



West Bank Business Association

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Minneapolis MN 55454

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thewestbank.org - members: wbba.thewestbank.org

Mayor Jacob Frey,
City Council Members Abdi Warsame, and Cam Gordon,
County Commissioner Angela Conley,
Rep. Noor, Rep. Dziejdzic,
Joe Bernard and Emily Stern, Community Planning and Economic Development

CC: Mpls City Council Members, Cedar Riverside Partnership, West Bank Community Development Corporation, Cedar Riverside NRP, Pillsbury United Communities, West Bank Business members

July 8, 2019

Dear colleagues,

I am writing in response to the recently proposed development in the 16th Avenue Lot, known locally as Lot A.

First, thank you to Council Member Warsame and his aide Ryan SanCartier for your participation in the business conversation following the announcement, and to Mayor Frey and Abdi Salah, and to Emily and Joe from CPED for your conversations after the public announcement. Your engagement following the announcement was important. However, as you are aware, there is a strong and growing concern in the community. Some of the concerns are:

- **Process:** That a public announcement was made prior to a transparent and accessible community engagement process.
- **Consistency:** A discrepancy in what is and is not flexible in this project. From the vision to the process, as well as what is negotiable, we are hearing different things from departments of the City.
- **Parking and mitigation:** This city-owned parking lot provides valuable parking for a wide variety of businesses. The business association is working with businesses to grow pedestrian and transit-oriented traffic, but this growth takes time. Providing adequate parking replacement but during and after construction is essential for the health of the current business community to prevent displacement of businesses.
- **Anti-displacement:** The proposed project does not account for the full diversity of our neighborhood including but not limited to other businesses of color, nor does it allow for active participation from the Native American community who have already been systematically displaced from the West Bank / Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

We believe the city can be a strong partner in addressing our mutual goals for the district and the city as a whole. However, in order to achieve those goals, we need to work together. "Nothing for us without us" - and the outreach process thus far has been inadequate.

Requests from the business community are:

- Answer the unanswered questions about the current development process, which have been sent to the Council Member and CPED;
- We request copies of the studies that were referenced regarding re-development of Lot A and best use, including any available parking metrics about lot utilization;
- Ensure a decision-making seat at the table for stakeholders (residents, businesses, property owners) throughout the RFP *building* process;
- Ensure a decision-making seat at the table for stakeholders (residents, businesses, property owners) regarding the RFP *decision* process;
- Adjust the timeline to ensure a responsible community engagement process.

I am including a resolution passed by the West Bank Business Association members that passed in 2013 and our organization has affirmed is still relevant and timely. We remain concerned about the impact of coming development on the existing business community. While we do support development and positive change, we also recognize the importance of community participation and local government in the development process. This is particularly important if we want to remain in alignment with the stated goals of the 2040 plan.

Coordinated Development Strategy:

In geographic areas most in need of reinvestment, conduct community centered planning processes that clearly articulate a coordinated district-wide development plan including the location, phasing, and conceptual design of buildings and infrastructure as well as strategies to minimize the displacement of nearby residents and businesses. <https://minneapolis2040.com/policies/coordinated-development-strategy/>

A purpose of the business association is to provide a voice for local businesses, working alongside the city in nurturing the type of development that preserves the vibrancy of the West Bank community. Slowing this process down allows us to conduct a thorough and productive community engagement processes, in alignment with our mutual goals. It allows businesses to plan for construction, and it also allows the local nonprofits to research and apply to funding sources that will support anti-displacement strategies. This includes but is not limited to the city's own Business District Support programs.

I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JS', is centered on a light gray background.

Jamie Schumacher
Executive Director

The West Bank Business Association exists to engage the business community in the responsible economic development of the West Bank district while preserving the unique character and heritage of the Cedar-Riverside area.

Re: Transit Oriented Development in the Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood

Whereas the City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department (CPED) has indicated its intention to promote extensive new real estate development in the area surrounding the Cedar Avenue Station of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit and

Whereas CPED intends to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) from developers for a site which includes publicly owned parking behind the Red Sea Restaurant (Lot A) and adjacent property owned by Hennepin County and

Whereas development on this site and other station area sites will have a profound impact on existing businesses and residents of Cedar-Riverside and

Whereas the loss of public parking on Lot A will have an especially profound negative effect on the many businesses that rely on it and

Whereas the City's Small Area Plan calls for replacement of public parking on this site but provides no specific criteria to ensure that adequate replacement is provided and

Whereas there has been no public community process to determine public purpose, development objectives and development proposal review criteria for Cedar-Riverside,

Therefore let it be resolved that the Executive Committee and Members of the West Bank Business Association calls on CPED to:

- a) postpone any issuance of an RFP on Lot A or any other transit oriented development site in Cedar-Riverside until the community has an opportunity to discuss and approve redevelopment objectives and development proposal review criteria
- b) Enter into discussions and negotiations with the community through the West Bank Community Coalition and the West Bank Business Association about the public purposes, objectives, and criteria the city will adopt for new development in Cedar-Riverside
- c) Include the criteria generated by the community in the issuance of RFPs and selection of development proposals
- d) Ensure meaningful participation of the Cedar-Riverside / West Bank community in drafting RFP language and selecting development proposals
- e) Incorporate enforcement of community generated criteria in any Contract for Private Redevelopment entered into as a result of the RFP process.