



March 16, 2021

Dear members of the House Capital Investment Committee,

**We are writing this letter to share LISC's support for the bonding request of FAWK** and to articulate the importance an Asian-led arts center will be for St. Paul and Minnesota. Through our work supporting the cultural districts of the Twin Cities metro, including East Side St. Paul, we recognize how critical projects such as this can be to their local communities. This refers to not only the financial boost, but also the positive impact on livability as well. We know FAWK through their work in our communities and are proud of the critical accolades their lead team has received. They would be an excellent partner in connecting this project with the community and executing creative programming. This project is timely, for a variety of reasons:

**Economic Development and Creative Placemaking is critical in 2021.**

At LISC Twin Cities, Creative Placemaking is our main approach to Economic Development, and we recognize the critical role the arts play in the Minnesota ecosystem. Last year's hardships to Twin Cities businesses-between the uprising and the pandemic-are only the beginning of what will be a long recovery. Theatres and venues were among the first to close and will be among the last to open. As the economy fully re-opens, LISC is working alongside elected officials to "build back better." Supporting a project such as this one, the first ever of its kind in Minnesota, is a fantastic way to do just that. And it will be a bit step toward fixing an equity gap we currently have in our creative economy.

As demonstrated in repeated studies, surveys, and demographic reports – Asian Americans are under-represented in Minnesota's creative sector, particularly in theatre and the performing arts.

LISC is prepared to support this effort in partnership with the state of Minnesota. FAWK and organizers will have access to our collaborative cohort of cultural districts, and as this project progresses, may be eligible for real estate feasibility funding as well. Our Creative Placemaking team also helps with technical assistance for cultural organizations doing community planning work in their district. We hope that you will join us in supporting this ambitious and momentous proposal that will be a humorous, creative, and timely space, especially for the Asian-American community in Minnesota.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JS", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Jamie Schumacher  
*APO Creative Placemaking and Lending*  
LISC Twin Cities  
[jschumacher@lisc.org](mailto:jschumacher@lisc.org)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter J. McLaughlin", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Peter McLaughlin  
*Executive Director*  
LISC Twin Cities  
[pmclaughlin@lisc.org](mailto:pmclaughlin@lisc.org)