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IMT.org

February 8, 2023

The Honorable Hodan Hassan
597 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Omar Fateh
Capitol Office
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3219
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Hodan Hassan and Senator Omar Fateh,

The Institute for Market Transformation (IMT) – a national nonprofit organization that seeks to transform the built environment by catalyzing widespread demand for high-performance buildings – is pleased to support the Sabathani Community Center’s (SCC) Community Energy Project. This phase of the project will install a new district energy geothermal heat pump system for the main Sabathani building with future expansion to a new 72-unit multi-family housing being built on the Sabathani campus in 2024.

Sabathani’s goal is to develop a Community Resilience Hub that supports their 87% BIPOC South Minneapolis community by securing energy for critical services such as their food shelf; providing a gathering place for times of extended power outages; dramatically reducing carbon emissions in a community that carries a heavy pollution burden; supporting workforce development for family-sustaining careers; building wealth and energy access in a community of color; and providing a demonstration site for clean-renewable energy.

The Institute for Market Transformation (IMT) is a Washington, DC-based nonprofit organization with extensive expertise advising major cities and other jurisdictions on the design, development, adoption, and implementation of building energy efficiency policies, including energy benchmarking and other related policy and programmatic elements. Our local staff have supported the cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul in design and implementation of their building energy benchmarking ordinances, and are currently working with a coalition of organizations to advocate for equity and justice considerations in utility regulation.

We are particularly interested in ways that we can support community priorities of education, health, and equity by implementing deep retrofits in buildings occupied by organizations that contribute to community well-being and have broad public support for their missions. Sabathani represents that type of building and organization – meeting critical needs of and serving as a meeting place for the community. Improvements in comfort, air quality, and lower bills of their building will directly support the organizations fundamental goal of providing people with the essential resources to improve their lives and build a thriving community, as well as the resilience of the surrounding neighborhoods.



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We have experienced unprecedented events in our city over the past three years – with the murder of George Floyd and the associated uprising for racial justice, and the intersecting crises of a public health pandemic, rising unemployment, and housing insecurity. Sabathani is among the organizations that have risen to meet the moment and the needs on the Southside. As a part of the Community Energy Project, the organization can plan for upgrading the building to continue to serve as that pillar of the community – a provider of critical food security and housing services, an incubator for businesses, and a space for neighborhood meetings and events. We at IMT have seen the role that Sabathani can and does play in this community, and would be thrilled to see the building serve as a model for advanced energy technology retrofits in a historic building and a demonstration of community resilience.

IMT has the staff resources – both locally and nationally – and availability to support the efforts associated with the proposed activities. We look forward to working alongside Sabathani Community Center and other key project partners to advance community-level energy resilience planning through deep community partnership.

The time to act is now. We must invest in and build power in the South Minneapolis neighborhoods that have been overburdened by high energy costs, health impacts, and racial unrest. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about IMT's involvement in this project. Many thanks for your leadership and attention to this important opportunity to advance progress on resilience and climate justice in my community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Julia Eagles'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julia Eagles – Senate District 62 constituent
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