November 4, 2025

To:
City of Saint Paul, Office of Financial Services – Procurement Division
Saint Paul Reparations Commission
Saint Paul City Council

Subject: Concerns Regarding Reparations Study RFP Process and Request for Equitable Action

Dear City of Saint Paul Leadership and Members of the Reparations Commission,

The Rondo Center of Diverse Expressions (RCODE) writes to express our deep concern regarding the current Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the Saint Paul Reparations Study. While we appreciate the City's investment and acknowledgment of the need for a comprehensive harm study, the process as currently structured risks reproducing the very inequities that reparations are intended to address.

Conflict of Interest and Process Integrity
It is troubling that City staff—representing institutions directly tied to historic policies of displacement and exclusion—are solely responsible for administering and evaluating proposals. This creates a conflict of interest that compromises the credibility and independence of the study. We strongly urge that community representatives, including Rondo descendants, serve as decision-makers in the review and selection process.

Lack of Outreach and Inclusion
Many Black-led and legacy organizations, including ours, were not informed or engaged prior to the RFP's release. True reparative work must begin with inclusion and transparency. The limited outreach has prevented equitable participation by those most impacted.

Need for Rondo Representation
The erasure of Rondo voices from this process is particularly painful. The destruction of the Rondo neighborhood through urban renewal remains one of the most profound examples of racial harm in Saint Paul's history. Any legitimate reparations study must include Rondo representation at every level—from design to implementation—to ensure accuracy, accountability, and community trust.

315 Fisk Street
Saint Paul, MN 55104
www.rcodemn.org
(651) 447-2157

Considering the above, we respectfully request the parties consider the following requests:

1. An **extension of the RFP deadline** to allow for equitable community engagement and participation.

2. A **revised review and selection process** that includes members of the Saint Paul Reparations Commission, Rondo descendants, and Black-led legacy organizations.

3. A **commitment to transparent communication** and collaboration with impacted communities throughout the study.

RCODE remains ready to collaborate with the city and the Reparations Commission to ensure this process honors both the history and the ongoing contributions of Rondo families and organizations. Reparative justice cannot be achieved without shared power and mutual respect.

Thank you for your attention and for the opportunity to continue working toward a just and truthful reckoning with Saint Paul's history.

With respect and resolve,

Marvin Roger Anderson
Founder and Chair
Rondo Center of Diverse Expressions
(651) 402-0095
marvin@rcodemn.org