



Jordan Area Community Council (JACC)
*We organize people, knowledge and capital
for the collective empowerment of Jordan Neighborhood*

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May 5, 2020

To: Chair Senator David H. Senjem, Vice Chair Senator Scott J. Newman, Minnesota Senate Capital Investment Committee, Senator Kari Dziedzic, Representative Fue Lee, Representative Raymond Dehn, Representative Mohamud Noor, Representative Sydney Jordan

From: Audua Pugh, Board Chair, on behalf of Jordan Area Community Council (JACC)

Re: JACC Opposes State Bonding Funds for First Avenue's Concert Venue at Upper Harbor Terminal

Jordan Area Community Council (JACC) is a non-profit, citizen participation organization for the Jordan Neighborhood. Since 1964, JACC's mission is to organize people, knowledge, and capital for the collective empowerment of the Jordan Neighborhood in North Minneapolis.

JACC appreciates the opportunity to comment and address the City of Minneapolis' request for \$20 million in state bonds to design and construct First Avenue's concert venue at Upper Harbor Terminal. At our JACC Board of Directors meeting that took place on Thursday, April 16, 2020, the Board discussed the Upper Harbor Terminal concert venue and voted on a resolution stating the following, "this project is too risky and delivers insufficient public benefits to merit state bonding at this time." As a result, we urge you to oppose state bonding funds from going to design and construct First Avenue's concert venue at Upper Harbor Terminal.

A year ago, providing \$20 million dollars in state bonding to develop a music venue in North Minneapolis that would only provide seasonal part-time minimum wage jobs made little sense. It continues to be unwise to fund this project, in the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shown how inequitable our current economic system is and how Black and Brown people are disproportionately impacted by the virus from a health and economic standpoint. North Minneapolis residents will struggle more now and, in the future, due to the virus. So why would the legislature provide bonding to a project that will not create living wage jobs?

The proposal for the concert venue continues to support a racist trickle-down economic strategy that will create wealth for the owner of First Avenue with minimal to no real economic impact for residents of North Minneapolis. As we can see jobs in the service, retail, and hospitality industries in the best of times are not enough to provide economic security and are even less so in a crisis.

Moreover, the proposed bonding request does not prioritize the economic, social, cultural, and primary health needs of the Northside and is unacceptable. Nor does it address long standing racial disparities and inequities in our state. It's important that

we ensure that redevelopment will provide equitable benefits to community members rather than allowing private interests to take the lead and reap the majority of the benefits on publicly-owned property. The design and engagement process for this project has been essentially developer-driven. As evidenced in the designs and presentations, the focal point of this real-estate development project along North Minneapolis' riverfront is the proposed First Avenue concert venue as the singular driver and primary resource to leverage surrounding development. Northside residents deserve the opportunity to be a part of any benefits that are realized in this real-estate development project that will provide positive real life impacts for local residents, such as providing long-lasting, deep affordable housing, incorporates responsible environmental practices and active-living amenities, encourages inclusive economic development opportunities, and does not displace marginalized community members.

In conclusion, the redevelopment of this city-owned site can better connect residents with the Mississippi River and be a model of community investment and wealth building. By opposing bonding for this project, the community will be allowed to push for a strategy and process to deliver a truly equitable development; one that focuses on and delivers community ownership and wealth building. The Upper Harbor project needs a reset to provide the kind of real life changing economic opportunities that are so essential for Northside residents.

Thank you for your efforts and consideration.

Respectfully,

Audua Pugh, Board Chair, on behalf of Jordan Area Community Council (JACC)