

November 13, 2019

It is difficult to write this letter but it is even more difficult to continue to be part a process that we do not believe supports the best interest of the community at large. Everyone gets to choose how they participate in community life - what is the best way for them to make a difference at this precise moment in time. We believe that resigning from the Collaborative Planning Committee (CPC) is what is best for us.

We hope that you will take the time to read and reflect on what we have to say. Our intent is not to judge but to highlight concerns we that have about the CPC and the ongoing Upper Harbor Terminal development.

### Introduction

The CPC, initiated by Council Member Phillipe Cunningham, is part of a strategy to engage community residents in a collaborative and co-creative process around the economic, cultural and physical development of the Upper Harbor Site. We believe that the original intent of this committee was to provide opportunities for residents and community members to be a part of the development process in their community - to have a share of the power in determining what is best for their community, to bake equity into the process and the project.

We firmly acknowledge that this process is difficult, messy and challenging. It is not something that we have done before in Minneapolis and this project would be the first.

The Upper Harbor Terminal project is a once in a generation opportunity for residents of North Minneapolis. How can the redevelopment of an existing industrial site create economic, social, health and environmental benefits for a community allowed to languish for decades? For the City of Minneapolis, it is an opportunity to demonstrate how a truly equitable and inclusive development strategy could be developed and implemented.

To be successful in this endeavor we have to understand the present and historical context we are working in. Minneapolis has a strong history of racial and ethnic disparities; institutional racism exists in the systems and structures we will and are working in. Significant racial and ethnic disparities persist in our city and we must no matter how difficult keep them at the forefront of our work if we are to have any success in changing them.

The data below is taken from The City of Minneapolis 2040 Plan (the recently adopted comprehensive plan for the city).

### Income

*"White Non-Hispanic and Asian households have increases in household income since 2000, while black households have experienced an approximately 40% decrease in income."*

City of Minneapolis 2040 plan

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates the median income in 2016 dollars for people in Minneapolis identifying as **White Non-Hispanic** was **\$65,438***

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates the median income in 2016 dollars for people in Minneapolis identifying as **Black or African American** was **\$20,871***

### Poverty

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates 44.5% of people in Minneapolis identifying as Black or African American had incomes below the Poverty Line.*

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates 33.1% of people in Minneapolis identifying as American Indian or Alaskan Native had incomes below the Poverty Line.*

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates 12.4% of people in Minneapolis identifying as White Non-Hispanic had incomes below the Poverty Line.*

### Housing

Cost Burdened 2010-2014 Hud Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Estimate

**32% of African American households were severely cost burdened spending 30%-50% of their incomes on Housing Cost.**

**24% of American Indian or Alaskan Native households were severely cost burdened spending 30%-50% of their incomes on Housing costs.**

**14% of White Non-Hispanic households were severely cost burdened spending 30%-50% of their incomes on Housing Costs.**

*Hud Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Estimate*

### Education

Attainment of more than a High School Diploma

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates 83.4% of people in Minneapolis identifying as White Non-Hispanic had attained more than a High School Diploma.*

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates 47.8% of people in Minneapolis identifying as Black or African-American had attained more than a High School Diploma.*

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates 45.8% of people in Minneapolis identifying as American Indian or Alaskan Native had attained more than a High School Diploma.*

*For the years 2012-2016 the American Community Survey estimates 32.6% of people in Minneapolis identifying as Hispanic or Latino had attained more than a High School Diploma.*

### Community Development not Real Estate Development

A fundamental challenge to the city's goals of equity and inclusivity for the UHT development is its grounding in a market based real estate development process. Real estate development is an extractive wealth building process. It must engage a capitalist system that is not now nor has it ever been equitable. The 48 acres of land that constitute the UHT development is currently owned by the City of Minneapolis. The decision to sell the land to a private developer perpetuates the existing and historic wealth disparities in the city and the state. Land ownership in the United States has always been a generator of wealth. The transfer of this asset from public to private hands is a long-term economic benefit for largely white companies and individuals outside of North Minneapolis.

This project is about much more than physical development. By challenging racial inequities, fostering inclusive economic systems, prioritizing environmental sustainability, providing affordable housing (below 30% AMI) and developing full time living wage jobs we can positively impact people's lives and move towards a more equitable future for the residents of North Minneapolis.

A process that truly prioritized equity and inclusivity would have an integrated approach and plan. The economic, social, cultural, health and environmental needs of the northside community would come first. Serious time and resources would be put into establishing **with** the community what those needs are with bench marks and outcomes developed, processes and strategies put in place. All of this would happen **before** the physical design of the site.

Unfortunately, the UHT process has taken the opposite approach. We continue to focus on the physical development instead of the social and economic needs of the community. That fact that we can still not articulate what is a real process and strategy to bring living wage jobs to the site in Phase I or how we tackle the reality that 30% AMI is still too high for a significant number of community residents is discouraging. Those issues and solutions should come before road alignment or development parcels.

In the community development world this community centered, holistic and long-term process is at the cutting edge. Cities and communities across the country are deploying it. A short list of projects underway or in development who have all embraced this approach are:

The Atlanta Beltline, The Underline in Miami Fl, 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Park in DC, Chouteau Greenway in St. Louis, Mo, The Dudley Street Initiative in Roxbury Ma and Market Creek Plaza in San Diego Ca.

#### Conclusion

In recent weeks it has become painfully clear that the goal of producing a physical plan trumps all greater social, economic, environmental and community realities. Any reasoned objections or concerns to this process which is no longer collaborative and being driven by the City not the community is labeled as obstructionist.

The CPC has become much more of an advisory committee with members reacting to the city's direction, not helping to shape that direction. In our view this project can not achieve its lofty goals of equity and inclusivity with a mostly top down structure that does not share power and is unwilling to consider alternate strategies or timelines to get the work done.

As we stated in our opening, this is a difficult and messy process. It takes commitment to do it differently and time and resources to carry that commitment out.

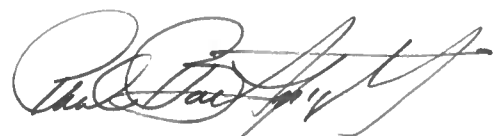
Right now, the CPC process has no ability to engage residents deeply in the development of their community and construct equitable strategies and outcomes. UHT has become a traditional dominant society real estate development project not a community development project. As it marches towards the city's deadline for the completion of the coordinated plan, we have made the decision that we will not be a part of that inequitable process.

It has been a pleasure to serve with all of you and we wish you the best as you continue to do what you think is best.

Regards



Tessa Anttila



Paul Bauknight