



October 24, 2018

Council Member Thao
Saint Paul City Hall
15 West Kellogg Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member Thao,

The Saint Paul Downtown Alliance is a new organization that represents downtown businesses, nonprofits, government entities, residents, and entrepreneurs to build a strong and vibrant downtown and create a positive downtown experience. I understand City Council and Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) will be contemplating a series of actions to approve improvements to Pedro Park along with the redevelopment of the former Public Safety Annex. While there are strong feelings in the community about the merits of tearing down the building for park development vs. redeveloping the building for office and retail uses, I wanted to share my analysis of the issue.

In service of the Alliance's focus on attracting more vitality and jobs to downtown, the time has come for something to happen on this site. It is the worst block in downtown, inhibiting reinvestment in the surrounding neighborhood. After sitting fallow for 10 years, it is time for something to happen. While my position is agnostic to the particulars of the project (tear down, redevelopment, any sized park improvement), downtown needs to see some action on this block that is above the standard vacant land (like the Central Station block). If there is a viable path and resources available this year to support the teardown and redevelopment of a larger park, it would be fully supported. If, on the other hand, Mayor Carter's proposal for a public/private partnership with the Ackerberg Group (to redevelop the former public safety annex along with the park) is the only viable option, then I humbly ask for you to support these investments.

The opportunity to see millions invested in this long-ignored block is upon us, and so the question is called for this project or some other investment this year.

Sincerely,

Joe Spencer
President