My name is Elwood C., residing a only a few hundred yards south of TCAAP. I was on the citizen advisory committee for the initial planning that led to the City of Arden Hills deciding to negotiate the purchase of about 600 acres and proceeding with specific plans along with a major developer who has now backed out, causing the City to vacate its purchase agreement. My home is part of the 140-townhouse development Arden Hills North Homes Association, and I am a member of the Board of Directors of that Association.

I had expected to attend the hearing and testify in person, but find I cannot due to an urgent health issue in the family. My wife is having major surgery at the Mayo Clinic on June 22, which means I will be in Rochester then, so this e-mail will have to serve as my testimony.
As a Board and a homeowner group, we concurred with the concept of a multi-use development of the 600 acres that City proposed to purchase because at the time it seemed the highest and best use of the land that lay so near to where we lived, as well as being financially feasible in view of the expertise of the developer partner. However, now that that is all changed, there is an opportunity to start over again, and create something different on the 600 acres that would be consistent with the 1500 acres (more or less) that remains for the present in the hands of the National Guard---that is, a major natural area of open space with rolling hills, wetlands and small lakes that would be an asset to the entire metropolitan area as well as to Arden Hills. I hope that a way will be found to do this that is within the financial and legal capability of the City of Arden Hills, perhaps with the aid and cooperation of other governmental units, including the County, the State, and of course, the Federal Government as owner of the land in question.

I spent much time several years ago on the original basic concept of developing TCAAP, have followed events and attended public meetings since then. While disappointed that a key developer has decided that the concept is not feasible, I am not in a position to debate that, and instead urge that something less complex and perhaps of equal or greater public benefit over the years be considered, such as a park that would preserve the natural open space already there and add to it rather than embarking upon the type of development now deemed infeasible.