



*Working to protect the Mississippi River
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area.*

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October 5, 2020

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Alter Logistics/TKDA's request for a comprehensive plan amendment and rezoning for PID #36-03900-10-011. We encourage the city to deny the request to change the land use steering and zoning for the eastern portion of the site.

Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR) is a non-profit organization with a mission to engage community members and other stakeholders to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region. We represent thousands of people in the metropolitan area who care deeply about the river, including a growing membership of over 2,700 people and more than 3,200 volunteers and 2,000 advocates engaged each year.

We find it reasonable for the city grant the rezoning request for the western portion of the property in line with both the current land use and the comprehensive plan's future land use. However, we encourage the city to deny Alter/TKDA's request for a comprehensive plan amendment and rezoning of its eastern section (the portion currently zoned NRDD) along the Mississippi River. Much of this area is designated as a "significant existing vegetative stand" in the city's 2040 Plan and merits a land use aligned with this designation.

This undeveloped riverfront parcel provides valuable wildlife habitat and water quality functions. It also enhances visitor enjoyment of Kaposia Landing—a crown jewel the city has worked hard to create—at a time when we understand more than ever the benefits of parks and open space.

Maintaining the steering towards open space and the NRDD zoning does not hinder Alter's current or planned uses of the property. The current designation is properly aligned with the goals in the city's Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area chapter of its 2040 Plan to protect significant existing vegetative stands and other Primary Conservation Areas. Maintaining this status ensures long-term protections for our great river's shoreline as we face increasingly challenging environmental threats.

Should the city approve a comprehensive plan amendment and zoning change for the eastern portion of the property, FMR strongly supports a permanent conservation easement for the shoreline and the boundary with Kaposia Landing. FMR's staff ecologists and water quality experts agree that a 300-

foot buffer is the ideal standard for securing strong habitat and water quality benefits. Therefore we recommend a 300-foot easement as part of any agreement to amend the city's comprehensive plan.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colleen O'Connor Toberman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light grey rectangular highlight behind it.

Colleen O'Connor Toberman
River Corridor Director