



Union Park District Council

Midway Center Engagement



Union Park has not taken a position on the proposed soccer stadium

It has written to elected officials seeking:

- Meaningful community engagement
- A comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of the entire Midway Center/Bus Barn site
- Attention to specific community concerns



Midway Center Task Force

- Set up in April 2015 to begin community discussion about development at this prime location
- Its mission: Engage community stakeholders in a visioning process and gather ideas and concerns
- Its goal: Develop recommendations for redevelopment of whole 34.5 acre Midway Center super block
- Report: Present recommendations to Union Park Land Use Committee and Board, and to the Citizen Advisory Committee



Surveys and Outreach

- Online survey
- Conversations with business owners on Snelling and University
- Surveying of shoppers at Big Top
- Discussion with the Frogtown Board
- Engaging students at Concordia College
- Talking with Aurora St. Anthony leadership



Engagement at events

- Central Baptist Church block party
- Annual event in Merriam Park
- Lex-Ham Annual meeting





Focus of discussions

- What services/stores do you most use now?
- What do you need to leave the neighborhood for?
- What kinds of amenities would you like to see? (restaurants, housing, health care, retail, green space, etc.)
- What fears and concerns do you have about changes?
- What do you think about the potential for a soccer stadium to be built in the area?



August 11 community meeting

1. Small groups worked at stations to share fears and hopes on specific topics
2. Participants completed fears and hopes worksheets
3. The group convened and shared an overview of what was discussed at each topic station





Traffic and Parking themes

- Event-day congestion is a huge concern
- Traffic and parking impacts on residential streets are predicted
- Surface parking is unpopular
- Shared parking is supported
- Public transit is seen as essential to provide access to the shopping center area, and free or reduced-rate transit is suggested



Stadium usage themes

- An underutilized stadium is feared
- There is a significant concern that it will not be accessible to the community
- Impacts like noise, bright lights, trash, tailgaters, and increased crime are concerns
- Some are worried about stadium design
- Suggestions for uses include concerts, local soccer matches, festivals, farmers markets, adjacent public plazas and parks



Development themes

- There are concerns that existing businesses will be forced out through redevelopment or higher property values
- Many worry that development will take a long time, leaving surface parking and blight
- Neighbors support comprehensive planning of the entire Bus Barn/Midway Center site
- There is support for local businesses, public and green space, and a mix of market-rate or affordable housing, retail and high quality jobs



Financing themes

- Many residents adamantly oppose any public support or tax-exempt status
- Some fear that public investment would not benefit the immediate community or address the needs and interests of our diverse neighborhood
- Some view modest public investment as key to gaining community access and related infrastructure
- Transparency and clear explanations of financing implications are called for



Other themes

- **Anti-stadium sentiment:** there is a considerable number of people who express opinions against the stadium, fearing it won't serve the local community and preferring something else at the site
- **Gentrification:** people are concerned about it getting too expensive to live or maintain a small business in the area
- **Neighborhood character:** people request preservation of the economic and ethnic diversity of the local community



Future of Union Park Task Force

- Will report recommendations in the next couple of months
- Will assess whether task force should continue engaging neighborhood residents and business owners located close to the area
- The goal: to ensure that redevelopment benefits the nearby neighborhoods, and that the voices of those most directly impacted are represented in discussions and decision-making