

Mr. Tom Beach
Council member Melvin Carter
Mr. Russ Stark

Gentlemen,

I reside at 587 Pelham Blvd. I am writing to inform you of my support by Union Park Proposal in regards to the corner of Pelham and Wabash. I am concerned that the present plan does not consider our neighborhood. Please relook at the Union Park Proposal and amend the current plan adapting it to meet neighborhood concerns.

Respectfully,
Jason Eck

- - - - -

-

Hi Jon, (Jon Commers)

My name is John Schatz and I am writing to you, as the Met Council member for District 14, in regards to the TBRA Grant Funding that the Port Authority received for their Pelham site in St.Paul.

The grant guidelines state:

In order to be eligible for TBRA funding proposed for either cleanup site investigation or contamination cleanup projects must:

• be consistent with the municipality's comprehensive plan or making significant progress on the required amendments to the plan;

The Port Authority, after receiving this grant, then went in and, contrary to the comprehensive plan that has been worked on for years by this community, fought the community to get the zoning to stay as L1 as opposed to being made TN4 as was originally proposed by the city planning department and supported by the community. The Port did not seek these changes (i.e. no significant progress on required amendments to plan had been made) until the fall/winter.

The Port Authority, in their application, states the number of jobs to be:

143 FTE (The projected number of jobs expected was discounted due to the lack of end user commitments.)

We have actually been told the Port is only requiring the developer to create 68 jobs.

These two items make me incredibly concerned that TBRA funding was given to the Port and then:

A) The Port did not follow the guidelines for TBRA funding (consistent with comprehensive planning)

B) The Port not even coming close to trying to produce the amount of Jobs that it claimed it would be.

As the Port Authority's plans for this site are under appeal before the St. Paul City Council, I have also copied Council member Russ Stark and Tom Beech from the City Zoning department on this email. The community has had great difficulty in working with the Port Authority on creating a development (that has been funded/cleaned up with taxpayer money) that is consistent with our neighborhoods plans, the central corridor plans and that is consistent with being a truly livable community (mass transit, bike-able, walk-able, strong urban design principles).

I urge you to look into this matter and hold the Port Authority accountable for their use of taxpayer funds and hold them accountable for working with communities, not against them, on comprehensive plans.

This development is a 3 minute walk from the Raymond Avenue Light Rail Station and they are proposing 196 parking spots for 68 jobs? This is not consistent with our community plans, it does not promote use of light rail/mass transit, and it is not consistent with what the Port Authority committed to in their grant application.

I recommend that the Port Authority be held accountable (put in writing with the developer) that the developer is required to create 143 jobs and not the 68 the developer is currently committed to (keep in mind this is also a speculative development). This is what the representatives of taxpayers were promised in return for this grant money - 143 jobs! If they are unwilling to do so, they should have to reduce that parking lot (which has great likelihood of becoming a paid parking lot for riders of light rail - not part of our community plan or a desired outcome) or have a covenant on the property that they won't ever rent parking spaces.

With regards to the Port Authority not following the local comprehensive planning, the Port Authority went against our proposed comprehensive plan for our community arguing that we "needed a buffer" from Rock Tenn. But if you actually walk from the Pelham bridge to the light rail station, the only thing this L1 development is doing is buffering TN4 from Residential. The Rock Tenn Industrial use is several hundred yards to the East of Pelham and our community has clearly and strongly stated through our community councils that this "buffer" is not necessary and merely appears to be a word game played by the Port Authority to get the zoning they want. Walking north on Pelham, taking a right on Wabash and then a left on Raymond, this L1 buffers me from nothing. It merely extends the industrial area closer to my walking path, the charter school, closer to the major bike route, closer to the pedestrians walking from Desnoyer Park to the light rail station and university avenue shops. Also, of note, that part of Rock Tenn closest to this site is just a truck parking area, and those trucks exit the Rock Tenn area either via Cretin or north to university, they don't cut over to Pelham. But now, this "buffer" will have more proposed trucks and the trucks will be exiting right near where the school is. So this buffer is unnecessary and they are proposing to buffer trucks that don't exit onto Pelham with trucks that will exit on Wabash, right near a school, and then out to Pelham. This is not/was not consistent with our comprehensive plan and after the Port Authority got this grant, they went and argued against our comprehensive plan to get the change that fit their needs - which goes against the TBRA Grant Guidelines.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
John Schatz
535 Glendale Street
Saint Paul, MN 55104

- - - - -

Hi Irene, (Irene Dassier, State)

My name is John Schatz and I am writing in regards to the St.Paul Port Authority's Contamination Cleanup Grant in the amount of \$600,000. The development at this site is currently under appeal (site plan appeal) to the St.Paul City Council (and I have therefore copied City Council Russ Stark's office and Tom Beach in the city planning department). One of the reasons that the community has chosen to appeal this plan is that it's low density nature and low job creation nature. In reviewing funding of this site I see that the Port Authority claimed that they would be creating 216 jobs on this site. They are now only requiring the developer that they sold the land to to create 68 jobs. The taxpayers of this state gave the Port Authority \$600,000 for site cleanup with the expectation of significantly more than 68 jobs being created. And I see in the guidelines for grant approval are:

- future tax base of the site
- social value of the cleanup, demonstrated by the number of jobs created through cleanup and redevelopment.

As a nearby neighbor and a taxpayer, I have great concerns that the Port Authority is not living up to it's end of the bargain for receiving this cleanup money. I am of course very happy to see the site cleaned up, but it looks like taxpayer dollars are being used to clean up a site so that the Port Authority can then sell the site cheaply to a developer who is not required to create the number of jobs the Port Authority committed to doing so in it's application.

I see great value in us as taxpayers helping to cleanup sites and create jobs. But I also sense this taxpayer funded system being exploited to create sweetheart deals for developers who are then not required to create the jobs our communities so desperately need that they promised they would in order to receive these funds.

The Port Authority should be held accountable for their promises to the taxpayers of this state to create a large number of jobs on that site in return for the significant taxpayer funded cleanup they received.

As the representative of the grantor of this money, I ask that you investigate this situation and hold the Port Authority accountable to their promises in their grant application. Also, please advise if there is another/different office I should be directing my concerns to.

Sincerely,
John Schatz
535 Glendale Street
Saint Paul, MN 55104

- - - - -

10-3-11

Dear Mr. Beach,

I am a resident of Desnoyer Park, and have a concern about a project planned down the street from me, just 2 blocks north of my house. I understand there is a new industrial development planned at 650 Pelham Blvd. I also understand the Port Authority went through a review process with the St. Anthony Park Community Council, but omitted discussions with my Desnoyer Park neighborhood which would be directly impacted.

I have reviewed the proposed site plan for the development. As an architect, I consider this development a missed opportunity on many levels. It misses the mark from a Transit opportunity, from a planning opportunity, from an aesthetic and architectural opportunity, from a safety responsibility, and from an opportunity to work with the neighbors and their children who call this area home.

From an urban planning perspective, the City of Saint Paul has taken extensive care and consideration in establishing the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (CCLRT) and the neighborhood zoning to spur Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). This site lies only 3 blocks from the Raymond Avenue Station, and originally fell within the Overlay District to encourage transit development. The properties north of this site are now zoned Traditional Neighborhood and the properties south of this site compose a single-family residential neighborhood. I understand the Port Authority desires this property to be designated an Industrial Buffer Zone. Truly, I do not consider this an example of TOD, an appropriate buffer, nor do I consider a buffer necessary between TN and R.

I also am concerned about the extensive parking lot, which does not take into account the proximity to the CCLRT, whose goal is to get people out of their car to share the ride.

The parking in excess of tenant requirements invites suburban commuters to use this as a park-and-ride for taking the LRT, and this traffic generator is not compatible with the pedestrian- and bike-friendly complete street on this residential boulevard (Pelham is part of the Grand Round). There also is a lack of sidewalk on the north side of the site, next to the train tracks, not permitting a safe walking path for children to school, and a discontinuous sidewalk on the east which continues to sit torn out for nearly a year.

I am licensed to protect the life, safety, health and welfare of the public and this development would leave pedestrians and bicyclists vulnerable to heavy truck traffic and other safety risks. I personally walk this way nearly daily to and from the bus on University Ave. From a safety standpoint, adding brick posts, iron fences and parking would provide opportunities for someone to hide, leaving me less safe as I walk home after dark than a crisp building edge of a 24-hour occupied mixed-use development.

We have numerous children under the age of 4 living within a block, 5 on Pelham within 2 houses of me. Pelham Blvd. is signed 'not a truck route', and I would like this enforced for the safety of my neighbor children. In addition, there is a school on Raymond, just half a block north of this site. For the safety of those children, the trucks should be routed other than through their school zone. Saint Paul strives to be the Most Livable Community, and safety of our children should be a basic consideration.

Visually, this corner and the corner to the west are the Gateway to Desnoyer Park, and it is a shame that this opportunity is missed. Currently there is no walkable retail within half-mile of my house, and this would have provided an opportunity for services my neighbors and I could use. Not to mention, a mixed use development is occupied 24 hours a day, whereas the industrial warehouse would only operate during business hours, sitting vacant the rest of the time.

From an architectural expression, the buildings on the blocks to the north express an urban edge, having two stories built up to the sidewalk. This proposed development does not suit the context of the community, by pulling away from the corner and displaying a suburban image.

I understand this building would be a speculative development, as there are no tenants signed on. In this economy, it could sit empty for an extended period of time. Empty buildings can be dangerous, leading to vandalism and can be the starting signs of a

blighted neighborhood. Our neighborhood currently is not blighted and improvements to the housing stock are being made on my block and around me.

I understand there is a public hearing this Wednesday, October 5, 2011, but I have a conflict that evening. I would like my concerns included as part of the public record. I am sorely disappointed in the process and the proposed solution.

Thank you.

Terry Olsen, AIA, CSI, LEED AP BD+C
542 Pelham Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55104
Desnoyer Park

- - - - -

To Councilmembers Carter, Stark, Lantry, Thune, Harris, Helgen and Bostrom,

I am writing in strong support of the Union Park District Council appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of the 650 Pelham Boulevard site plan.

As a city resident and member of the Union Park District Council Land Use Committee, I am most concerned with this proposed development being inconsistent with City plans including the St. Paul Comprehensive Plan, St. Anthony Park Community District Plan, Merriam Park Master Plan, Central Corridor Development Strategy, Raymond Station Area Plan, Central Corridor Bike Walk Action Plan, West Midway Task Force, and Mississippi River Corridor Plan. We spend a lot of time and money on these plans to ensure good development with a vision for the future, not a quick short-term opportunity.

With a nearly billion-dollar investment in light rail, it is not only in the City's interest, but in our region's interest, to make land use decisions that will help the light rail corridor be successful. Specifically, we need to transition to a higher density transit-oriented development (TOD) in areas within a 1/4 mile of a light rail station. Given that the 650 Pelham property is within a 1/4 mile of the Raymond Avenue Station, and is located on the primary bike/walk route to University Avenue from the Desnoyer Park residential neighborhood to the south, I believe it is very important that it conform with the goal of moving toward more urban, mixed use development with 2-4 story buildings close to, and facing on the street, in this case Pelham and Wabash. In fact, the Raymond Station Area Plan envisions this property as part of a "Prestige Employment Hub...geared

primarily to employment, hospitality, convention, entertainment, and related ancillary services." In addition, the Central Corridor Bike Walk Action Plan cites Pelham/Raymond as an important connector to the light rail station that would benefit from future investments to provide a safe, pleasant pedestrian route and "transform it into one of the city's premier bikeways".

This development (with no committed tenants) should not go forward. I ask that you vote to approve the Union Park Community Council's appeal.

Sincerely,

Debbie Meister

1312 Portland Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55104

cc: Tom Beach

- - - - -

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to lend my voice to the opposition to the Union Park District Council's plan to build a one-story warehouse with parking on all four sides to accommodate the rail.

Matana Morin
590 Cromwell Av
St. Paul, MN 55104

- - - - -

Dear Mr. Beach,

My name is Matt Miller and I live at 389 Otis Ave in Desnoyer Park in St. Paul. I have been a Desnoyer Park Improvement Association board member for the past four years.

I am writing you to voice my support for the Union Park District Council's appeal of the site plan for the Port Authority's development at Pelham/Wabash to the St. Paul City Council. Furthermore, after investing countless hours in issues affecting our neighborhood over the past several years, I am very disappointed and concerned that such a plan could be moved forward without greater community involvement, especially when such care has gone into plans around development near the central corridor.

I am asking you to put conditions on the development at the very least. I, for one, am not interested in concessions such as trees, shrubs and sidewalks. The area should not be zoned light industrial. I believe there is tremendous community support for a design change to the plan. As an active citizen, with additional family members that are 40 year residents of this neighborhood, I will be interested to see how this situation is handled and how the concerns of the community are represented.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Matt Miller

- - - - -

Dear Gentlemen:

I am in support of the UPDC appeal against the proposed site plan at Wabash and Pelham. I plan on attending tomorrow night's (Oct. 5, 2011 @ 5:30 PM) City Council hearing at the scheduled St. Paul City Council Meeting.

Sincerely,
Mathew Curran
609 Eustis Street
(651) 646-8197

- - - - -

Dear Mr. Beach,

This is just a short note to let you know that I support the UPDC in their appeal against the site plan for 650 Pelham. I prefer the site to be mixed use residential and retail and to follow crime prevention guidelines in its development.

Sincerely,
Lisa Harrington
539 Glendale St.
St. Paul MN 55104

- - - - -

Councilman Stark

We are residents on Beverly Road and would like to express our support of the Union Park Development Council's appeal of the site plan for the lot at Pelham and Wabash.

Leland and Kathleen Hansen
2309 Beverly Road

- - - - -

Gentlemen -

I would like to add my opposition to to the speculative suburban - styled development on Pelham. It is a perfect example of **old school thinking** and drastically sells out our future on that lot in a way that **undermines the very progressive activities** of a wide variety of volunteer groups surrounding the corridor development opportunities.

This plan's underlying assumptions are fundamentally flawed, and will not be covered over by small cosmetic fixes such as flowers, fences, etc, etc. There needs to be a more considered program with an integrated design that fits into the neighboring buildings' aesthetic, allows for higher density, civic involvement, and addresses the linking potential that this site has. Identifying developers that are local and committed to long term community improvement is also important.

Please utilize any available tools you have to rescind the current plan's approvals and look to your community for them to help you identify better options. We care, we have the tools, and we are willing to help. Especially in this time of economic fragility, we need to better utilize our public resources to lay the foundation for a healthy, productive, vibrant future.

Thanks.

Geoffrey Warner, AIA
Principal Architect • weeHouse Founder
Alchemy Architects • 856 Raymond Ave Studio G. St. Paul, MN 55114

- - - -

It is with dismay I have to even write this. That you folks would commit \$1 billion to a major transit corridor project only to proceed to ruin that very project through bone headed zoning is simply beyond my comprehension. This is the failure of imagination of elected leaders that leaves voters scratching their heads.

The corridor, for success, requires a commitment of high density development. The communities have been engaged in this process from the beginning. The zoning overlays for 650 Pelham clearly outlined the transition to high density TND. It is so obvious. The site is within three blocks of one of the stations. But no, you folks in your infinite wisdom exempt the site to hold an industrial zoning and ruin the access to the station for Desnoyer Park.

Not only that, in your infinite wisdom you have preserved and expanded the Rock Ten Paper Plant. So now our access via Pelham will be through a hideously ugly industrial park, and our access via Cretin will be past Rock Ten.

This is nothing but crony capitalism financed by bankers that I have come to loathe. You guys take a piece of ground and sell it to one of your buddies for \$1 that is worth \$4 million. He can run to the bank and finance the whole thing with the true value of the land and pocket the cash. Is it any wonder he lives in Florida. So good luck papering the pockets of your cronies with money and feeding us fake community input structures only to stab us in the back at the end.

Is it any wonder the level of disgust with government there is. You destroy the commons, ruin and endanger pedestrian and bikers, ruin the corridor for us, and paper the pockets of your cronies. Nice job.

It sickens me.

Scot Torkelson

Please enter this e-mail message into the official record for today's public hearing on the Union Park District Council's appeal of the site plan for 650 Pelham Avenue in St. Paul. I support the appeal for several reasons.

First, the community has overwhelmingly expressed desires for specific types of development. There is no reason to deny this request. The building is being built in the hope that the developer can then find and sign a tenant. Given that there is no one currently committed to occupying the building, there are no hardships to a business that wants to occupy this building, once built.

Second, and most importantly, the site falls inside a special zoning district created to maximize investment close to the Central Corridor LRT. The plan for the Raymond Area Station was created with a great deal of community input, and was adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan for this building does not meet the specifications of this plan. Why did the City spend so much time and taxpayer money to develop a plan, and why did the community participate in the plan, if the City chooses to ignore the plan any time it is convenient? The plan is supposed to guide development, but isn't doing so in this case.

I ask that you grant the appeal of the Union Park District Council and associated groups and don't approve any plan for this site that doesn't meet the specifications spelled out in the Raymond Area Station Plan.

Benita Warns
1440 Lafond Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104

Council Member Stark –

I am not able to attend the Appeals Hearing tonight regarding the Pelham site due to a prior commitment. I hope you will accept my comments as follows –

As Chair of the District 12 Land Use Committee, I have been very involved with the Pelham/Wabash site and its proposed redevelopment. While I support the mission of the Port Authority of creating jobs, I would simply say that this particular development is the wrong building type for this site.

At our first meeting with the PA, we noted that our District Plan favored a TN zoning for this area, with an emphasis on Mixed Use developments that would support residential with possible commercial / light industrial uses. We wanted developments that would anchor corners, minimize parking and relate strongly to pedestrian, bike and light rail transportation. We wanted developments that become vital parts of a residential and Artists community that we see developing at the corner of Raymond and University as per our Creative Enterprise Zone efforts. As we said in meetings with the PA, we want all of this area to be “more natural, more urban and more connected.”

While we were never asked to vote on this site plan, as a variance was never requested, we did express our displeasure at the meetings and in written communications with Tom Beach.

The plan presents a suburban type, car oriented development in an urban setting. It presents a sea of asphalt at the Southern gateway to our community. It encourages car traffic and lower density on the fringe of a Transit Oriented area.

To their credit, I think the PA has made some efforts to mitigate the impact of the development (added sidewalks and landscaping). The building itself would be appropriate in another (suburban) location. But at this site there is simply no way this can be dressed up enough to make it work and fit into the fabric of our neighborhood. I hope that the appeal is given serious consideration.

Roger Purdy, LEED AP – Construction Administrator
250 Third Avenue North, Suite 450, Minneapolis, MN 55401
