



May 19, 2015

Councilmember Chris Tolbert
City of Saint Paul
310-C City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

VIA EMAIL

Re: Mixed-Use Development at 735 Cleveland Avenue (City File No. 15-011-695)

Dear Councilmember Tolbert:

As the State's largest local chamber and an advocate for expanding the tax base through private investment in high density transit-oriented development, the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce (SPACC) writes to express its strong support for the proposed mixed-use development at 735 Cleveland Avenue South. For the reasons discussed in greater detail below, we urge members of the city council to affirm the planning commission's unanimous approval of this important project.

TJL Development is interested in making a significant economic investment in Saint Paul by converting an underutilized building into a mixed-use development. The development would include a new four-story building providing added rental housing opportunities to the neighborhood—the type of housing amenities that are not currently available in the area. In addition, the development would provide new commercial space, expanding the economic opportunities in the neighborhood. In essence, this development will improve upon a very strong neighborhood. In doing so, it will provide additional vibrancy by creating a high-density investment that supports the new A-Line BRT along Ford Parkway, planned to be completed in the fall of 2015. This is exactly the kind of development called for by Saint Paul's comprehensive plan.

As noted in the zoning committee staff report, dated April 8, 2015, and the staff response to the appeal, the proposed development complies with all applicable city zoning and land use regulations. The development satisfies density, setback, height, and parking requirements under the zoning code. And because the development does not require any conditional use permits or zoning variances, as recognized by planning commissioner Betsy Reveal at the city's zoning committee on April 16, 2015, it is incumbent upon the city to approve this important project.

Finally, and most importantly, the proposed development is supported by city staff, the zoning committee, and the planning commission. At each stage of the regulatory process, this project has received the unanimous support of the reviewing body. This unequivocally demonstrates that this proposal is supported by the community and should be approved.

In summary, this project is widely supported, consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, and will expand the local tax base through private investment in an important commercial corridor. It is for these reasons the Chamber supports the proposed mixed-use development at 735 Cleveland Avenue

South. Similar to the city's zoning committee and planning commission, we believe this project is good for Saint Paul. We encourage the city council to deny the appeal and approve this project.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments. Thank you.

With Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael J. Belaen
Director of Public Affairs and Legal Counsel

cc: Russ Stark, President, Saint Paul City Council
Members of the Saint Paul City Council