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*Saving America's  
Civil War Battlefields*

**Civilwar.org**

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July 12, 2017

The Honorable Megan Barry  
Office of the Mayor  
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County  
1 Public Square, Suite 100  
Nashville, TN 37201

Dear Mayor Barry:

I am writing on behalf of the Civil War Trust, the nation's premier nonprofit land preservation organization devoted to the protection of America's hallowed battlefields. Although primarily focused on the acquisition of Civil War battlefields, through its Campaign 1776 initiative, the Trust also seeks to save the battlefields connected to the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. To date, the Trust has preserved more than 46,000 acres of battlefield land in 24 states, including 3,473 acres in Tennessee.

With this letter, I seek to convey the Trust's concern with the proposed redevelopment of the site of the old Greer Stadium, which — like historic Fort Negley, immediately adjacent to the stadium — is located on parkland owned and overseen by the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Given both the stadium's proximity to Fort Negley and its location within Fort Negley Park writ large, we encourage the Metropolitan Government and all involved to approach the future of the stadium site with the thoughtfulness and special care necessitated by the historic landscape it shares with the storied fort next door.

While Nashville and Davidson County are chockfull of Civil War history, an extant resource like Fort Negley is rare indeed — to be sure, it is Nashville's only remaining intact Civil War-era fort, in addition to being the largest inland stone fortification constructed in the United States during the war. Beyond its well-known role in defending Nashville once the city came under Union control in 1862, Fort Negley serves as a powerful reminder of a particularly poignant part of the African-American story; the Metropolitan Government rightly reminds visitors to its official website for Fort Negley that the fort would never have been built but for the backbreaking efforts of "more than 2,700 conscript laborers, predominately contrabands (runaway slaves) and free Blacks."

The shuttering of Greer Stadium has given Nashville and Davidson County an opportunity to augment Fort Negley Park by making way for additional green space, which could buffer and enhance the fort at its core while providing more accessible parkland for visitors and area residents alike — a chance, needless to say, that does not come along every day in such an urban setting. At the least, the Metropolitan Government's

**Letter from the Civil War Trust (continued)**

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ownership of the land in question guarantees its ability to ensure that any redevelopment of the stadium site is carried out in a contextually-sensitive manner appropriate to the one-of-a-kind local and national historic treasure under its stewardship in Fort Negley. Plentiful green space is a key element in allowing the public to enjoy and fully partake of the beauty and historic character of Fort Negley Park.

To be sure, there are promising pieces of the redevelopment plan selected by the Metropolitan Government for the stadium site in this regard; “Cloud Hill Partnership’s proposal for the 21-acre, Metro-owned site,” *The Tennessean* has noted, “includes more than eight acres of dedicated park, public open space and greenways.” But we agree with, and herein echo, its Editorial Board’s May 18 characterization of the process by which the plan was selected as “problematic” for its lack of transparency and public involvement. “[K]eeping the entire process open is fundamental,” the newspaper rightly emphasized, “to ensure the community never loses faith in it.”

It is vitally important for all parties to recognize that the challenge of maintaining the integrity of Fort Negley requires a permanent partnership, grounded in patience and prudence. The wealth of historic assets located throughout Fort Negley Park makes it incumbent upon the Metropolitan Government to take the time needed to ensure that each of these resources is managed in a manner that will augment, rather than diminish, corresponding resources and the park as a whole.

Accordingly, we urge the Metropolitan Government to renew its outreach to the Friends of Fort Negley and other stakeholders with a demonstrated interest in safeguarding Nashville’s surviving, tangible Civil War heritage for current and future generations. Such outreach should also include comprehensive consultation with the Tennessee Wars Commission — charged with pursuing the “planning, preservation, and promotion of structures, buildings, sites, and battlefields of Tennessee associated with ... the War Between the States” — as well as the Tennessee Historical Commission writ large, whose guidance and expertise in helping to envision the ideal future for Fort Negley and Fort Negley Park would be invaluable.

Thank you for your time, consideration and attention to this matter. We are confident that a mutually satisfactory solution is possible through a shared commitment to collaboration and context sensitivity. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (202) 367-1861 if you have any questions or wish to discuss our comments further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "O. James Lighthizer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "O" and a long, sweeping underline.

O. James Lighthizer, President