

March 16, 2007

Council President Barbara Johnson Minneapolis City Council City Hall 350 South 5th Street, Room 307 Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Council President Johnson:

Thank you very much for meeting with me last week to discuss the Minneapolis stadium development project in Downtown East. The Vikings organization is greatly appreciative of your work and leadership on the redevelopment project and in trying to retain the Vikings in Minneapolis.

I am writing to appeal to you to intervene and prevent the City-owned Downtown East (DTE) parking ramp from being sold in the public auction that is underway. In discussions with City staff last fall, we had been advised that it was possible for the City to withdraw this ramp from the auction in order to determine the best course of action and weigh the impacts and cost-benefits of potentially selling this property at this time. It is also our understanding that all bidders on the DTE ramp were notified that this parcel was potentially to be included in a broader redevelopment plan and that the property could be withdrawn from the auction.

The Vikings ownership and organization have strong concerns about this issue, and we believe that the DTE ramp must be withdrawn from the auction for the following reasons:

- 1. As you know, the DTE ramp is the underground parking lot beneath the DTE light rail stop. This property is an <u>integral part</u> of the proposed redevelopment of the entire DTE area, a project on which we are collaborating with the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission (MSFC). The Vikings organization is prepared to make a significant investment in this project, if we can be assured that it is on track.
- 2. We are in the process of seeking federal dollars to support the major redevelopment of the DTE light rail stop, which is the connecting point for the current Hiawatha and future Central Corridor light rail lines. The project plans are to develop this light rail stop into a Winter Garden transit station and multimodal hub a dramatic new indoor station that will be the heart and soul of the DTE redevelopment. Transferring the DTE ramp to a private entity would jeopardize any federal or other public transportation dollars that may be available to assist the development of this LRT station.



- Inserting another developer into this scenario at this time would increase the
 risk and difficulty in making this project work economically. As the Twins land
 disagreement has shown, it could also significantly delay the redevelopment
 project.
- 4. Selling the property to another developer could drive up the project costs for everyone involved. Such added costs could impact the degree and willingness of the Vikings to invest in this project.
- 5. Removing the property from the auction will not cause any loss in value of the property. We propose that the property sale be deferred until the project parameters can be determined and the impact on all partners is known.

This is an extremely important issue to the success of this project, and we ask that you intervene and provide assistance where you can. Please contact me with questions or to discuss this issue further. Again, we are grateful for the partnership and friendship that you and the City of Minneapolis have extended to my family and the Vikings organization. Thank you for your assistance on this matter.

Sincerely,

Z∕ygi Waif Owner/Chairman

cc: Congressman Jim Oberstar

Mayor R.T. Rybak

Met Council Chair Peter Bell MSFC Chair Roy Terwilliger CPED Director Lee Sheehy