this, I have been able to see a few issues that will arise if we continue creating high-density housing in this area.

Currently, street parking is at a premium. Those using the street parking are employees of Shalom Home & Mississippi Market, current residents of the Victoria Way apartment homes and their guests, along with staff & faculty from our school. We already have another apartment building under construction in the neighborhood, so available street parking will become more of an issue. During shift changes, the beginning and end of the school day, and during any school events (games, concerts, informational meetings), parking pushes even further into the surrounding neighborhoods.

Hand in hand with parking issues are the increased traffic. Not only is this a safety issue, but a noise and road wear issue as well. In the mornings and afternoons when people are heading to and from work, people tend to speed on Victoria Way West and Victoria Street South as it is a straight shot into and out of the neighborhood.

The City of St. Paul will be developing Victoria Park further and with the new park and ball fields coming in, Nova Classical Academy will hopefully begin using some of those fields for our home games. We will then need to find parking for our team's supporters, as well as for the opposing team, not to mention other city residents who just want to use the park. This creates further issues with parking and traffic.

Additionally, last year we had issues with snow removal by the city which resulted in parking restrictions - only one side of the street could be used for parking. This made parking and traffic more challenging as the streets were so narrow.

I am pleased that our requested traffic study will be conducted sometime in the next 2-3 months prior to the site-plan review for the new construction. However, even with this traffic study, the development of the area has veered far from the original Victoria Park Master plan. The small decisions made to convert the original plans of townhomes into mostly apartment buildings have had large effects; they've really changed the character of the neighborhood. I do hope we can start adhering more to the Victoria Park Master Plan in order to maintain the diversity of housing and ensure the neighborhood stays pedestrian-friendly.

In summary, if more high-density housing comes into the neighborhood, our parking situation will go from bad to worse, traffic will increase in frequency, and the safety of the neighborhood (residents, students, and those who work in the neighborhood) will go down. I ask that you adhere to the Victoria Park Master Plan for any future buildings to help with these growing issues so we can keep this wonderful neighborhood healthy and thriving.

Sincerely,
Robin Cerio
Nova Classical Academy parent & volunteer