January 9, 2012

Dear Basilica Members and Friends,

In the past few weeks, several people have asked me about the possibility of a new Vikings stadium at the Linden Ave. location (two blocks from The Basilica), and/or the Farmer's Market site. In response, I have tried to be clear about two things. First, I support the Vikings and want them to stay in Minnesota. I think they are an asset to our state and to our local community. It is good that we work to retain them. Second, though, I have some serious concerns about the proposed Linden Avenue site, and to a lesser extent the Farmer's Market site. In this regard, I think there are five things worth noting.

1. I am very concerned about the impact a stadium at these locations would have on our Basilica community and the broader community we serve through our programs, services and St. Vincent de Paul ministry. We are a very diverse group of people who have come together to form a community of faith. The Basilica is not a neighborhood parish. The vision that guides our parish reminds us of this: *"Seek the well being of the city to which I have sent you. Pray for it to the Lord. For in seeking its well being you shall find your own."* (Jeremiah 29.7) People choose to come to The Basilica for a variety of reasons. I am concerned that nothing hinder us from serving the greater Minneapolis community or prevent people from continuing to make The Basilica their spiritual home.

2. I am concerned about the possible impact construction of a stadium would have on our historic buildings. As I hope you know, The Basilica of Saint Mary, as well as our School, are sites on the National Historic Register. The Basilica is currently a beacon on the skyline, and the notion of a major Stadium so close to this historic building is not comforting. Stadium construction may well cause additional structural damage to our historic buildings. Since the 1990's our parish and community have joined together to preserve and do long term maintenance necessary to care for our historic buildings. These efforts are ongoing and we are not done yet. I am very concerned that a project of the magnitude of the Stadium so close to The Basilica would do harm to our buildings.

3. I am concerned about traffic flow and parking. Increasing traffic on roadways so close to The Basilica could also have seriously negative impacts. Our congregation of over 6,300 households comes from throughout the Twin Cities metro area (primarily from the suburbs) for weekend Masses and weekday programs. Throughout the year, members and thousands of visitors come to The Basilica for liturgies, concerts, art exhibits, outreach support for those in need, The Basilica Block Party, lectures, classes and other special events. Traffic during construction and during the operation of a Stadium and proposed Event Center will adversely affect The Basilica's ability to continue its programs, services, and events.

Further, parking for events and activities at The Basilica is already challenging. The addition of the Stadium would make this even more daunting. With the close

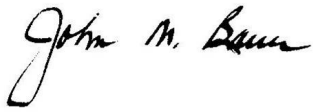
proximity of the proposed sites to the parking on 16th and 17th Streets, under the Highway 94 Bridge, at the MCTC Ramp and other street parking, bringing 65,000 plus attendees to Vikings game would adversely impact The Basilica's ability to continue to have parking for its events, activities and Liturgies.

4. I am concerned about the loss of the main stage for our Basilica Block Party if the Linden Ave. site were chosen. The Basilica Block Party is one of our major fundraising events. The proceeds are used for the ongoing restoration and renovation of The Basilica and its campus. I am concerned that the loss of this stage could in turn cause a loss of income for the ongoing restoration and maintenance of The Basilica and its campus.

5. I am concerned about the possible impact of a new stadium on our ability to rent our school building. Currently we rent this building to a charter school. The rental of our school building provides significant revenue to The Basilica. I am concerned that the possibility of a new stadium so close might isolate us and cause difficulty in renting our school building in the future.

The above issues are serious concerns for me in regard to a new stadium at the Linden Ave. site, and to a lesser degree the Farmer's Market site. They are not, however, insoluble. In this regard, we hope to be invited to be a voice at the table in any discussion of a new stadium at either of these sites. I am convinced that working together in good will, with mutual respect, and with an openness to a variety of ideas and possibilities, no issue is insurmountable.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



John M. Bauer
Pastor, Basilica of St. Mary