



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
*Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor*

25 West Fourth Street  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700  
Facsimile: 651-266-6549

Date: May 11, 2016  
To: Snelling-Midway Community Advisory Committee  
From: Donna Drummond, Planning Director, PED  
Subject: Questions about Snelling-Midway Redevelopment

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At the last CAC meeting, there were many questions and concerns about the proposed redevelopment and process. Questions about phasing and scale of future development were prominent. This memo attempts to answer some of those questions and provides background information on the role zoning and the master plan will play in the development process. Marketing the site and the phasing of development is also addressed.

***Q: How can we have confidence that what is proposed is what will be developed? We are concerned that the scale of development presented may not be what is actually built.***

The master plan represents a vision of the type and amount of development the site could accommodate at full build-out based on what is allowed by existing zoning and the comprehensive plan. The master plan specifies where new public open spaces and streets will go and how the street rights-of-way will be designed to serve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle traffic. The master plan also determines uses, maximum density and scale. The exact density of the private development actually built on the site will be determined by what the master plan allows and what market forces make feasible.

In addition to being consistent with the master plan, all development on the site, including both public facilities and private development must be consistent with T4 (Traditional Neighborhood) zoning. T4 zoning sets general uses, minimum densities, and scale in terms of building heights. Traditional neighborhood zoning districts also include design standards related to: land use diversity; landscaping; building heights; entrance locations; door and window openings; materials and detailing; screening; parking location and design; and sidewalks.

All new private development must go through the site plan review process before it is built (in part, to make sure it is consistent with the master plan and zoning). The Planning Commission has the option to hold a public hearing to gather community input on any site plan and is likely to assert its right to do so for future development on the superblock. If plans do not meet requirements of T4 zoning or the master plan a variance of either the zoning requirements or a modification of the master plan would be needed. These processes require a public hearing and provide an opportunity for community input.

***Q: How is the scale of future development determined?***

The master plan establishes the maximum amount of development that would be allowed on the site and represents a “most dense” scenario. The underlying T4 zoning sets a minimum development threshold with a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.0. Future development will fall somewhere between the

“most dense” scenario and the 1.0 floor area ratio. In the proposed master plan, the FARs for individual blocks are generally in the 4.0-5.0 range. See the attached information showing how FAR is calculated and the proposed master plan FARs. Also included in the attached are example buildings along the Green Line with their FARs to illustrate what development at various FARs looks like. *Floor area ratio is the total floor area of all buildings or structures on a lot divided by the area of the lot.* A building with a lot of surface parking will generally have a low floor area ratio.

**Q: *Is the site being marketed? How and by whom?***

RK Midway has been actively marketing the site. RK Midway has been working with its existing tenants to find potential locations in the new development. RK Midway has also talked with several potential new tenants and is working with United Properties to market the site to potential office tenants. In addition, the Minnesota United owners have been talking with potential developers and tenants that are compatible uses for the stadium.

New development can be identified at any time. However, new development cannot begin until the master plan and a site plan are approved.

**Q: *Why has it taken so long to get information from the design teams about what development might look like at year of stadium opening or a few years after that?***

Phase 1 scenarios are just beginning to emerge as the exact layout of the stadium site is determined, interest in the site grows, and the potential market created by the new stadium is known. In addition, negotiations between property owners, developers, and potential tenants are typically confidential as the parties do not want to make dealings public until details are worked out. The development process can be unpredictable and is often characterized by uncertainty. Until more information is known, reliable projections about phasing and scale of development will be up in the air. Once the team’s requests from the state legislature relating to the stadium are approved, we expect there will be more certainty surrounding the stadium portion of development, including phase 1 scenarios, and we anticipate subsequent interest in development of the balance of the site will begin to firm up.

**Q: *How has CAC and community input been provided to the design teams? They are seldom present at our meetings.***

From the beginning, the design team used public input to inform plans for the site. The Snelling Station Area Plan first and foremost lays the foundation for the mixed use urban village proposed for the superblock. As part of the Comprehensive Plan, the Station Area Plan is the result of a public process that expresses a community vision for the area. The Snelling station area vision states,

*A vibrant commercial center, both a city-wide destination and local needs hub, that successfully hosts and connects a multitude of uses. These could include corporate headquarters, retail stores, community services, local businesses, residential development, and cultural and entertainment destinations – all structured within a pattern of streets, blocks, and green gathering spaces that promote safer, more active streets and balanced options for movement and increased economic vitality.*

The design principles that guide the design teams’ work are informed by input provided by the Station Area Plan as well as input from the CAC and community members at open house meetings and at Open Saint Paul. City staff assembled notes from each CAC discussion and sent them to the design teams and also had several telephone conversations conveying the information. In addition, a representative from S9 Architecture attended several CAC meetings and one community open house to present information about the master plan, listen to comments and concerns, and answer questions.

**Q: *How much of the existing retail will remain on site in 2018 when the stadium is opened?***

Of the 326,191 square feet of existing retail on site, approximately 125,000-130,000 will remain at the time of stadium opening in March 2018. The exact amount and the extent of business relocations from out buildings (such as McDonald's, Perkins, and Big Top Liquor) that will occur by stadium opening is not yet known and is subject to on-going planning and negotiations. It is unknown exactly how much retail would be included in a first mixed use building on Snelling, but the master plan shows first floor retail square footages that range from 43,700 – 93,000 sq. ft. per block along Snelling. Total retail square footage shown in the master plan equals 421,100 sq. ft., in addition to 1 million sq. ft. of office, 620 residential units, and 400 hotel rooms.