



September 2, 2020

Bill Dermody, City Planner

Re: Comments on the Hillcrest Golf Course Initial Development Framework

Dear Mr. Dermody:

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity would like to offer comment on the Initial Development Framework for the Hillcrest Golf Course Master Plan. Our organization has enjoyed a partnership with the City of Saint Paul for years. Since 1985, we have built over 370 homes in St. Paul and helped over 1300 families across Minnesota achieve homeownership. Our work in St. Paul and elsewhere is driven by our mission to eliminate poverty housing from the Twin Cities and to make decent, affordable shelter for all people a matter of conscience.

We offer the following priority statements to convey our hopes for the Hillcrest Master Plan.

We support a site approach and master plan that maximizes opportunities for affordable housing. Per the objectives outlined in the City of Saint Paul's comprehensive plan, we support design approaches that will maximize affordable housing and create at least 1,000 new units. We would be pleased to see site approaches that achieve a higher threshold of units, such as 1,500 new units, provided a significant portion of the new units were affordable.

We support a development that fosters integrated and healthy communities through mixed housing types, including lower and higher density. As stated in the Community Priorities, community members want a mix of housing options on the Hillcrest site. With multiple housing types, the development can meet the needs of those who already live on the East Side, as well as those who want to move to the area. Twin Cities Habitat supports a combination of lower and higher density units, as well as housing options that sustain a variety of family types. As site developers finalize a master plan, we hope you consider a range of ownership unit types, including single-family standalone units, townhomes, twin homes, and higher density ownership units, such as condominiums.

We strongly support decisions that are rooted in racial equity analysis and designed to uphold the City's commitments to racial equity. Given the well-documented, systemic, and persistent racial disparities that cause harm across Minnesota, racial equity needs to be at the forefront of any development decisions. Due to decades of discriminatory policy and development, there is a 53% gap between homeownership for white households and Black households in Minnesota today. As homeownership is one of the main ways to build wealth, affordable homeownership is a key strategy for addressing racial inequity. It is our hope that the Hillcrest development creates new opportunities for low- and middle-income families to access the transformational benefits of homeownership.

We hope to work together with you as you move forward in the development process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Coleman".

Chris Coleman
President and CEO
Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity