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**City Council**

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Dear President Erwin, members of the Park Board, Superintendent Miller, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Staff Partners, Bruce Chamberlain, and Mary deLaittre:

Thank you for your leadership in the successful RiverFIRST project and acknowledging the importance of the 5.5-mile stretch of one of the three greatest rivers in the world, the Mississippi River.

The riverfront provides a unique opportunity in our city to focus our attention to the birthplace of Minneapolis, to acknowledge the historic importance to our region, to preserve and improve the rich ecological and environmental systems. It is an opportunity to connect our rich past and our future.

I support the report and the recommendations to the board that recognize the importance of revitalizing challenged, and underutilized sites in our city such as the Fairview Park expansion to the river, and the upper harbor terminal. Careful analysis of such areas in order to add vitality, living wage job opportunities, and an expansion of our tax base for support of parks and city services needs to be pursued and evaluated as another means to revitalize and reshape this area of our city.

I congratulate the Parks Board's decision to purchase the former Scherer Lumber Company site recognizing the potential of the site in relationship to the Boom Island Park, BF Nelson Parks, and the opportunity to connect our Northeast community to both parks. The priority of continuing the trails past Graco Corporation's International Headquarters, and the newest park in the Minneapolis Park System, the Sheridan Memorial Park, will encourage additional bikers and walkers and an increase of the parks riverfront.

The former Scherer Brothers site is the most, "project ready," with the advance work of the Park Board to secure funding for clean up and trail connections. However the realistic, economic, and practical needs of the community need to be coupled with the pictures of the ideal.

As a gentle reminder, the former Scherer Brothers site, BF Nelson and Boom Island Parks are located in successful residential and commercial nodes that enjoy the respect of the combination of ecological, residential, commercial, and recreational functions coexisting and thriving. The community would expect no less in the



future. I can not stress the importance to the economic commitment that has been made by the residents and businesses of this area. I am committed to work with the Park Board, their staff, our businesses, and our residential community toward mutual success in the future of this area.

The Park Board has kept in balance the residential and ecological needs carefully in order to find a balance that does not affect the city and neighborhood's commitment to family housing supported by passive park usage.

As stewards of our great riverfront, a riverfront that birthed a great city, I thank you for helping us redefine ourselves through our riverfront. It is the flyer-over zone for thousands of migratory animals and it is our namesake. In all of our collective work, we are defining our legacy. It is our string of pearls, our connection to the rest of the world.

The St. Anthony Falls area holds historic, natural and economic potential and integral in the context of the project planning area. To separate and or ignore the unique sites in the city and the world would be a mistake. The most recent designation of the Pillsbury A Mill as one of the 11 most endangered historic buildings in the United States has added national significance to the development of the Mill District area. It is the historic equivalent of Mount Vernon. Redevelopment proposals are actively engaging with our interested partners: the National Parks Service, the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, the University of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota District Alliance, our Neighborhoods, the city of Minneapolis, and the Minneapolis Park Board in order to insure the full potential of our great riverfront.

As our future unfolds, I ask, again, that we all commit to the exceptional and not the expedient, never forgetting our legacy, significance, and potential of this unprecedented opportunity.

I thank each of you and pledge my support to work toward a Riverfront that wows with natural wonder, is a place to reflect in the quiet that only our natural environment can supply, that encourages us to look up to the sky that we share with world, and welcome the glory that is accomplished by thoughtful decisions.

Sincerely,



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