



**Building A
Stronger Midway**

Developers

American Bank
Equity Services of
St. Paul
Park Midway Bank
Warners' Stellian
Wellington
Management, Inc.
Xcel Energy

Architects

American Engineering
Testing, Inc.
Anchor Bank
Hamline University
JB Realty, Co.
McDonald's
NAI Welsh
Companies
Pioneer Press

Builders

Associated Bank
Hubbard
Broadcasting, Inc.
Mintahoe Catering
& Events
St. Paul Port Authority
Western Bank

September 28, 2011

RE: Meridian Industrial Project

650 Pelham Boulevard

Madam President and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

My name is Paul McGinley. I am the current chair of the board of directors of the Midway Chamber of Commerce. I am writing on behalf of the Midway Chamber of Commerce to express our strong support for the Saint Paul Port Authority's plans to redevelop an existing industrial site, the Meridian Industrial Project at 650 Pelham Boulevard, to create new jobs in the Midway area.

This project gives Saint Paul an important chance to make better use of valuable industrial property and attract new investment, at a time when our local economy faces significant challenges. We urge you to approve the plan as presented and allow this project to move forward.

The Midway Chamber of Commerce has been an integral part of this community for 92 years. Although the backbone of the Twin Cities has evolved and changed over the years, one thing has remained consistent – the Midway Chamber of Commerce supports jobs and the businesses needed to provide those economic opportunities for families. This project continues this tradition by making a valuable five-acre site immediately more attractive to businesses, ensuring that Saint Paul realizes the benefits.

This project, which is located close to highways and near the Central Corridor, leverages transit investments to provide jobs for the greater community. The site plan proposed for the site conforms to the zoning and land use plans the city has recently adopted. When the zoning study for the Central Corridor was conducted, with extensive input from the community and local businesses, with numerous community meetings and with hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council, this site was fully examined. It was decided by staff, the Planning Commission and by unanimous vote of the City Council to retain the existing Industrial zoning, expressly for the purpose of accommodating this type of opportunity.

This site is immediately adjacent to the Rock-Tenn facility and provides an important buffer between that I-2, heavy industrial, use and the T4 zoning in the areas near this site adjacent to the new LRT line. Many of us struggled for a number of years to retain the 400 or so jobs provided by Rock-Tenn to the surrounding community. Long-held urban planning principles recognize the appropriateness of this proposed use and zoning as a buffer between

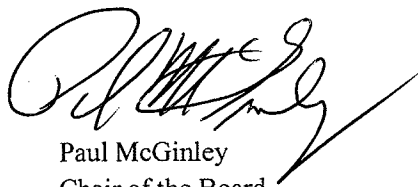
heavy industrial use and residential, commercial and mixed-use zoning such as T4. The use proposed on this site serves as a buffer – protecting the interests of the neighboring T4 areas as well as the operations of Rock-Tenn. Allowing high-density residential and mixed-use T4 zoning immediately next to Rock-Tenn sets up potential conflicts and discord that does a disservice to both the T4 community that may develop and to Rock-Tenn. The current zoning is consistent with surrounding uses, and the proposed single-story structure will help create a transition to other parts of the community. Also, the proposed use would have little impact upon, and is not visible from, the residential communities south of Interstate 94, due to the intervening railroad corridor and freeway as well as elevation differences and sound-barrier walls.

The Midway area is a special place because there is a broad mix of land uses. It's what makes this a special place. The extensive work done, over many years to create plans around the Central Corridor station areas took all of this into account, as did the recent changes to the zoning for the area. In the Development Strategy and the Comprehensive Plan it was concluded that Industrial uses, especially at this station area in question, should be maintained if not located directly on the Corridor (which this site is not). The plans before you have been thoroughly reviewed. Through that review process, involving significant community input, the development plans have been revised to provide bike access, to increase pedestrian connections and sidewalks and to provide landscape buffers to parking areas. The Port Authority's involvement in the project will ensure successful completion of the plan and that the community will benefit from the new jobs and investment in the site.

Saint Paul competes with many communities throughout the metropolitan area and the country to keep the jobs we already have and bring new business ventures and jobs into the City. It can be challenging to find locations within the city that enable us to keep our city economically strong, a need that is even more evident in these challenging budgetary times for the City. This five-acre site is in the vicinity of light-rail, near interstate highway access, and close to the people who need jobs, within a city that needs new tax revenue. This is a productive, economically viable plan at the right location at the right time.

Thank you for your time and your consideration. We again urge you to support the project and together we can take a productive step forward for the City of Saint Paul, its businesses and citizens.

Thank you.



Paul McGinley
Chair of the Board
Midway Chamber of Commerce



Kari Canfield
President/Executive Director
Midway Chamber of Commerce