

April 25, 2021

Honorable Ilhan Omar  
United States House of Representatives  
1730 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Rep. Omar,

On behalf of the Minneapolis Parks Foundation I am writing to ask you to include North Commons Park within the community project funding proposals for Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District.

Parks and the public realm are deeply connected to the health and well-being of Minneapolis and are critical civic assets that define and bond communities. North Commons Park is a rare gem that serves the most vibrant, yet continually under-resourced neighborhood in Minnesota. The future of North Commons Park will help bring new resources and healthy benefits to the community.

The importance of North Commons Park reaches back generations. North Minneapolis families have learned to swim in the park, connected to youth programming, and held space for formal and informal community gatherings. Parks like North Commons are nearly impossible to create over night because they need decades of memories and experiences generated over time. It has become the heart and soul of the neighborhood.

As the community in North Minneapolis begins to envision the future of North Commons Park in partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, funding is needed to realize that vision. Your decision to include North Commons Park funding in the community project funding proposals for Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District will help a truly community-driven effort to succeed and meet the aspirations of the community for generations to follow.

No other project in Minneapolis is better situated for the moment we are facing as a city and a nation. As a partner with the community and the Park Board, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation is honored to help bring this vision to reality and we hope you consider it as important to our city as we do. Lives will be transformed for the better through this vision

Thank you for your service and attention.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Evers".

Tom Evers  
Executive Director  
Minneapolis Parks Foundation  
[tevers@mplsparksfoundation.org](mailto:tevers@mplsparksfoundation.org)  
(612) 822-2656

The Honorable Ilhan Omar  
United States House of Representatives  
1730 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Monday, 26 April 2021

Re: Letter of Support from Seeds To Harvest Service Coalition regarding North Commons Park Development in North Minneapolis

Congresswoman Omar,

How are you doing? Thanks again for considering supporting this amazing effort pushed by community members in partnership with the Minneapolis Park Board.

The Seeds To Harvest Service Coalition, a coalition of 51 community organizations and initiatives which have formed to serve its community through these challenging times, proudly support the North Commons Park Development Project. We believe with your support in Congress, we're well on our way to building a more equitable community and park system for our youth and families!

As you know for 8-plus years, several of your constituents and I have been working to reimagine and redevelop North Commons Park as a campus with the potential to attract people from all across the Upper Midwest to learn, work and connect with us in North Minneapolis. This vision enables our community to showcase our talents; to provide a safe space for tens of thousands of our youth to play and learn in our community; and extend warm hospitality for hundreds of thousands of visitors join us here on the Northside.

This model utilizes recreational campuses to spark economic development and is integral to reversing the tide of decades of disinvestment and stagnant opportunity in North Minneapolis. The North Commons project follows a several successful models demonstrated in other parts of the country including the East Lake project in Atlanta and the Negro Baseball Hall of Fame in Kansas City. The time has come to step up and amplify the successes of this model here in Minnesota!

Letter of Support from Seeds To Harvest Service Coalition regarding North Commons Park Development in North Minneapolis

There was a reason Governor Walz selected this project as one of the highlights of the last bonding session in Minnesota. We are proud to put this project up as a North Star for our district with hopes to bring the community closer together and invite new friends from across the region.

The park's design spans 26 acres, in perspective; the Twins stadium in the North Loop spans 11 acres. In reimagining the community center, multiple floors will provide community partners a unique recreation and educational experience for all visitors and participants. The attached fieldhouse will host large events year round attracting hundreds of thousands to the West Broadway corridor each year which should ignite an amazing culinary, retail and cultural development projects along the corridor. Yes, this project helps create jobs and wealth.

We've gained great momentum in a short amount of time. We believe this is a grand opportunity to create an amazing economic opportunity through this concept.

Our Service Coalition believe in this project and the potential of this community that since last May, we have committed over 12,000 hours and reached over 23,600 community members to improve our area for the opportunity in the face of the on-going tragedies damaging our community. Please note, our young Northside Bulldogs - community youth ages 10 to 16, are the base of our service team. We hope you can stop by and join us during our one of our Service Saturdays.

It would be a momentous accomplishment to have the support of Congress to move this entire project forward and unite our community following an emotionally charged year.

Keep fighting the good fight, Ilhan. Let us know if you need anything, we're always here for you!

In continued service to our district,

*Brett D. Buckner*

Brett D. Buckner  
Network Coordinator, Seeds To Harvest Service Coalition  
Resident, Fifth Congressional District

Cc: Seeds To Harvest Service Coalition Members

Letter of Support from Seeds To Harvest Service Coalition regarding North Commons Park Development in North Minneapolis

April 26, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

The City of Minneapolis is pleased to support the Community Project Funding request of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for North Commons Community Center. The proposed new Community Center will provide a unique amenity that is not yet found in the Minneapolis Park system, a large fieldhouse-like gymnasium. This amenity will allow Minneapolis Parks to host tournaments and other large-scale events. This will draw people from Minneapolis and surrounding communities to further activate the neighborhood and benefit local businesses.

The Community Center will provide opportunities for water recreation such as a deep pool and lazy river providing fun, exercise, and the opportunity to develop water safety skills. There are racial disparities in the rate of accidental drowning in the State of Minnesota with people of color more likely to drown. Therefore, it's particularly valuable to public health and safety to provide this type of amenity in part of the city with one of the highest percentages of residents that are people of color.

MPRB and its partners offer valuable programs and services that help youth to develop new skills and participate in community activities, but participation in these programs is not consistent across the city. We believe that the specific investments being made in the community center could inspire youth to engage with MPRB who otherwise may not, and it could lead to rich new opportunities.

We look forward to continuing to work with MPRB as they advance their plans for the Community Center and the broader North Commons Park.

Thank you for your consideration.



Community Planning and Economic Development  
Executive Director