

# RAILROAD ISLAND COMMUNITY TASK FORCE . . . . . . On the Right Track for Change

Recognized by District 5, Railroad Island Task Force is a Task Force of neighbors working together to revitalize Railroad Island.

February 14, 2013

Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Committee  
C/O John McCarthy, City of Saint Paul

Dear CIB Committee Members,

The Railroad Island Task Force (RRITF) wishes to submit a letter of support for Merrick Community Services and its CIB proposal for a new community center. The RRITF has endorsed Merrick and its programs and services over the years and continues to do so. Merrick has been an essential part of the community for over 100 years, providing a safety net for many people in need and transition. The RRITF members are very pleased Merrick has plans to expand and continue its services in Railroad Island.

The small Railroad Island community has faced significant ongoing adversity: the highest poverty levels in the region (50%), unemployment rates around 20%, and less than 25% of the households have high school education. Merrick services are vital in providing for the basic needs of residents and a positive presence in our community.

Merrick has provided needed programs and services to the elderly, families, and young children. The Railroad Island Task Force has identified unmet community needs in our area. We see a clear need for expanded programs to effectively serve youth ages 14-18. There have been outbreaks of violence and neighborhood disturbances that could be curtailed with effective programs and supervised activities. The youth need services that offer positive activities and they also need a supervised place to “hang out” after school and on weekends. The summer months are particularly challenging for the youth due to lack of things to do or a place to go. The Railroad Task Force looks forward to supporting Merrick Community Services as they expand both their facilities and programming to meet these important needs. This CIB proposal will significantly help our local community build this capacity to serve all residents and we strongly support this request.

RRITF’s primary purpose is to revitalize Railroad Island and Merrick is an essential part of our future in making it a more vibrant community.

Sincerely,

Linda Arnesen, Chair

cc  
Daniel Rodriguez, MCS  
Amy Brendmoen, City Council Member  
Kathy Lantry, City Council Chair  
Dan Bostrom, ward 6  
Dave Thune, Ward 2  
Chris Coleman, Mayor  
Leslie McMurray, D5 Director  
Al Oertwig, D5 Board of Directors President