



Dear committee members,

We write today to express our concerns with the proposed Upper Harbor Terminal Community Performing Arts Center (CPAC) bonding request that is being considered by the Legislature. We do not believe that the CPAC will be a true public asset, and we oppose public funding for its design and construction. We ask for your support in opposing HF2105, HF 2106, and SF 2208, which seek \$2 million in bonds to design the CPAC.

The Upper Harbor Terminal is a once in-a-generation opportunity for community development that centers the goals of area residents, creates inclusive economic development, reduces racial disparities, embraces the Mississippi River as a community asset and advances environmental sustainability. Our organizations have been active participants in the planning process because we know that the major investments in riverfront parks and trails and adjacent redevelopment of former industrial land have the potential to create a vibrant community amenity and set a high standard for community-driven redevelopment.

Rather than live up to this potential, however, the current concept plan prioritizes private development over truly accessible, high-quality public amenities. There has been widespread community opposition to the CPAC because it is not a strategy for true community prosperity and equity. We are disappointed that the development team has presented only a single plan and the community has not had the opportunity to explore and contrast the merits, costs, and benefits of alternatives. The CPAC entertainment venue will be an enormous public investment resulting largely in private wealth for its operators (First Avenue), rather than wealth-building for the community at large. This is not a plan deserving of public bonds.

We also believe that the proposed design work is premature because community engagement is not yet complete. Most community engagement for the project took place after a development team had been selected and a single concept plan created, at which point the community was invited to give feedback only on that one plan. Some residents and business owners immediately adjacent to the site have told us that they were not contacted at all during the engagement process.

We appreciate that the Minneapolis City Council has amended the concept plan to allow for more community engagement in the planning process. However, we still believe that the design of this process, including allowing just 60 days for a committee of community volunteers to create alternative development scenarios, does not offer sufficient genuine opportunities for community input. And if the community does bring forward alternatives to the current CPAC design, any bonding funds committed may not be usable, or worse, might be spent on a concept that falls by the wayside.

Our organizations share a vision for innovative, community-centered equitable development on this site. We believe that there is a better route forward to creating a project that delivers true community prosperity through community ownership, affordable housing and commercial space, well-paying career opportunities, and world-class natural and recreational amenities. We're open to a different version of performing arts center that is owned and operated by a public or nonprofit entity (rather than First Avenue as listed in the current concept plan). This vision would still require public investment, but that investment would build equity and community wealth. Over the past several months we have been working together to bring to life a community participation process that gives more neighbors the opportunity to participate in the Upper Harbor Terminal planning process and develop creative, community-centered development ideas.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you, North Minneapolis residents and the Minneapolis City Council to develop an Upper Harbor Terminal project that delivers community prosperity. We ask that you not provide bonding funds to the current First-Avenue operated CPAC concept that lacks community support, does not advance the public interest, and is not ready for the design phase. We look forward to working with you, the city of Minneapolis, and the Northside community to advance a better plan for Upper Harbor Terminal.

In partnership,

Whitney Clark, Executive Director, Friends of the Mississippi River

Kyle Samejima, Executive Director, Minneapolis Climate Action

Michael Chaney, Founder, Project Sweetie Pie