



PANGEA WORLD THEATER

Honoring our circle of many realities

June 14th, 2015

Dear Ways and Means Council Members,

Please stand with the residents of East Phillips, who have emphatically and repeatedly stated their opposition to the proposed water yard at the current Roof Depot site.

We, Pangea World Theater, stand in solidarity saying NO to more concentrated pollution in neighborhoods and YES to environmental justice and creative community leadership. The mission of our theater is ‘to illuminate the human condition, celebrate cultural differences, and promote human rights by creating and presenting international, multi-disciplinary theater’.

We care about the future of this neighborhood-- for us this is a matter of human rights. The work we create with diverse communities in the Phillips neighborhood and those communities that border the area tell us that more pollution-bringing industry, without a community benefits agreement, would not support health. As artists who are entering the field of community development and who are invested in the creative economic vitalization of this area, we request transparency of process and for the city to desist from building a water yard in the area.

We firmly believe the City’s attempt to relocate the water yard to our overburdened neighborhood violates the City’s own comprehensive plan. The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth states that “Through promoting and protecting the civil rights of the citizens of Minneapolis, sources of environmental pollution will not be concentrated in neighborhoods of one race or ethnicity, near sensitive populations, or in economically disadvantaged areas.” But by putting the wateryard in East Phillips, the City would be further concentrating air pollution and negatively impacting our air quality by adding more heavy truck traffic to our already environmentally challenged community – an area which is also designated as a Racially Concentrated Area of Poverty according to the MetCouncil. We are ground zero of the notorious Arsenic Triangle, we cannot bear the burden of any more pollution. The city’s comprehensive plan also designates this area as an Industrial Employment District, yet the water yard would not provide jobs for the area residents who are supposed to benefit from this zoning designation - ostensibly intended to offset the negative impacts of increased pollution.

For the residents of East Phillips, this is an issue of not just environmental justice, but of environmental racism. Historically, East Phillips has been asked time and again to bear the brunt of Minneapolis' industrial air and soil pollution. The families and children in this community deserve better from our current elected officials.

The community of East Phillips has spoken. We will not accept the water yard at this location. The City Council is tasked with carrying out the will of the residents. We ask that you please stand with the East Phillips community by voting against the staff recommendation to begin negotiating the purchase price of the current Roof Depot site at 1860 28th St E and 2717 Longfellow Ave.

Sincerely,

Pangea World Theater