



Neighbors for a Livable Saint Paul

<https://www.livablefordvillage.com/>

THE SUPER-SIZING OF HIGHLAND PARK: SHOWING THE REAL IMPACTS FROM THE PLANNED FORD REDEVELOPMENT

BE HEARD!

Exposing facts to residents of Highland Village and neighboring areas

Updated July 10, 2017

Mission



We advocate for a Ford Site Development that is livable, safe and a harmonious extension of our village

This document was compiled by a Highland neighborhood group (called **Neighbors for a Livable St. Paul**) who support the development and **smart** use of the Ford site, but argues against the City-proposed zoning plan for high-rise construction and excessive **30%** increase in Highland's population.

City's vision for the Ford Site in Highland Village (so-called "New Urbanism")



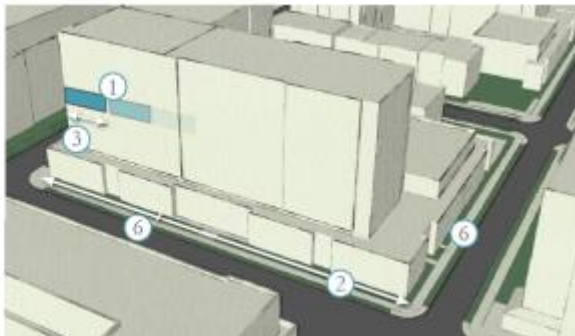
Illustrative pictures from
the draft Ford Site
Zoning and Master Plan
May 2017

Building Type



Massive 10-story apartments 110' tall
planned for Highland
(Illustration taken out of City presentation Nov
2016)

- ① Dwelling Unit Counts
- ② Lot Width
- ③ Dwelling Unit Width
- ④ → ⑤ Lot Coverage
- ⑥ Right-of-Way Setback



Saint Paul City planners are proposing a dense, highly-packed, modern high-rise "concrete jungle" development. This development will tower over the rest of Highland and look out of place, out of scale with the rest of the region

Ford & Highland Village – a Give-&-Take relationship since 1925



But it now appears that Ford, with City Planners, have a joint agenda to pack the Ford site to its fullest density regardless of the long term negative impacts to the broader existing community

Quote taken out of a local Minnpost article from 07/14/16:

*Ford's Cory [Rob Cory, Director of Global Real Estate Services for Ford Land] said the company's plan and the city's sync up because higher-intensity development also **maximizes how much the company can earn from a sale and redevelopment.** "It's a Ford Motor Co. asset so we owe it to our shareholders to maximize the site, and what the city wants to do will lead to good value for the site," Cory said*

City's design for the Highland Village Ford Site

St. Paul City Planners' high-density development plan includes:

- A range of 2,400 to 4,000 housing units (mostly apartments), no single-family homes in the plan
- Projected increase in residents, based on draft plan = 4,320 to 7,200 (potential 30% increase to all of Highland)
- Massive 10 story buildings (110' maximum height)
- Only 9% of property to be designated specifically as parkland

The City leaders /bureaucrats are trying to social-engineer St. Paul residents by pushing through their personal high-density urbanism agenda, even though it is not what most residents want. The City seems to be placing their own objectives, biases before the majority

What Highland residents want

- Reasonable Density / Lower density:
 - Cap the number of new housing units at 2400 (the low end of the city's own estimate)
 - Maximum 12% population increase vs planned 30% additional residents
- Limited Building Heights:
 - Keep to “human scale” with 4 story building heights max vs 10 stories in the City's plan
 - Enforce 40' building height limit along the Mississippi, preserve pristine riverside spaces and views
- Manageable Traffic Increases:
 - Manage traffic increases on surrounding streets vs potential tripling of traffic volumes
 - Walkability & Pedestrian safety
- 25% Greenspace:
 - Mandate greenspace beyond the 9% City ordinance requirement – Residents want 25% min
 - Landscape design should celebrate local history and unique proximity to the Mississippi
 - Mandate a variety of outdoor recreational amenities/ spaces
 - Mandate an obligation to preserve space to relocate the existing Ford baseball diamonds
- No Tax Breaks, TIFs or “special” bonding bills offered to the Developers
 - Residents / tax payers should not have to foot the infrastructure buildout costs
 - This is not a blighted site, Ford will receive exceptional value from developer(s)
- The Development Should “Fit in” to the Neighborhood:
 - The physical, visual, architectural look should fit into the existing neighborhood
 - Development should honor the character of the neighborhood and its unique riverfront

The City is asserting its own principles of design & density instead of attending to local conditions and local community wishes

Losing the “Village” Feel

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Highland Park

The Highland Park neighborhood of Saint Paul provides a small town feel within the grasp of a big city.

Explore the river trails, beach and spring-fed falls at Hidden Falls Regional Park. Step into the Highland Grill for fresh, always made from scratch fare using local ingredients. Grab kosher classic at Cecil's Deli. Stop by Tiffany Sports Lounge or Sweet Pea's Public House for a beer. Quixotic Coffee serves up nitro cold brew and hand-crafted coffee drinks. See movie at the historic Highland Theatre. There's a shopping district to check out and in July you'll want to attend Highland Fest, an art fair and festival all rolled into one.

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North End/State Capital

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www.areavibes.com

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livability
72

VERY LIVABLE

Highland

- Highland is ranked #3 in St. Paul
- Highland is ranked #15 in Minnesota

- ✓ Low Crime Rates
- ✓ Stable Housing Market
- ✓ Lots of Local Amenities

The City of Saint Paul website describes the Highland Neighborhood as having a “small-town feel”. However, the city’s proposal for the Ford site will have Highland grow to the highest population density per square mile in all of Minnesota – Certainly not a small town “village”.

Comparing Population Densities



Rochester, MN

Population: 112,225

Land acreage: 54.75 sq. miles

Density: 1,995 people per sq. mile



Saint Paul, MN

Population: 300,800

Land acreage: 51.98 sq. miles

Density: 5,726 people per sq. mile

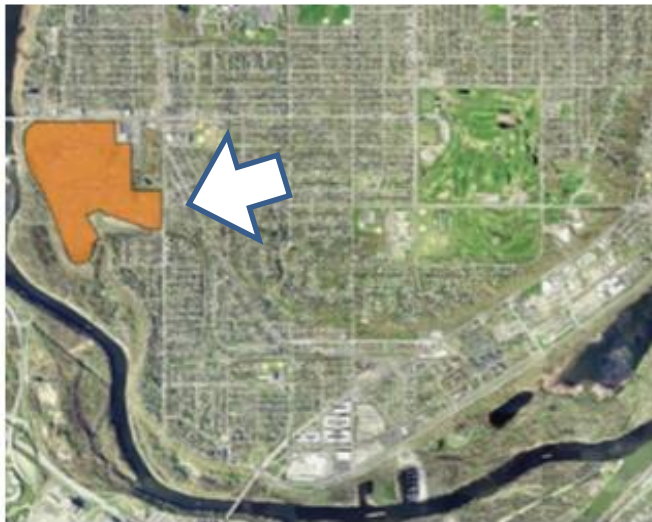


New York City

Population: 8,550,405

Land acreage: 302.6 sq. miles

Density: 28,052 people per sq. mile



Ford Property Planned Density

Population (maximum estimate): 7,200

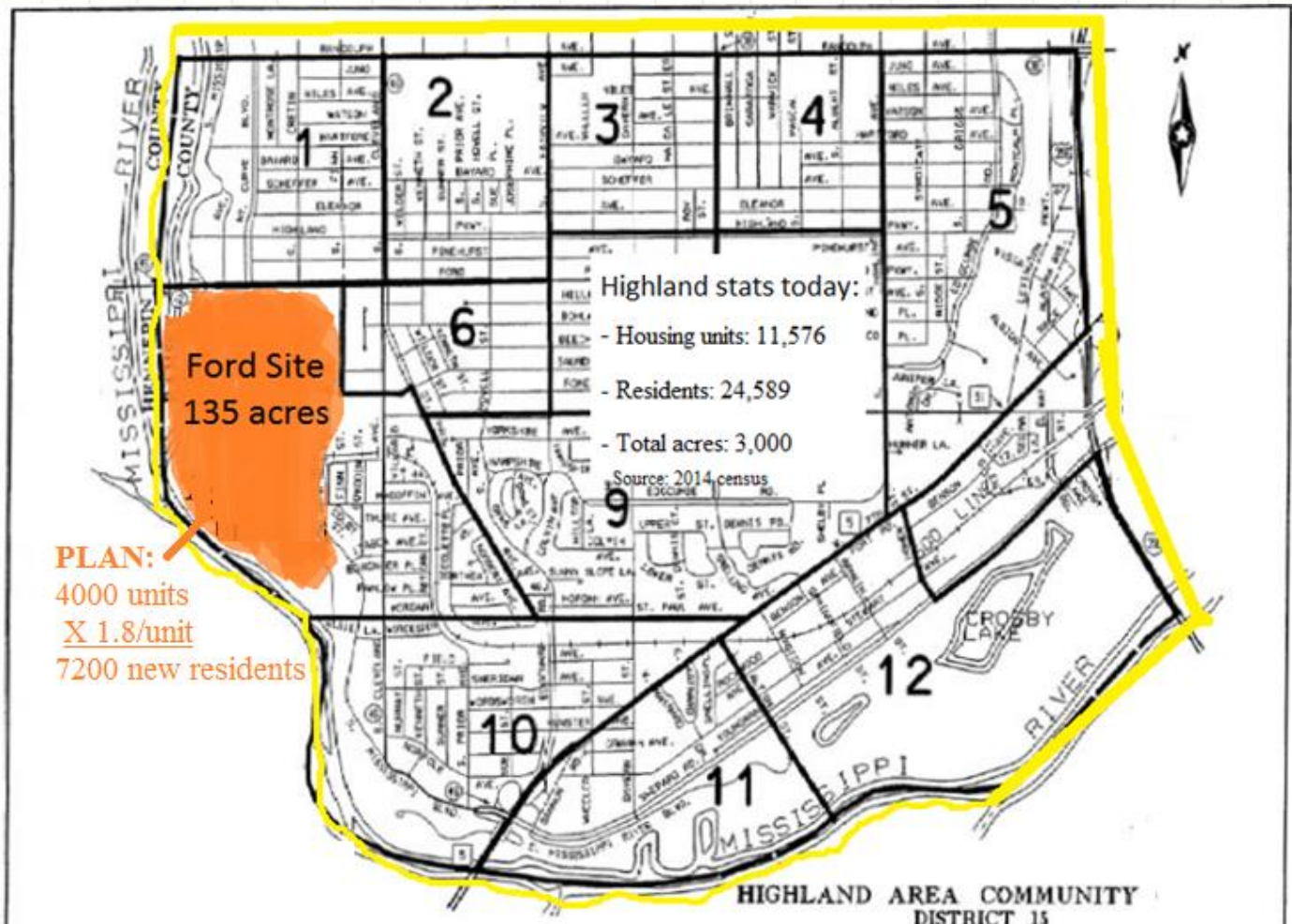
Land acreage: 125-135 acres or only **~0.21 sq. miles**

Density: **34,000** people per sq. mile

The Ford property will be denser than New York City and become the densest development buildout in all Minnesota

Density: The City plan would be a massive addition to Highland's Population

The City proposes a high density footprint be built on 135 acres, **adding 30% more to Highland's entire population** census, creating a high-density urban island



Planned development will add more than 7,000 new residents onto 135 acres – Becoming a high density residential area far from major freeway access

Ford Site Not Accessible

The Ford site is an urban island surrounded by residential single-family homes, streets and a river



The Highland Neighborhood is not adjacent to light rail or freeways, needed for the proposed high density development. All Highland residents have to travel several miles on residential streets to reach freeway access points or light rail. It's poor urban planning to allow access to this development via only residential / secondary roadways

Impacts from high density

The Highland high-density zoning plan drives a range of ill effects. Here are some of them:

- **Traffic** – Traffic congestion is already a problem in Highland. Planners' optimistically estimate 20% will walk or bike thus permitting existing roads to support massive volume increases.
- **Parking** – High concentrations of people bring high numbers of cars. Parking will undoubtedly spill out into the surrounding neighborhoods. Parking in and around shops and stores in Highland is already difficult.
- **Tall, out-of-character structures** – The City's plan for multiple high-rises. These tall modern structures are distinctly out of character with the Highland neighborhood. Tall structures block sight lines, contribute to a sense of being closed-in, contained, and overshadowed – beyond human scale. The views to and from the Mississippi River will be forever spoiled.
- **Diminishment of community** – Home ownership tends to create long-term investment in one's neighborhood and community. The high-density plan for the Ford site proposes a high proportion of new residents to be renters. Renters tend to be transitional residents – less likely to be fully invested in community.
- **General congestion** – With an additional 30% more people living in Highland, we should expect a general increase in crowding – longer wait times at restaurants, grocery stores, and theater over-crowding. Traffic on all residential roads and even popular River Road will increase considerably.
- **Stresses on public services and amenities** – The local utilities, library, parks, schools will be increasingly burdened by the large increase in population. Local public schools, many of which are already struggling with under-funding, will need to accommodate hundreds of new students.
- **Restrictions on community, open and recreational spaces** – The Highland area is already underserved with respect to open fields for recreational use. The current plan shows less than 10% set aside for real green space. With high-density planned, the minimal green space will be over-burdened. Further, the current Ford baseball fields are at risk in the plan. Montreal will be extended right through the current Ford Fields.

Density is the root of these problems - The City's vision of a high-rise, high-density development does not respond to the actual needs and desires of most Highland residents. The people's desires run counter to what those in power dictate

City-paid consultants over-estimating that biking and walking will reduce vehicle load - These are their figures:

Transportation Trends and Principles

70% of drivers would rather not drive

if other options effectively met their needs

"I don't live close to transit"

"I need to drop my kids off at school"



"I can't afford to live close to work"

"Using transit would take longer"

People will walk

when destinations are close by

% of trips within 1 mile made by walking

60% **for fun**



46% **to school or church**



40% **to the store**



35% **to work**



Federal Highway Administration, 2009 National Household Travel Survey

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NYGAARD

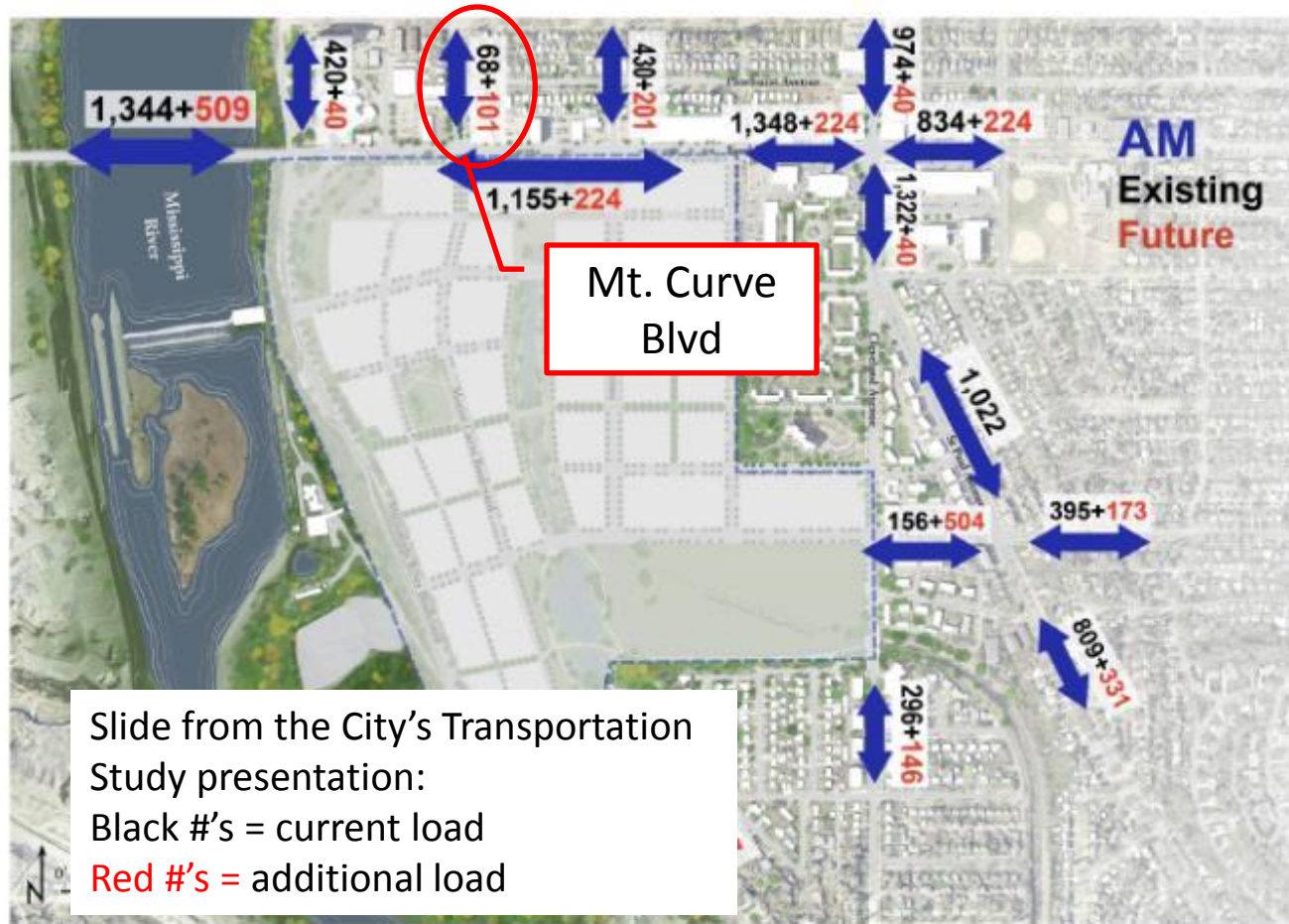
None of the referenced trends/studies were based in MN – You can say this for cities in temperate climates, not St. Paul, MN

Tripling traffic volumes on side streets

Example- Mt Curve:

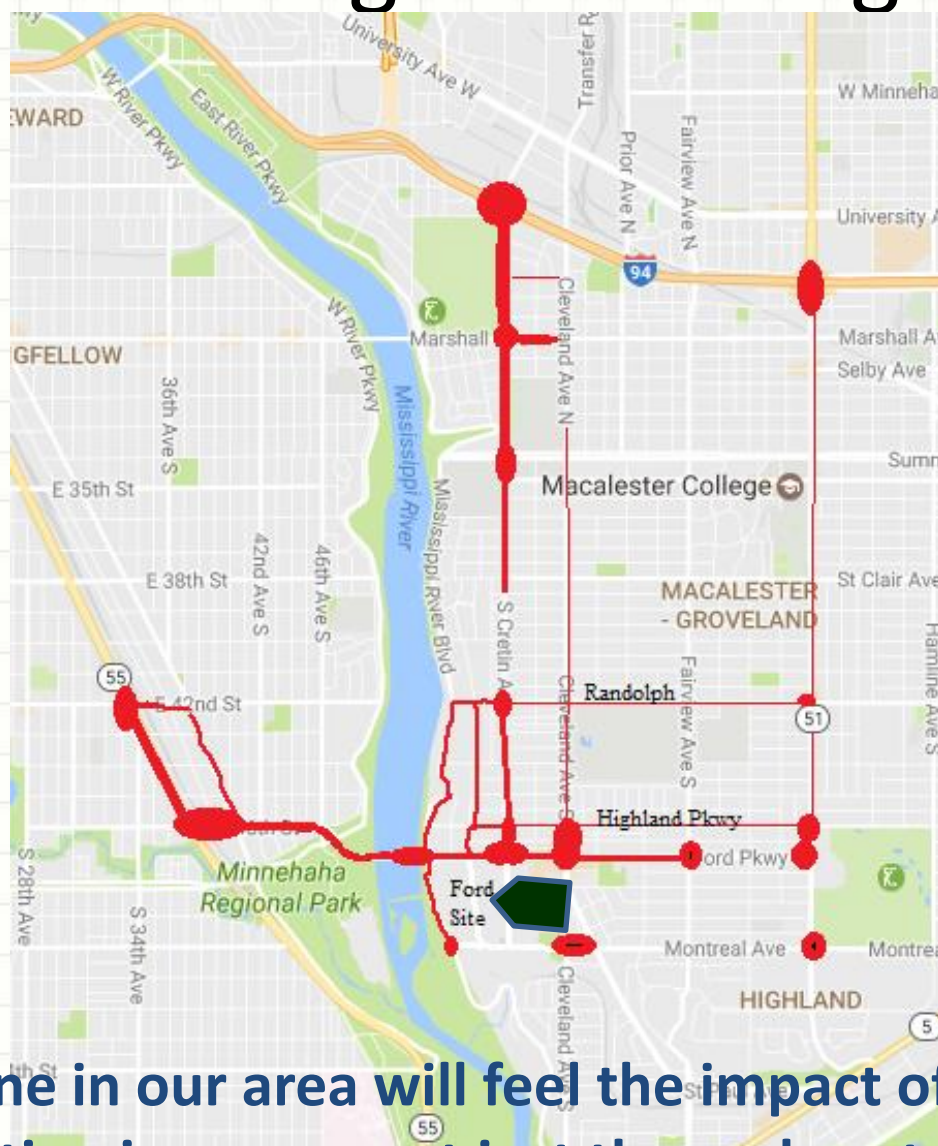
- Current peak vehicle volumes (the black number) = 68/hour on Mt Curve
- Transportation study predicts 101 *more* vehicles/hr after site development.
- Speeds on Mt Curve can be fast due to the long blocks

Vehicular Volumes at AM Peak Hour



The current development plan provides for no traffic safety/speed calming solutions on feeder streets

Traffic: Gridlock will extend far beyond the Highland Village & Ward 3



City-sponsored traffic studies only studied a few intersections near the Ford site, not beyond.

These studies only selected volume scenarios/data that supported the Cities assumptions

The Ford site is miles away from Freeway access points.

Cretin/I-94 and West over the Ford bridge will have long back-ups.

Today's traffic already backs up in these areas, Imagine another 6000 cars with daily commutes to these known surrounding pinch-points?

Ward 4 and even part of Ward 1 will feel the traffic impacts from the Ford development

Everyone in our area will feel the impact of the Highland population increase, not just those close to the Ford site

Planned High-rise / High-density construction not acceptable

The new 4-story Edina Realty Building in Highland is less than 1/2 the height of the proposed high rises for the Ford site.



Picture of the new Edina office at Cleveland & Highland Pkwy for size comparison

Visualize how oversized and out-of-place the new 4-story Edina office building looks in Highland Village, and then add 6 more stories – This is the plan for the Ford site high-density footprint with multiple 10 story buildings

No 10-story high-rises



Planners' illustration of high-density housing projected for the Ford site

The proposed plan for the Ford plant site calls for up to 4000 apartments/condos, multiple 10-story structures, 7200+ new residents and overflow traffic on ALL surrounding residential streets

We already have high-rise examples in Highland, and they look out of place

740
Mississippi
River Road,
Highland
Park

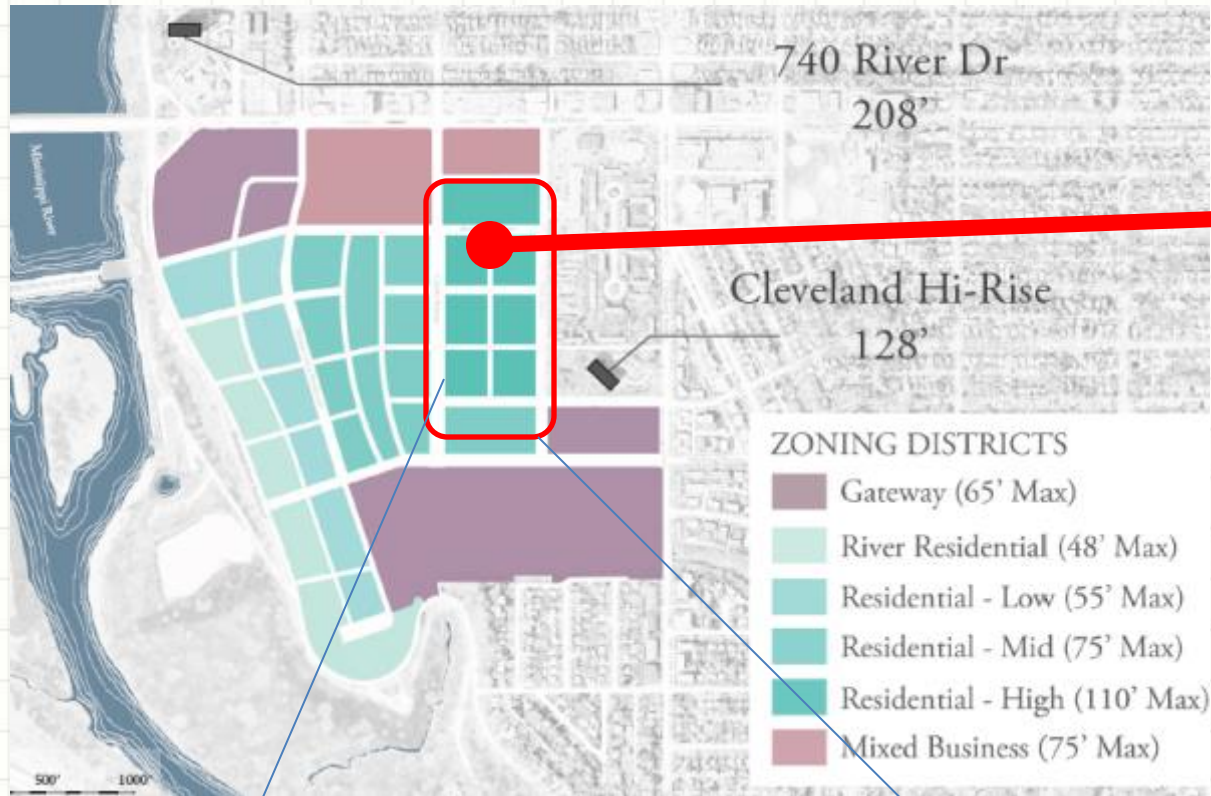


Cleveland Ave
High-rise

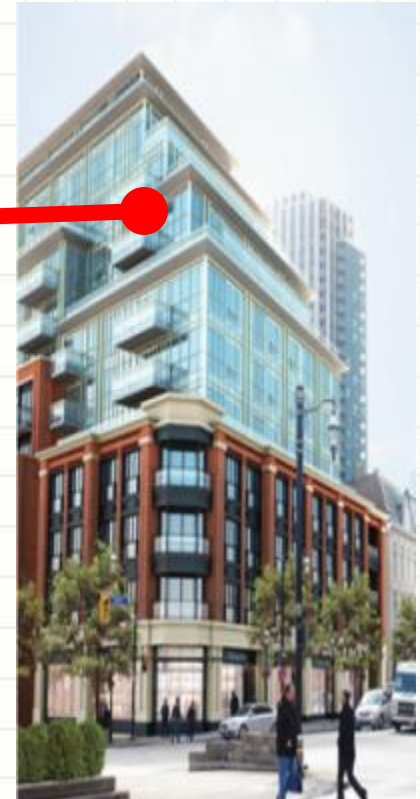


These high-rise buildings were built decades ago – But we are on the verge of allowing the City and developers to overbuild on the Ford site with similar modern, out-of-place, high-density construction

10 story apartments will spoil the view from and to the River



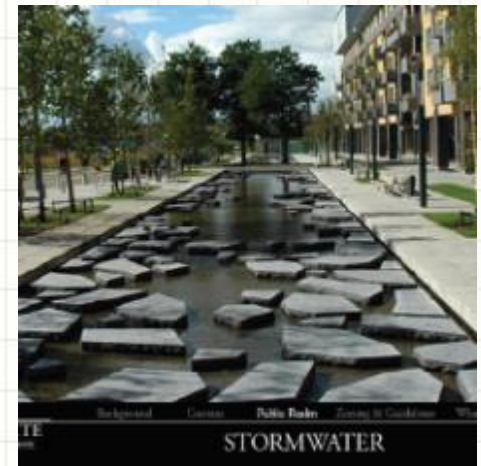
This area of high-rises will create a massive "wall" of cement disrupting the views from the Mississippi river looking East and blocked views looking West from Highland Village



Massive 10-story apartments 110' tall planned for Highland

(Illustration taken out of a City presentation Nov 2016)

More Green-Space / Parkland Wanted



Only 9% parkland space is mandated due to the City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance – Most open space will be storm water features, counted as green-space even though they are mostly water mgt features, not park space. This is a classic technique that developers use to achieve minimum green space allocation requirements - Even the Ford ball diamonds are at risk as the City is counting on access to the CP railroad land – Somebody needs to pay for it. 18

CP Rail needs to be in this discussion

Today

Proposed new sports fields location would require CP land to be purchased

Ford diamonds will need to be relocated because Montreal will be extended into the new site

False Representation

Proposed
On CP land

This CP land is needed for the new sports field, as the old Ford diamonds will be removed – But CP land cannot be included in the City's plan – No one has come forward to pay top-\$ for the CP land for ball fields

The City's plan drawings are misleading – there currently is not plan/space for recreation fields - The CP land can't be counted

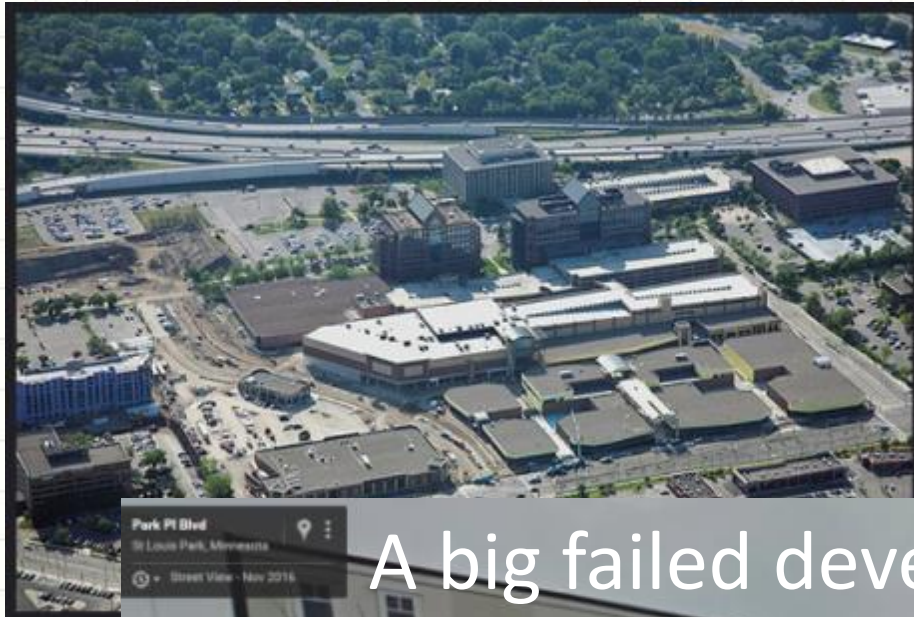
Excessive retail & office space planned

The amount of retail and commercial office space planned for the Ford site could fill half of the IDS building.

There has not been a thorough market study to substantiate the amount of planned retail/commercial space - Much of the commercial space could sit vacant for many years



Learn from West End, Mpls Failures



A big failed development



West End mixed-use development in St. Louis Park is what Highland could look like – with class-A office space at only 40% occupancy. Also 50% of the retail space is still un-rented/vacant in St. Louis Park – as pictured above

St Paul Midway Development

Happening at the same time...



At the same time as the Ford development, the Midway (Minnesota United Soccer stadium) area will be developed to high-density standards. Further, Snelling Ave corridor is getting rezoned for high-density. Can the City absorb all of this development at once? There could be a glut of residential and retail space in St. Paul. These developments should be looked at holistically.

Use Centennial Lakes Park, Edina as a model?

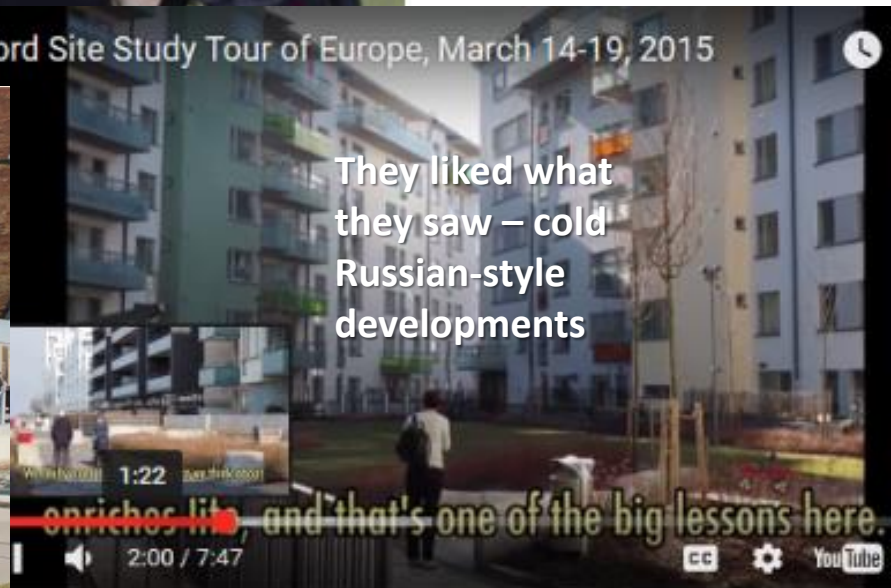


Edina said no high-rises, only timeless/retro architecture, lots of naturalistic landscaping, water features, over 30% greenspace, medium density build-out, good mixed-use balance, lots of recreational amenities, ample parking and transportation access, lots of breathing space – not jammed packed with construction and cement

Local Politicians got their high-density ideas from a 2015 trip to Europe

In early 2015, city officials and community partners traveled through European cities to identify key lessons and beneficial ways to build a 21st Century Community at the Ford Site. Check out this new video that summarizes some of the key takeaways from the trip:

See video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDjJgv24LwI>



We are NOT Europe, we are Americans & Minnesotans

Breaking down false assumptions

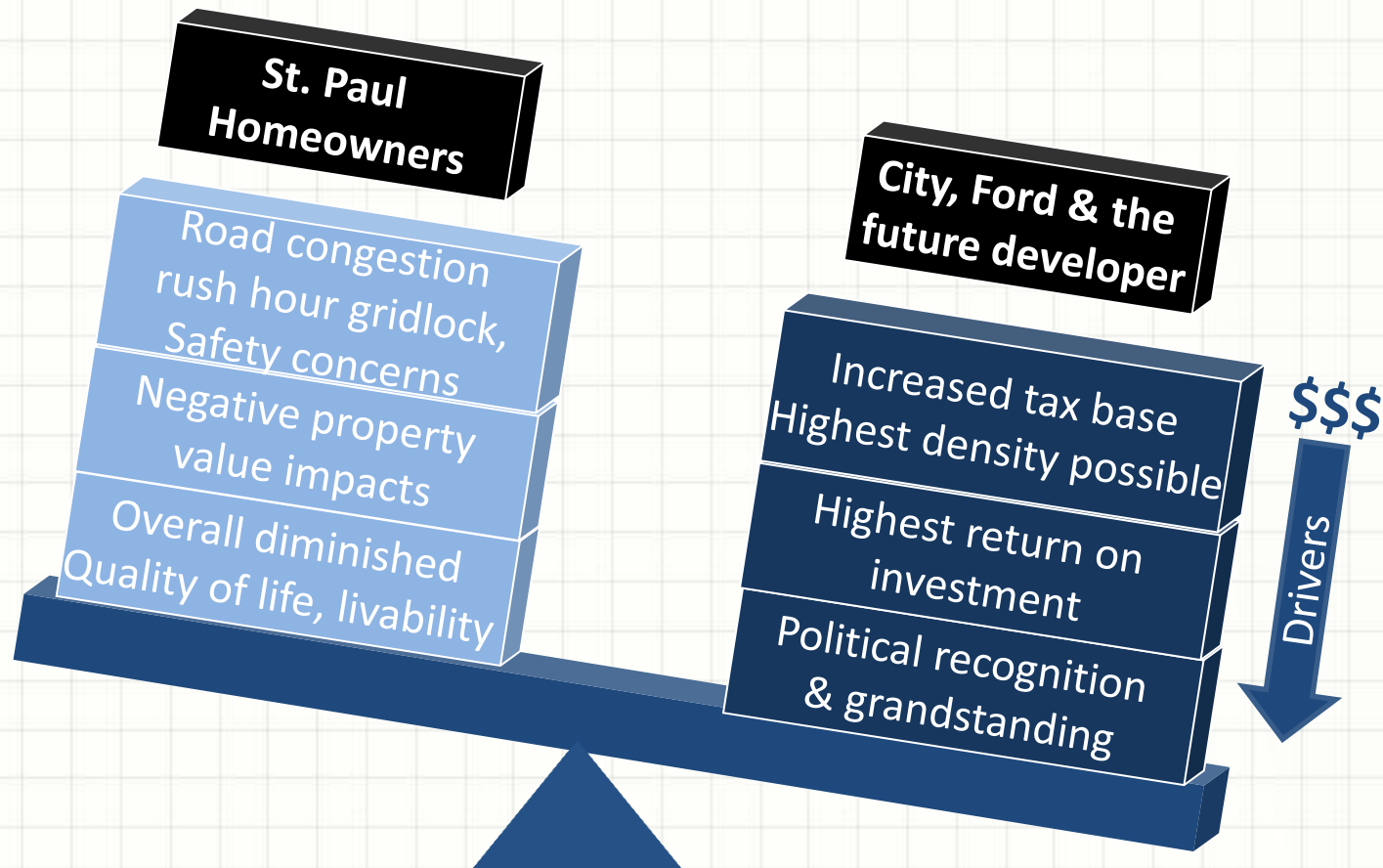
False Assumptions	Reality
The Ford ball diamonds will be saved	Not guaranteed - the current site plan shows Montreal Ave cutting through where the Ford little league diamonds are today
The Canadian Pacific railroad land near the Ford site can be considered in the current development plan	False – The CP-owned land is independent private land not for sale as part of Ford's land. CP property is an entirely separate redevelopment consideration. However, the City's site plan shows that this land is developable and considered in their plan
The larger tax income for the City will offer residents property tax relief	No –The increase in tax revenue (called a "tax increment") will be taken by the HRA (Housing Redevelopment Authority) between 2020 and 2045 to pay Ford site developers and to support different St. Paul "TIF" (Tax Increment Financing) developments. New tax revenues are <u>not</u> going to relieve any residential tax burdens. Further, Highland residents can expect easements/allocations to pay for new traffic safety features on residential streets outside the site. Other expenses the City will incur (roads destroyed by construction equipment, space for new students, new park and rec expenses, etc) may need to be covered through new levies on Highland residents
The high value of this site will not require Tax-prayer / City subsidies	Not true – There is a current plan to provide \$275M in TIF to help offset the massive infrastructure build-out for the site and attract the "best" national developers to the project.
Traffic studies have proven that the existing Highland residential streets have adequate capacity to support the massive increase in daily vehicle trips	These studies were flawed – they assumed that all secondary residential streets (like Mt. Curve) are available to pick up overload situations off Cretin, Ford Pkwy, Cleveland, Montreal and Fairview. The studies did not simulate the stop-&-go impact of stoplights. These factors will create gridlock everywhere, and no flow even on secondary streets

It's all about money, not what's "right"

- **City** - current tax income from the Ford property is \$1.1m (From Ford). The City is motivated by a high density tax base – proposing at least 4000 new condos/apartments, potentially driving a \$20m annual new tax base (irrespective of the stress imposed on the existing community infrastructure). Sadly, there will be no tax burden reduction for Highland after development. The City is continuously defending its high density / new-urbanism approach, motivated and blinded by the higher tax income.
- **Ford** - wants highest density to achieve the highest value from a prospective developer. The City is concerned that Ford could sue if the City does not support a maximum buildout of the site. It not be the Highland resident's burden to maximize the land value for Ford. Putting this into perspective, Ford makes \$150B annually.
- **Developers** - they want the highest possible density to pay back their massive investment in the buildout. The City has voiced concerns that the current 4000 unit plan may **not** be enough to attract developers. The City has been quoted saying that if there is not enough "value" from the site, it won't be developed. Finally, the City is pushing for public TIFs (Tax Increment Financing) to help support infrastructure buildout costs. We will be "paying" for this site in many different ways - The developers have self-serving interests, frankly not overly concerned about community impacts.
- **Highland home owners / residents** - we have some of the highest taxes in St. Paul (Highland Ward 3 pays 25% of all St. Paul prop tax) - but we risk the quality of life that attracted us to this part of town. We risk a dramatic loss of property values and general livability decrease of our community – constant traffic, noise, congestion, pollution with no return to Highland residents – we will have the burden on our backs, while the City, Ford and Developers receive the benefits. Highland property taxes will not be reduced even after the City receives a 30% increase into their tax coffers from the new site.

We have a strong collective voice to tip the scales

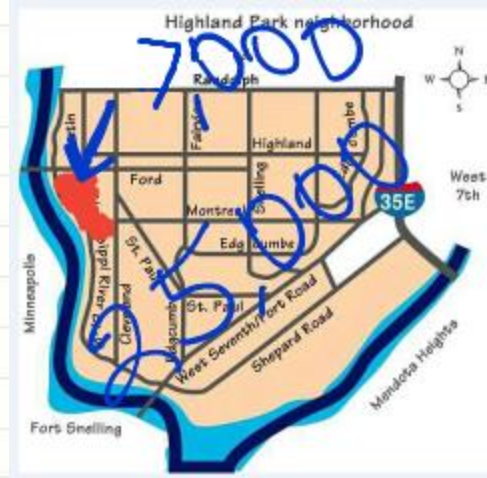
We need more balance to the debate



It is obvious that each side of the issue has their own opposing self-interests, but it is clear that the City is only going through the motions of “listening” to the community. In the end, the deep-pockets and lawyers of the developers will prevail unless we speak up now en masse.

Summary

- City is proposing high-density, high-rise housing in a low/medium-density neighborhood
- City's transportation studies have flawed assumptions and have not expanded outside the Highland area
- Expecting 7000+ new residents to Highland, a 30%+ increase – “Highland Village” will become “Highland City”
- 10-story high-rises will look out of place compared to most of Highland Village
- Secondary neighborhood streets will experience 3x vehicle load 24/7 – no more quiet nights. City has no plans for added safety/calming features on streets outside of the Ford site area. Cretin, Cleveland, Montreal, Highland Pkwy, River Road and Ford Parkway will become gridlocked. The Ford site is located many blocks from the nearest Freeway access – This site is an island surrounded by residential streets
- The City is overestimating the reduction in traffic volume due to walking/biking/transit users given MN winters. Most residents drive over 8 miles to/from work, outside of the Highland area. There will be also 1000's of commuters coming into the site daily for jobs and retail
- Overall, the concerns of Highland residents are falling on deaf ears by the City



Here is the request – get vocal....

- The City is going to need to hear a substantial community outcry and condemnation before it throttles back and adjusts zoning allowances for less dense build-out – Summer / Fall 2017.
- Persuade the mayoral candidates take a clear opposition position on Ford
- Send a letter / email to the Planning Commission or City Council, or City Councilmember - Ward 3 councilmember via: ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us
- Please include your address and full name with your testimony in order for it to be included in the official public record
- See our website: LivableSaintPaul.com
- **Please sign this petition for more green space, lower density:**
<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/fight-high-density-highland>



Community call to action