



**PROJECT FOR
PRIDE IN
LIVING**



December 2, 2019

Council President Amy Brendmoen
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker
Councilmember Chris Tolbert
City of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Councilmember Kassim Busuri Councilmember Mitra Jalali Nelson
Councilmember Jane Prince Councilmember Dai Thao

RE: Ford Site Redevelopment Agreement

Dear Council President Brendmoen and Councilmembers Busuri, Nelson, Noecker, Prince, Thao, and Tolbert:

Project for Pride in Living and CommonBond have each been providing affordable housing throughout our region for nearly 50 years. Both of our organizations have a great track record of developing and managing affordable housing in our community with over 6,000 total affordable units in the Twin Cities region. Despite our efforts, and those of similar organizations, the need has not been met and unfortunately continues to grow. Housing costs are increasing, while wages remain stagnant, which diminishes locational choice for people of very limited means. The fact that low-wage earners will have quality, affordable housing options in the Highland Park neighborhood is one of the many impactful outcomes of the collaborative work among policy makers, City staff, and Highland Park residents to re-imagine the future of the former Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant.

In various capacities and at various times since Ford's announcement in 2008 that the plant would close, we have both been engaged in Ford site discussions, first in trying to prevent the plant from closing, and subsequently helping to envision a future for the site that embraced sustainability, parks and open spaces, jobs, and housing options for people in different stages and from all walks of life. The final plan, including the financing plan which you'll consider on December 4th, reflects the values of hundreds of people who volunteered, participated in focus groups, responded to surveys, and ensured their collective voice was heard. CommonBond and PPL are honored to partner with Ryan Companies and the City of Saint Paul to ensure the affordable housing goals within the plan are fully realized.

We applaud and respect the City of Saint Paul's critical commitment to ensure that at least 20% (approximately 760 units) of the housing developed on the Ford site is affordable, and we appreciate the commitment of Ryan Companies to ensure that the City's affordable housing goals are firmly incorporated into the development plan. More importantly, however, is the commitment to ensure a significant number of those units, including one of the first projects we expect to develop, will serve those with the greatest gap between their income and rents – those with incomes below 30% of area median income. In order to meet this goal, we look forward to a robust partnership with myriad committed funding partners as well as the City of Saint Paul.

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Thank you for your leadership in advancing these ambitious goals. We strongly urge your approval of the Ford Site Redevelopment Agreement and related actions. Both of our organizations are eager to support the execution of the Ford Master Plan, and we look forward to working with the City of Saint Paul and Ryan to create a community at the Ford site of which we can all be proud.

Sincerely,

Paul Williams
President and CEO
Project for Pride in Living

Cecile Bedor
Executive Vice President
CommonBond Communities