



February 13th, 2025

Dear Commissioners of the Zoning Committee;

Regarding the rezoning of 10 River Park Plaza, WSCO continues to hold its position concerning the flawed process of City staff “conditionally approving” the minor master plan amendment without meaningful engagement and communication with the West Side District 3 council. We continue to assert that **Unilateral staff decisions (even conditional ones) about the West Side Flats without community involvement are unacceptable today**. It is important that any rezoning of an Area Master Plan, does NOT follow the path that this rezoning has taken.

WSCO is actively engaged in good-faith negotiations with Pier Foundry and the property owners to establish a **Community Benefits Agreement**.

However, despite the City’s rezoning action, we continue to assert that expanding higher industrial use in this area would have serious consequences for our community. The following findings underscore the need for a more thorough and critical analysis before any further industrial development is considered:

- **Air Quality Violations:** MPCA air monitoring in 2021-2022 found the area does not comply with Minnesota Ambient Air Quality Standards for Total Suspended Particulate Matter.
- **Inadequate Monitoring:** Southport is currently being monitored for just one out of eleven common industrial pollutants identified in the 2024 MDA Air Monitoring Network Plan.
- **Public Health Risks:** From 2017 to 2021, asthma-related emergency room visits in the West Side (ZIP code 55107) were more than double those of both the seven-county metro area and the state of Minnesota.
- **Environmental Harm and Displacement:** The 2024 *Flats to the Future* report confirms that past industrialization of the West Side Flats has led to environmental degradation and community displacement, prompting organized efforts for repair and redress.

Further industrial expansion along the riverfront will only deepen these harms. Our community will not accept this.

We also acknowledge the support of our City Council Representative, and others on the council for seeing the importance and significance of naming the Community Benefit Agreement, at the December 11th City Council hearing, as a condition of the support of this specific rezoning and development proposal.

We are pleased that Pier Foundry and the LandOwner have taken steps to enter into this important work, and we have taken steps to build relationship and trust.



It is important that we are given the time and space to practice this due diligence of the Community Benefits Agreement.

We are committed to this process. Early discussions have covered a range of priorities, as identified in WSCO Equitable Development Scorecard, and also as identified in the Flats to the Future report completed in July of 2024. Although we have more discussions ahead of us, we are optimistic that a Community Benefits Agreement can be achieved.

We urge City Planning staff to view this as a model for meaningful and respectful community engagement. With time, intention, and transparency, development and community priorities can align—ensuring thoughtful decision-making rather than arbitrary actions. We urge you to prioritize a restorative lens when pertaining to development on the West Side Flats. We appreciate the Commission’s time and consideration of these critical issues.

For the Community,

Monica Bravo

Executive Director of West Side Community Organization