RAMSEY COUNTY
Board of Commissioners

County Commissioner Garrison McMurtrey
District 3

August 10, 2026

Housing & Redevelopment Authority
City of Saint Paul, City Council
15 W Kellogg Blvd, Suite 320
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Honorable HRA Chair Cheniqua Johnson and Members of the Council,

As the Ramsey County Commissioner for District 3, representing the Saint Paul side of the Rice & Larpenteur Alliance (RLA), I am writing to express my strong support for continued funding from the Saint Paul City Council. RLA serves as an essential economic, cultural, and community-driven anchor within Ramsey County. Its uniquely shared geography—connecting Saint Paul, Maplewood, and Roseville—sits at the heart of one of Minnesota's most culturally and racially diverse corridors: Rice & Larpenteur. This diversity is reflected in an extraordinary network of BIPOC and immigrant-owned businesses, community organizations, and trusted partnerships with neighbors, schools, elected officials, public safety agencies, and departmental leaders across all three cities.

Sustaining and strengthening this corridor requires thoughtful planning and continuous stewardship—precisely the role RLA has fulfilled. Under the leadership of Executive Director Kim O'Brien, RLA has made Rice & Larpenteur safer, more accessible, and more welcoming. Their placemaking work has helped transform the area from a corridor people pass through into a destination people seek out, fostering pride, connection, and a model that has inspired other initiatives, including the newly formed Snelling University Alliance.

Over the past decade, RLA has advanced infrastructure improvements, elevated community identity, uplifted local businesses, and enhanced safety and livability—achievements that would not have occurred without their leadership, advocacy, and expertise. Through Phases 1 and 2 of the Rice Street Reconstruction project, RLA partnered closely with my office to ensure small businesses received timely updates, multilingual communications, and access to County resources. Together, we organized the #ReOpenRice celebration following Phase 1, bringing neighbors, students, school representatives, and small business owners together to mark the opening of a safer, more accessible corridor—supported by gift cards purchased from businesses most impacted by construction. During Operation Metro Surge, RLA again played a vital role by guiding small businesses on public safety protocols, coordinating Legal Observer Training, leading Shop Local campaigns, and establishing a small grants fund for affected businesses. Additionally, RLA has helped welcome new businesses to the corridor and facilitated the installation of 30 public art and signage pieces throughout the neighborhood – they truly are the key to community engagement, connection, and inclusion.

Today, the need for sustained investment is clear. Our community depends on vibrant destinations that attract visitors, strong local businesses that anchor the neighborhood, and public spaces that instill pride and belonging. RLA continues to be the driving force behind these placemaking efforts, turning everyday areas into meaningful spaces where people gather, connect, and feel at home. Their leadership and vision have been central to this corridor's success, and ongoing funding will ensure that Rice & Larpenteur continues to thrive in ways that benefit the entire community.

Thank you,

Garrison McMurtrey
Ramsey County Commissioner, District 3
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