



*Protecting, restoring and enhancing the metro
Mississippi River and its watershed since 1993.*

106 W. Water St., Ste. 600 | St. Paul MN 55107-2032
(651) 222-2193 | fmr.org | info@fmr.org

February 6, 2025

Dear Commissioners of the Zoning Committee:

On behalf of Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR), I appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns about the Determination of Similar Use for 560 Randolph Avenue.

FMR supports the West 7th/Fort Road Federation's appeal of this determination. FMR is particularly concerned by the city's determination that the proposed FCC truck facility is consistent with St. Paul's Comprehensive Plan. Long-established plans that are official addenda to the 2040 Plan clearly state intentions for this site to be redeveloped differently.

Two of the items on the Zoning Committee's February 13 meeting agenda display the same pattern: city disregard for neighborhood and riverfront plans that guide specific Mississippi riverfront sites to be redeveloped as mixed-use, people-oriented, and walkable.

City staff have apparently decided that these plans—developed with extensive community engagement and included as 2040 Plan addenda—are no longer valid, but without consulting the district councils involved in their creation. For both of these properties, the city is recommending industrial development that perpetuates environmental injustice and a disconnect between residents and the Mississippi River.

Conflict with Great River Passage Plan

Over the years, many city plans have affirmed the intention for the 560 Randolph site and the surrounding area to be redeveloped into mixed-use neighborhood node that enhances walkability, transit, and access to the Mississippi River.

The Great River Passage Plan, adopted by the city in 2013, maps 560 Randolph and the surrounding parcels as intended for “river-oriented redevelopment opportunities.” The plan states, “Utilize redevelopment to link the West 7th Street corridor to the river: Redevelopment of Island Station and the ADM site will provide a major missing piece to provide public access to and along the river between downtown and the Valley reach” (p. 67).

The Waterford Bay redevelopment at the former Island Station power plant site already represents a broken commitment to the neighborhood. The city did not seek to carry out the Great River Passage Plan vision for that site and in fact failed to secure even the minimal public land on that site that we were told it would when the Waterford Bay project was being planned. (A site that should have been an inviting neighborhood river access point is now a privately owned kayak launch to which the property managers have at times refused the promised public access.)

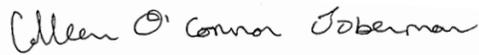
Now, the neighborhood is being asked to give up on yet another documented opportunity for a less industrial river area. The city's failure to account for these established community is disappointing.

It seems that city staff and leaders have changed their vision for this property without discussing it with the neighborhood. It is our understanding that the city and FCC rebuffed requests from the West 7th/Fort Road Federation to discuss the proposed project for at least five months before finally meeting with the neighborhood in December. Given that the city was well aware of this proposal months before that, it's unjust that the neighborhood was not.

Given this context, we urge you to grant the Appeal of Determination of Similar Use by finding that the proposed use is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

For the river,



Colleen O'Connor Toberman
Land Use & Planning Director