

Email Received from d_rutchik@yahoo.com on Friday, 5/22/26:

Dear Ms. Hammer and Members of the Planning and Development Committee,

I am writing as a Winnebago county, Rockford resident to submit public comment regarding the proposed South Rockford Industrial TIF district.

The city projects this TIF could increase property values in the district from \$161,436 to \$45–55 million over 23 years. While tax base growth is important, property value means more than an assessed number. For residents, value also means clean groundwater, stable floodplains, quiet neighborhoods, and land use that respects the area's existing character.

I urge the council not to approve this TIF without the following protections in place, regardless of whether a data center, warehouse, or other industrial use ultimately locates there:

1. Accurate TIF Qualification

Productive farmland and open space should not be labeled “blighted” simply to meet statutory criteria. The blight designation must be defended with clear, public evidence that meets Illinois TIF law, not developer convenience.

2. Independent Impact Analysis First

Before any incentives are locked in for 23 years, require independent studies on water consumption, wastewater, air quality, noise, traffic, and flood impact. These studies should not be funded or controlled by prospective developers.

3. Binding Community Benefit Agreements

If tax increment revenue rises by a projected \$51 million, a defined portion must be committed to direct community benefits — roads, stormwater infrastructure, schools, and services for impacted residents — not solely to site prep for private projects.

4. No “We Have to Put Something There” Planning

A TIF extending to 2049 is a generational decision. Approving it based on vague prospects or urgency, without a known end user and full public vetting, risks poor planning and long-term regret for taxpayers.

Development can be positive for Rockford. But development without upfront safeguards and honest designations benefits developers at residents' expense. I respectfully ask that council delay or reject this TIF until the above protections are written into the ordinance and made enforceable.

Thank you for entering this into the public record and for your service to Rockford.

Sincerely,

David Rutchik

Rockford, IL