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September 30, 2011

Council President Kathy Lantry  
City of Saint Paul  
320-C City Hall  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55102

**RE: Meridian Project, 650 Pelham Boulevard**

Dear Council President Lantry and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I am writing to provide you with the Saint Paul Port Authority's input regarding Union Park District Council's appeal to the City Council of the Saint Paul Planning Commission's denial of this appeal on September 2, 2011.

The Port Authority redeveloped this site, and Mr. John Allen, owner of Industrial Equities Company, is prepared to commence development of a 68,000 square foot light industrial flex multi-tenant building immediately. This new development will provide private sector investment of approximately \$3 million; a well-designed building with significant landscaping and connection to nearby walking and biking areas; at least 65 jobs and likely more; and tax base that will be greater than 200 percent of the property taxes generated by this former underutilized site.

City staff has recommended approval of this development.

We urge the City Council to deny this appeal and allow this development to proceed. The following are the primary reasons this development should proceed:

- The site is zoned I-1, and the site plan meets or exceeds all requirements of an industrial zoned property. The City Council approved this zoning earlier this year and also approved I-1 zoning for the site across the street on Pelham.
- The site plan is consistent with land use plans. The comprehensive plan calls for this area to be an employment district. There will be increased jobs and taxes at this site compared to its use as a trucking terminal.
- The site is adjacent to Rock-Tenn Recycling, a heavy industrial (I-2) use with 400 jobs. The Pelham site provides a good buffer between I-2 zoning, TN zoning, residential neighborhoods, and the Central Corridor station.

Regarding improvements to the site plan, based upon staff and community input, the Port Authority and the developer have agreed to changes to the original site plan, which incorporates the following pedestrian connections and design features:

- Fencing along Pelham Boulevard and Wabash Avenue: 16" square 5' high brick piers to match building with 4' high ornamental metal fence. Landscaping along the fence to provide a buffer from parking lot.
- Lantern-style street lights along Pelham Boulevard and Wabash Avenue – make and model to be determined by City.
- Public sidewalk along east side of Pelham Boulevard.
- Shifting the entrance along Pelham Boulevard so does not interrupt pedestrian connection to an entrance.
- Bicycle parking at a rate of one bike parking space per 20 car parking spaces.
- 35' landscaped setback between the parking lot and Pelham Boulevard curb.
- Pelham Boulevard additional boulevard trees approximately 40' on center and a second row behind the sidewalk staggered with the boulevard trees at 40' on center.
- Sidewalk along the front of the building between building entrances.
- Pedestrian connections crossing the parking lot from the public sidewalk to front building sidewalk.
- The area of landscaping within the parking lot equals more than 15% of the paved area of the parking lot.

The Port Authority and the developer are providing a significant amount of additional equity to this project to provide visual, landscaping, and pedestrian enhancements to this project. The developer has indicated that he is spending an additional 10% of his cash (\$300,000) to implement the required site plan improvements, which is reflective of his opinion of market strength for this light industrial product.

The developer is marketing this property to bio-tech and other high-tech companies. This development will be a high quality addition to the Midway area and provide space not currently available for this market niche.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



Louis Jambois, President