

**SUMMIT-UNIVERSITY
PLANNING COUNCIL**

**2014-2015
Board of Directors**

January 30, 2015

Chair
Steve Wilson
Hallie Q. Brown Community
Center

Jonathan Sage-Martinson, Director
St. Paul Planning and Economic Development Department
Suite 1300

Vice Chair
Simone Harris

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Secretary
Mary Morris
Ramsey Hill Association

Dear Mr. Sage-Martinson,

Treasurer
Marvin Scroggins

**Chair, Neighborhood
Development Committee**
Stephen Filing

This letter is written in support for the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) on Selby Avenue. The Summit-University Planning Council, at its January 27, 2015 board meeting, voted unanimously to support the request of the Rondo Community Land Trust and Community Housing Development Corporation for tentative developer designation for the proposed redevelopment of the two HRA owned vacant sites at 838 Selby Avenue and 940 Selby Avenue.

**Chair, Communications and
Outreach**
Dianne Moore

**Chair, Community
Improvement and Safety**
Trahern Crews

Ginny Martin
Unity Church Unitarian

Vaughn Larry
Aurora St. Anthony
Neighborhood Development
Corporation

The project will include 33 units of affordable senior housing at or below 60% of HUD medium incomes and commercial space on the first floor of each of the two buildings. Rondo Community Land Trust and Community Housing Development Corporation are developing a new model for a mixed-use, multi-level commercial/residential building. The project provides an anti-gentrification tool to retain, stabilize and promote small, local and minority owned businesses and housing on Selby Avenue. The goal of the project is to stabilize the cost of the commercial spaces on the first level and the affordable housing units on the second and third levels. To ensure long-term affordability for the commercial space the cost of the buildings will be in line with the revenue that small businesses with small profit margins can afford. The experienced development team is creating a new model that provides an effective, equitable and sustainable approach to maintaining and supporting local, minority owned businesses.

Jean Schroepfer

Rebecca Airmet

Gerald Ransom

Robert Clarksen

Channa Pitman

Theresa Nix

Gloria Caples

Ibrahim Kamia

Thomas Ernst

Martin Lorenz-Meyer

Angela Burns

Carol Maupins

The Rondo CLTP is one component of the broader African American Heritage Corridor Commercial District (AHC-CD), a community economic development initiative that celebrates the Rondo community's heritage. The concept for the project was developed by community members who understand that small minority owned businesses play a central role in the economic health of the community. In order to reduce the risk of commercial gentrification, the



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commercial land trust will secure long-term, affordable small business space and affordable housing units on Selby, specifically targeted to benefit historically disadvantaged groups. This is an important project to improve two long vacant parcels and to advance racial and economic justice in the city of St. Paul.

We request that you support this neighborhood based development project.

Sincerely,

Sara Udvig, Executive Director

cc: Greg Finzell, Executive Director, Rondo Community Land Trust



SAINT PAUL NAACP
Roy Wilkins Memorial Branch
270 Kent Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-649-0520
www.naacp-stpaul.org

January 23, 2015

To

This letter is written in support for the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) on Selby Avenue.

Rondo Community Land Trust is developing a new model for a mixed-use, multi-level commercial/residential building. The project provides an anti-gentrification tool to retain, stabilize and promote small, local and minority owned businesses and housing on Selby Avenue. The two City owned vacant sites to be developed are at the southeast corner at Victoria and Selby.

The goal of the Rondo CLTP is to build two new multi-level buildings on Selby Avenue that will stabilize the cost of commercial space on the first floor and provide affordable housing units on the second and third levels. The land trust model will fill the affordability gap with up front capital and the monthly costs of the buildings will be in line with the revenue that small businesses with small profit margins can afford.

The development team is creating a model that provides an effective, equitable and sustainable approach to maintaining and supporting local, businesses owned by entrepreneurs of color. The project will include 35 units of affordable housing at or below 60% of HUD medium incomes.

The small business participants will enroll in the Neighborhood Development Center's (NDC) business training and education programs to ensure that they have a grounded understanding of running or expanding a small business. Classes will include accounting, bookkeeping, marketing, and other areas that are identified by both the NDC staff and applicants. Additionally, a Black Apprenticeship Project is being developed to form a base of Selby Avenue small business owners.

The Rondo CLTP is one component of the broader African American Heritage Corridor Commercial District (AHC-CD), a community economic development initiative that celebrates the Rondo community's heritage.

The concept for the project was conceived by community members that understand that small businesses owned by entrepreneurs of color play a central role in the economic health of the community. In order to reduce the risk of gentrification, the commercial land trust will secure long-term, affordable small business space and affordable housing units on the two sites, specifically targeted to benefit historically disadvantaged groups.

The Saint Paul Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Executive Board requests that you support this neighborhood based development project.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey Martin" with a stylized flourish at the end. There is a small "6/17" written below the signature.

Jeffrey Martin, Resident

Saint Paul Chapter NAACP

**Selby Avenue
Action Coalition**
Inspiring enterprise & investment from Dale St to Lexington Pkwy

January 21, 2015

Steve Wilson, Chair
Summit-University Planning Council
909B Selby Avenue
St. Paul MN 55104

Dear Mr. Wilson

This letter is written in support for the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) on Selby Avenue. The Selby Avenue Action Coalition (SAAC) is a diverse group of neighborhood stakeholders who came together in 2010 to find ways to inspire enterprise and investment on nine underutilized blocks of Selby Avenue, from Dale Street west to Lexington Parkway. The all-volunteer group is composed of local business owners, residents, city officials, and nonprofit staff persons, all with vested interest in the success of the businesses, institutions, and families residing in this section of the Selby-Dale neighborhood. The mission of SAAC is to implement targeted actions that support, guide and enhance the revitalization of Selby Avenue between Dale Street and Lexington Parkway.

The Selby Avenue Action Coalition, at its January 20, 2015 meeting, unanimously voted to support the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) to develop the two City owned (HRA) vacant sites at 838 Selby and 940 Selby. The project will include long term affordable commercial space on the first floor and provide affordable housing units on the second and third levels. The project will include 35 units of affordable senior housing at or below 60% of HUD medium incomes.

The experienced Development Team is creating a new model that provides an effective, equitable and sustainable approach to maintaining and supporting local, minority owned businesses. The small business participants will enroll in the Neighborhood Development Center's (NDC) business training and education programs. Additionally, a Black Apprentice Project is being developed to form a base of Selby Avenue small business owners.

SAAC is committed to celebrating the diversity of Selby Avenue and the richness of its historical cultural heritage, as well as its emerging cultural and socioeconomic identity. This project is fundamentally designed to align groups of people from businesses, organizations, and the surrounding neighborhood around the idea of a unified Selby Avenue. As stated in the June 3, 2009 adopted Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Saint Paul, Economic

Development section, page four, item 21 states: "Continue the improvement of commercial streets (i.e. Selby and University Avenues) and add cultural components on the public right-of-ways. The city will work with the Selby Avenue Action Committee, composed of representatives from Selby Avenue district councils, business associations, community organizations and residents and businesses, which will continue to meet and move forward ideas and initiatives that promote Selby Avenue's revitalization."

In addition, this project is one component of the broader African American Heritage Corridor Commercial District (AHC-CD), a community economic development initiative that celebrates the Rondo community's heritage. The concept for the project was developed by community members who understand that small minority owned businesses play a central role in the economic health of the community. In order to reduce the risk of gentrification, the commercial land trust will secure long-term, affordable small business space and affordable housing units on Selby, specifically targeted to benefit historically disadvantaged groups

We request that you support this neighborhood based development project.

Sincerely,



Mychael Wright
SAAC Chair



Peter Leggett
SAAC Secretary



Neighborhood Development Center

663 University Avenue • Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55104
tel 651.291.2480 fax 651.291.2597
www.ndc-mn.org

BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMIES FROM WITHIN
February 27, 2015



This letter is written in support for the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) on Selby Avenue.

Rondo Community Land Trust is developing a new model for a mixed-use, multi-level commercial/residential building. The project provides an anti-gentrification tool to retain, stabilize and promote small, local and minority owned businesses and housing on Selby Avenue. The two City owned vacant sites to be developed are 940 Selby and the southeast corner at Victoria and Selby.

The goal of the Rondo CLTP is stabilize the cost of commercial space on the first floor and provide affordable housing units on the second and third levels. To ensure long-term affordability, for the commercial space, the amount of debt will be limited; the land trust model will fill the affordability gap with up front capital. The monthly costs of the buildings will be in line with the revenue that small businesses with small profit margins can afford, no matter how successful Selby Avenue becomes.

The experienced development team is creating a new model that provides an effective, equitable and sustainable approach to maintaining and supporting local, minority owned businesses. The project will include 35 units of affordable senior housing at or below 60% of HUD medium incomes.

The small business participants will enroll in our Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) business training and education program. We will work with them to ensure that they have a grounded understanding of running or expanding a small business. Classes will include accounting, bookkeeping, marketing, and other areas that are identified by both the NDC staff and applicants. Additionally, a Black Apprentice Project is being developed to form a base of Selby Avenue small business owners.

The Rondo CLTP is one component of the broader African American Heritage Corridor Commercial District (AHC-CD), a community economic development initiative that celebrates the Rondo community's heritage.

The concept for the project was developed by community members who understand that small minority owned businesses play a central role in the economic health of the community. In order to reduce the risk of gentrification, the commercial land trust will secure long-term, affordable small business space and affordable housing units on Selby, specifically targeted to benefit historically disadvantaged groups.

We request that you support this neighborhood based development project.

Sincerely,



Mike LaFave

Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

January 26, 2015

To The Summit-University Planning Council,

This letter is written in support of the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) at 940 Selby Avenue and the southeast corner at Victoria Street and Selby Avenue. This project coupled with other efforts along the Avenue including the work of the Selby Avenue Action Coalition, and numerous small businesses, stands to significantly shape and impact the corridor for years to come.

Rondo Community Land Trust's plans to develop mixed-use, multi-level commercial/residential buildings at these sites, and model an anti-gentrification tool to retain, stabilize and promote small, local and minority owned businesses and housing on Selby Avenue, is a critical investment for residents, businesses and the Summit-University community as a whole.

Rondo CLT's concept for the project was developed by community members who understand that small minority owned businesses play a central role in the economic health of the community. In order to reduce the risk of gentrification, the commercial land trust will secure long-term, affordable small business space and affordable housing units on Selby, specifically targeted to benefit historically disadvantaged groups.

As an organization that has called Selby Avenue home for more than 25 years, this project will further the efforts that so many in our neighborhood have long strived to realize. We are in full support of the project, and urge you to support the Rondo Community Land Trust in their efforts to move this project forward.

Sincerely,



Peter E. Leggett
Executive Director



Administrative Offices
622 Selby Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104
651-310-9499
www.msmarket.coop

January 20, 2015

Steve Wilson, Chair

Summit-University Planning Council

909B Selby Avenue

St. Paul MN 55104

Dear Chairperson Wilson,

On behalf of Mississippi Market Natural Foods Co-op, I am writing this letter in support for the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) on Selby Avenue.

Rondo Community Land Trust is developing a new model for a mixed-use, multi-level commercial/residential building. The project provides an anti-gentrification tool to retain, stabilize and promote small, local and minority owned businesses and housing on Selby Avenue. The two City owned vacant sites to be developed are 940 Selby and the southeast corner at Victoria and Selby.

The goal of the Rondo CLTP is stabilize the cost of commercial space on the first floor and provide affordable housing units on the second and third levels. To ensure long-term affordability, for the commercial space, the amount of debt will be limited; the land trust model will fill the affordability gap with up front capital. The monthly costs of the buildings will be in line with the revenue that small businesses with small profit margins can afford, no matter how successful Selby Avenue becomes.

The experienced development team is creating a new model that provides an effective, equitable and sustainable approach to maintaining and supporting local, minority owned businesses. The project will include 35 units of affordable housing at or below 60% of HUD medium incomes.

The small business participants will enroll in the Neighborhood Development Center's (NDC) business training and education programs to ensure that they have a grounded understanding of running or expanding a small business. Classes will include accounting, bookkeeping, marketing, and other areas that are identified by both the NDC staff and applicants. Additionally, a Black Apprentice Project is being developed to form a base of Selby Avenue small business owners.

The Rondo CLTP is one component of the broader African American Heritage Corridor Commercial District (AHC-CD), a community economic development initiative that celebrates the Rondo community's heritage.

The concept for the project was developed by community members who understand that small minority owned businesses play a central role in the economic health of the community. In order to reduce the risk of gentrification, the commercial land trust will secure long-term, affordable small business space and affordable housing units on Selby, specifically targeted to benefit historically disadvantaged groups.

We request that you support this neighborhood based development project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Nicholson', written over a horizontal dashed line.

Christina Nicholson

Operations Manager

Mississippi Market Natural Foods Cooperative

622 Selby Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55104

Steve Wilson, Chair
Summit-University Planning Council
909B Selby Avenue
St. Paul MN 55104

January 20, 2015

Dear Steve:

This letter is written in support for the Rondo Commercial Land Trust Project (RCLTP) on Selby Avenue. Jewish Community Action (JCA) is a nonprofit organization that brings together Jews as allies with diverse communities to take action on social and economic justice. We have worked on affordable housing for most of our 20 years as an organization across the Twin Cities and have worked in the past with Rondo Community Land Trust on housing issues in St. Paul.

Rondo Community Land Trust is developing a new model for a mixed-use, multi-level commercial/residential building. The project provides an anti-gentrification tool to retain, stabilize and promote small, local and minority owned businesses and housing on Selby Avenue. The two City owned vacant sites to be developed are 940 Selby and the southeast corner at Victoria and Selby. As a resident for more than 28 years in this neighborhood, living on the 900 block of Laurel Avenue, believe this is a very important project for our community.

The goal of the Rondo CLTP is to stabilize the cost of commercial space on the first floor and provide affordable housing units on the second and third levels. To ensure long-term affordability, for the commercial space, the amount of debt will be limited; the land trust model will fill the affordability gap with up front capital. The monthly costs of the buildings will be in line with the revenue that small businesses with small profit margins can afford, no matter how successful Selby Avenue becomes.

The experienced development team is creating a new model that provides an effective, equitable and sustainable approach to maintaining and supporting local, minority owned businesses. The project will include 35 units of affordable housing at or below 60% of HUD medium incomes. I have always been very impressed with the staff of Rondo CLTP led by Greg Finzell.


The small business participants will enroll in the Neighborhood Development Center's (NDC) business training and education programs to ensure that they have a grounded understanding of running or expanding a small business. Classes will include accounting, bookkeeping, marketing, and other areas that are identified by both the NDC staff and applicants. Additionally, a Black Apprentice Project is being developed to form a base of Selby Avenue small business owners.

The Rondo CLTP is one component of the broader African American Heritage Corridor Commercial District (AHC-CD), a community economic development initiative that celebrates the Rondo community's heritage. The concept for the project was developed by community members who understand that small minority owned businesses play a central role in the economic health of the

community. In order to reduce the risk of gentrification, the commercial land trust will secure long-term, affordable small business space and affordable housing units on Selby, specifically targeted to benefit historically disadvantaged groups. This is an important project to advance racial and economic justice in the city of St. Paul.

We request that you support this neighborhood based development project and would be willing to respond to any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vic Rosenthal', written over a horizontal dashed line.

Vic Rosenthal,
Executive Director,
Jewish Community Action

January, 2015

To Whom It May Concern;

Commercial land trusts represent an exciting means of business development and retention for an increasing number of communities. They are, in fact, an emerging activity for community based organizations across the country. It is not yet an extensive practice, but what evidence exists on previous projects across the country is quite supportive of its potential impact for communities, and for the community engagement work of the organizations pursuing these commercial land trusts.

A report for the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy notes that the kind of neighborhood-based commercial development encouraged by commercial land trusts would produce “local jobs and training, increase entrepreneurial opportunities, provide residents with convenient access to goods and services, and help improve resident self-perceptions and life satisfaction.”¹ The report also notes the potential of commercial land trusts to prevent the negative impacts of displacement of indigenous businesses and their replacement by chain retail stores.

The idea of commercial land trust projects is fairly new. Though some Land Trusts around the country have done work in this area, the numbers are not large. The chief objective of the Rondo proposal is to engage in more comprehensive community development by supporting local business development. The Lincoln Institute report indicates that this type of benefit is quite possible with commercial land trusts, and concludes that “more CLTs should consider pursuing non-residential projects in order to contribute to comprehensive community development and neighborhood revitalization.”

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance also calls for the creation of commercial land trusts to generate local business activity and healthy local economies. I have colleagues across the country who are beginning to look at this approach and its potential in their communities. I think the technique is quickly spreading as an innovative idea nationally.

For an organization with a demonstrated track record like Rondo, having years in the same community and connections that are deep within the community, a commercial land trust seems a natural extension of their community development approach. It would put them on the cutting edge of comprehensive community development.

One strength of the Rondo proposal is that the project will also produce affordable housing. Their proposal calls for a mixed-use development with housing above commercial. This of

¹ Greg Rosenberg and Jeffrey Yuen. 2012. “Beyond Housing: Urban Agriculture and Commercial Development by Community Land Trusts.” Lincoln Institute of Land Policy Working Paper.

course fits into the neighborhood fabric well, but also constitutes an innovative extension of their organizational activities. Given the relatively large number of land trusts operating in Minnesota, a project like this has the potential to be path-breaking locally.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edward Goetz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "Z" at the end.

Edward G. Goetz
Director
Professor of Urban and Regional Planning



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

DAI THAO
Councilmember

June 8, 2016

Greg Finzell, Executive Director
The Rondo Community Land Trust
626 Selby Avenue
St. Paul, MN. 55104

Dear Mr. Finzell,

Please consider this letter an enthusiastic endorsement for your Selby Milton Victoria (SMV) Project on Selby Avenue.

One of the most pressing issues in the community is how small, minority-owned, businesses can afford space when rapidly rising rents and speculative real estate development threatens to displace them. It is unsettling to those of us who care about insuring that local business owners are not displaced after they have made an investment in their community.

I think your commercial land trust model is the most promising response to that concern currently on the table. Working with experienced development consultants and local business owners, you are developing a model that will provide both affordable commercial space on the ground floor and affordable senior housing on the upper floors. You are redeveloping two long vacant sites at Victoria and Selby at 940 Selby Avenue for the project. These two sites are in the heart of the Rondo Community and have direct links to the Green Line on University Avenue and the shops on Grand Avenue to the south.

You have accomplished a great deal since you first presented this idea to me and city staff. It is a good idea and the right people are at the table. You have put together a strong team that includes Community Housing Development Corporation (CHDC) and Neighborhood Network for seniors (NNFS) and Neighborhood Development Center (NDC). The model is transferrable. I hope that funders and policy makers see this project as a positive investment in an **equity-based** future for the Rondo Community and other communities facing gentrification.

Please don't hesitate to call me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Dai Thao
Saint Paul City Councilmember – Ward One