

September 4, 2020



McKINLEY PARK
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

Dear McKinley Park Friends,

In the recent days and weeks there has been major news concerning the development of buildings within the Central Manufacturing District (CMD) along Pershing Road in the McKinley Park Neighborhood. The McKinley Park Development Council (MPDC) believes that revitalization and modernization of the CMD is a critical component in helping to strengthen the neighborhood and its residents. The desire for the district to be brought into the 21st century has been reiterated multiple times across the many public meetings, neighborhood outreach events, and surveys conducted during the efforts to develop the neighborhood plan. Recommendations for the buildings include light industrial usage, green and non-intensive manufacturing, and mixed use housing opportunities.

It's unfortunate, but understandable that the most recent proposal of creating affordable housing opportunities in two of the buildings has been stopped due to environmental and public health concerns presented to the Department of Housing. The MPDC believes that every resident, current and future, has the right to live in an area where the environmental impacts of industrial properties minimally impact their health and wellbeing.

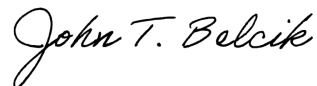
The MPDC supports the proposed solution of moving a polluting business, as the city is proposing for the MAT Asphalt Company, as a way to facilitate the proposed residential development of the CMD. Additionally, in the broader area, yet still within the CMD, there are several other businesses that produce pollutants at similar or higher levels than the asphalt plant. The MPCD believes that the asphalt plant and all such heavy industry in the area be examined for their current public health impact and the environmental justice implications of their continued, status quo operation in our predominantly people of color and working class neighborhood. Tighter regulation and updated environmental policies and standards should be implemented and emitters held accountable when they violate those ordinances.

Businesses should be required to upgrade their current operations with the latest technology to meet and exceed pollution and emission reduction standards for their activities, including all aspects of the manufacturing and transportation processes. If these polluters cannot exceed the environmental standards when then are in close proximity to a residential area, they should be relocated to an area that is adequately zoned for their use, but also has a sufficient buffer of transitional zoning or landscape features between the areas zoned for manufacturing and residential usages.

The Development Council is not advocating for a complete shutdown of all industrial activities in the CMD. As the area has a rich history as a manufacturing hub and significant job source for the neighborhood. We are, however, advocating for the tighter regulation of those industries where possible, movement of industries causing negative health impacts to an area where their impacts will be minimal to non-existent, and a modernization of the CMD. Our advocacy of these things is an effort to help bring the CMD, and by extension McKinley Park, into the 21st Century.

The future of the CMD and McKinley Park at large should be a mixed use future. This future would include a mix of residential affordable housing options and sustainable, green, and environmentally low impact businesses. These two features, along with many others, were highlighted by many residents during the creation of the neighborhood plan. By modernizing the CMD with these resident driven recommendations, it can continue to serve as a manufacturing hub and job source as it has for the last 120 years while simultaneously reducing its impacts on nearby residents' health and help secure the affordability of the neighborhood for its residents for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Belcik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Belcik
President, MPDC