

Memorandum

TO: Mellon Arena Interested Parties **DATE:** August 2, 2010
FROM: Timothy G. Zinn, Project Manager **SUBJECT:** Options Report—Preferred
Alternative

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify issues raised during Interested Parties Meeting #7 and again in Meeting #8 regarding the selection of a “Preferred Alternative” in the May 2010 Development Options Comparison Draft Report and in the July 2010 revised draft report.

1. Process. The Options Report was prepared to summarize the alternatives development and analysis process Baker and the SEA employed. Although the proposed project does not involve a federal action, Baker and the SEA chose to use decision-making procedures that are modeled on two federal laws, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The NEPA process involves the development of a Purpose and Needs Statement for the proposed project, against which alternatives are then evaluated on their ability to meet the identified needs. The Section 106 process involves consultation to identify historic properties, evaluate effects on those properties, and resolve adverse effects. Baker and SEA voluntarily incorporated those elements of NEPA review and Section 106 consultation to provide a structure for the decision-making process. This approach was deemed appropriate because of the site’s history (being one of the city’s most controversial urban redevelopment projects of the 1950 and 1960s), the fact that the building is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and because of several prior agreements and on-going planning efforts within the Hill District community that involve the arena and its 28-acre site.

2. Preferred Alternative. Based on the needs as identified through this process and the economic studies provided by the Pittsburgh Penguins and Oxford-Chester, Baker’s project team identified Option 5 as the recommended preferred alternative, as indicated in the first and second draft versions of the Options Report. The Interested parties participated in the development of the purpose and needs statement used in part by Baker to reach this recommendation to the Authority. The Interested Parties did not - nor were they asked to – determine the Purpose and Need or select Option 5 as their preferred alternative. As both versions of the report were issued in draft, the recommendation of a preferred alternative was not intended to end the Interested Party process and dialog and of course, no matter the recommendation by Baker, the final selection of a preferred alternative is the prerogative of the Authority’s board.