



Legislation Text

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Requesting a Planning Commission study of Southport on the WestSide to address safety and health issues.

WHEREAS, a recent zoning application for the Southport area of the West Side brought forth an outpouring of concern from West Side residents, churches, schools, and workers who have grown familiar with pollutants on the riverfront at Southport; and

WHEREAS, there has been little progress in addressing environmental racism; and

WHEREAS, increasing national concern about transport of dangerous chemicals and flammable products thru the nearby neighborhoods, adding to already unacceptable traffic congestion, air and water quality degradation, have increased markedly since opening of the North Dakota Bakken fields; and

WHEREAS, the Great River Passage master plan promised environmental and livability improvements that seem to recess further into the future with every rezoning; and

WHEREAS, new pressures on the Saint Paul riverfront at Southport demand a new comprehensive analysis of the situation; Now Therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saint Paul City Council requests the Planning Commission to undertake a study limited to Southport and Barge Channel Road on the West Side that will include representatives from District 3 Planning Council (WSCO), Protect Our Riverfront Together (PORT), Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA), Planning & Economic Development, Upper Mississippi Waterway Association, Saint Paul Port Authority, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Steelworkers Union to report back to the City Council by September 21, 2016; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this study will address the following Southport safety and health issues:

- (a) Develop baseline data on air, soil, and water quality and potential risks for the West Side neighbors that could be affected by wind and particulate matter distribution patterns from Southport businesses. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) historical data, analyses, and personnel resources should, in particular, be fully utilized in the study.
- (b) Initiate a detailed traffic study of Barge Channel Road that analyzes both immediate truck, rail, barge and other transportation modes and also forecasts five year patterns.
- (c) Develop substantive optional or alternative access routes to ensure safe egress from the area for workers and area residents.
- (d) Develop a neighborhood notice and evacuation plan in event of a chemical or other hazardous material release or other emergency.
- (e) Undertake a transparent analysis of the Port Authority's priorities and options, similar to ones recently undertaken at the Ports of Childs Road and Winona, with the aim of improving the environmental and economic sustainability of Southport.
- (f) Undertake a science-based pilot project in Southport to address issues such as vehicle exhaust, dust, air quality, sources of pollution, etc. with collaboration from MPCA and the Port Authority with the goal of ensuring a healthy Mississippi River and healthy nearby neighborhood.

