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## **Change still needed to Midway Target plan**

BY BRIAN MCMAHON

Successful corporations, like Target, understand the need for return on investment, and a positive bottom line. Successful retailers, like Target, know the value of designing their store layout to maximize merchandising synergies.

Cities and public agencies should do the same. Municipal land use policies and development decisions should be made with an eye toward maximizing public benefits and return on investment and creating synergies.

The proposed Midway SuperTarget fails this test.

Billions of public dollars have been invested in transportation and utility infrastructure that adds value to this site, and it is likely that another billion will be invested for light rail. To maximize the return on these public investments, an intense level of development is required.

A single-story, single-use building with a large expanse of surface parking lots is a grossly inefficient use of this valuable real estate. Given that Target is demolishing a four-story hotel, the project is actually a step backward on most criteria. This site should be generating 50 to 70 jobs per acre — twice what is proposed. This site should include a mix of uses, including housing, to further the city policy of locating housing along transit corridors. This site should also be generating far more in property taxes, but because it is mostly surface parking lots, little value is being created.

A recent tax study by University UNITED revealed that Midway Books at Snelling and University, a nearby family-owned business, is actually paying three times more per square foot in property taxes than Target. Inefficient land use is shifting the tax burden from the national chains to the "Main Street" retailers, and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Surface parking lots not only generate few jobs and little tax base, from a planning perspective they are a blight that lessens the value of adjoining property.

We are proposing a very modest improvement.

We have accepted (with reluctance) the proposed single-story SuperTarget concept, and the proposed 640 parking spaces. We are merely asking that Target include additional development in its parking lot, which could be accomplished by building a parking deck to free up space for additional projects. Target would retain all the parking they claim they need, and the city would gain more development, more jobs and more tax base.

McMahon is executive director of University UNITED, a coalition of community groups and businesses promoting transit-oriented development along University Avenue.

# Target has worked with the community

BY JOHN GRIFFITH

Today the St. Paul City Council will make a quality-of-life decision on whether to allow construction of a SuperTarget along University Avenue, where it will play a key role in revitalization of the Midway neighborhood. We are disappointed that some members of the City Council and a small number of third parties seeking only to promote their own agendas are playing roulette with the future of St. Paul rather than looking at the big picture.

The Zoning Commission approved Target's site plan on March 16. The Planning Commission approved the site plan on March 24. The decision should be a simple one for the City Council to reach. One need only take a brief look at a few of the facts associated with bringing the Twin Cities' first SuperTarget to Midway, including:

- This \$30 million redevelopment project is privately financed by Target and does not require city subsidy.
- An average SuperTarget store employs 350 to 450 team members. Employment for a regular Target averages 150 to 200 team members per store. While University UNITED, a neighborhood activist group, advocates for a more dense development, the economic realities of the marketplace do not support that at this time, and not recognizing that could place hundreds of potential new jobs in jeopardy.
- The city now recognizes this site as an auto-oriented parcel in its master plan and zoning. Based on the traffic study requested by the city, traffic impact is minimal. Target supports Transit Oriented Design (TOD) for University Avenue, which is the reason we pushed our building back to St. Anthony Avenue to allow for such development.
- At the community's request, Target has asked to reduce its parking capacity by more than 20 percent in order to have less surface parking in keeping with TOD principles.
- Additional green space has been created in the site plan.

Target has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to working with the community during this process. We have been very upfront from the beginning about what is and what is not possible for the site. As a result of five separate community meetings and many other discussions, we have agreed to some of the community's suggestions, while still allowing the store to be successful for Target. The City Council should support and approve the Midway SuperTarget today to the benefit of all St. Paul residents.

The writer is executive vice president of property development for Target Corp.