

Good evening. My name is Ken Iosso and I'm the Aide to County Commissioner Rafael E. Ortega. Commissioner Ortega has represented downtown for more than 20 years and has served as the Chair of the Regional Rail Authority for much of that time. Over the last few years we as a county have been actively engaged in the implementation of the River Balcony, including by providing financial support for the master planning process through our Regional Railroad Authority. We applaud the efforts of city staff in the development of the River Balcony Master Plan and I am pleased to speak in favor of the plan today.

The River Balcony is of particular interest to Ramsey County at this time, as we are leading the effort to redevelop a key site—the Riverfront Properties—that will intersect with the River Balcony. From the outset of this process, it has been our goal to integrate the Riverfront Properties development with the River Balcony in order to maximize the contribution of both projects to the vitality of downtown St. Paul. We have recently

entered into negotiations with a developer for the Riverfront Properties who shares this vision and is excited to establish an active first floor that interacts with pedestrian activity along the River Balcony.

Additionally, Union Depot, a county property and the easternmost property on the River Balcony, will be a key public entry point to the River Balcony and stands to benefit from its connection to the balcony. Ramsey County looks forward to an ongoing partnership with the city to integrate Union Depot seamlessly into the River Balcony.

Because we as a county have such a significant presence on the riverfront, we have maintained a keen interest in the River Balcony from its inception. We are thrilled to witness the progress that the completion of the Master Plan represents, and are excited to continue to support the River Balcony in the years ahead.

Thank you.