How to use these template letters

1. Pick a letter that resonates with you (list of letter themes below).
2. Copy/Paste the letter, use as written, or modify as you like.
3. If you are writing to the council member who represents your Ward, emphasize that.
4. Include your street address, name, and date.
5. Consider replacing the “final ask” with a message unique for each council member (examples below).
6. Share these templates with neighbors/friends/family, so they can write too!

Letter Themes

1. Without owner’s consent, restrictions on owner to renovate and/or maintain
2. Previous votes against historic designation and City Comprehensive Plan 2030
3. Previous studies on historic designation
4. Aging building, significant maintenance costs, fewer funds for education
5. Adaptive reuse, preservation and carbon neutral goal 2050
6. No other viable alternative for TCGIS
7. For parents/guardians in Saint Paul
8. For parents/guardians outside of Saint Paul
9. For TCGIS students

Closing messages directed to individual council members and mayor:

Ward 1 - Dai Thao
ward1@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Councilmember Thao, as a member of the St. Paul Hmong community, you are keenly aware of the plight of people struggling with a place to call home. TCGIS shares common ground with you here. This is our school’s third location and we find ourselves the new kids on the block once again, longing for a permanent home and acceptance by community. Forced historic designation of our school would have a catastrophic impact on our ability to maintain our high caliber immersion program. Please vote against this forced historic designation.

Ward 2 - Rebecca Noecker
ward2@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Councilmember Noecker, given your advocacy for underprivileged kids, public transportation, and the environment, I’m sure you can see how forced historic designation of our school will undermine our efforts to address these very same issues. Our campus improvement project specifically calls for expanded spaces for our special education children, who currently have no private place to meet other than crowded hallways. Our increased promotion of busing for our kids and advocating for using public transport with our staff has led to a significant reduction in traffic to and from our school. Finally, our new

campus calls for a continued focus on the environment by expanding our permeable surface and green space, and continued storm-water management to beneficially impact Como Lake. Forced historic designation of our school threatens our ability to continue our program and to have a positive environmental impact on the neighborhood. Please vote against historic designation.

Ward 3 - Chris Tolbert
ward3@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Councilmember Tolbert, as a graduate of St. Paul's Central High school, please know that TCGIS has a strong partnership with your *alma mater,* giving TCGIS graduates from any city the opportunity for advanced German education, high-caliber academics, and extracurricular activities that Central High School- the oldest high school in the state of Minnesota- has to offer. Currently, half of TCGIS graduates choose to attend Central for high school. TCGIS has no other reasonable alternatives to create facilities to meet the needs of our students. The detrimental financial impact that historic designation would have on TCGIS would limit the number of successful students we funnel into St. Paul public high schools. Please vote against historic designation.

Ward 4 - Mitra Jalali Nelson
ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Councilmember Nelson, we recognize the high environmental price we pay as a society when old energy inefficient and uninsulated buildings are used on a daily basis, as well as the price the occupants pay in lack of comfort such drafty structures create for our students and staff. Our new building will meet new standards for energy efficiency, have large windows providing both daylight and solar heat gain, and be a learning environment children in which children will thrive. Please vote against historic designation, because the environment and the kids will thank you.

Ward 5 (TCGIS is in this ward) - Amy Brendmoen, Council President
ward5@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Councilmember Brendmoen, we both know the vibrancy and vitality TCGIS brings to the neighborhood. We recognize that this is a difficult situation for all parties who have vested interests in the Warrendale neighborhood. When it come down to it, TCGIS simply cannot afford the requirements described by the HPC preservation plan if historic designation were approved. Our successful public language immersion school would lose its vitality as a result. We don't think that is in the best interest of the thriving Warrendale neighborhood. Please prioritize the future over the past, recognizing that it is hard, but absolutely necessary. Please vote against historic designation.

Ward 6 - Kassim Busuri
ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Councilmember Busari, given your deep understanding of the education system and especially charter schools, I'm sure you can see how historic designation would compromise the school's ability to maintain its high caliber immersion program. Charter public schools receive less funding than traditional public schools, and we need to direct our scarce

resources to teacher salaries, materials, and enrichment opportunities for students and staff. Please vote against the historic designation of our school.

Ward 7 - Jane L. Prince
ward7@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Councilmember Prince, as an attorney you understand the importance of precedent setting, and to force historic designation on unsuspecting property owners, years after the property was purchased, would be a dangerous precedent to establish. The fact that this is being done to a non-profit educational organization such as TCGIS, is even more concerning. Please vote against historic designation.

Mayor Melvin Carter
mayor@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Mayor Carter, I admire your ambition to build a city that works for all. TCGIS has a vision of building an improved K-8 public school campus, which would contribute to the vibrancy of your city for years and years to come. TCGIS rented its first 2 locations in St. Paul, and invested into the Como Park neighborhood when it purchased its forever home. Now part of the building is not used for its original purpose and it is not working for the students and staff who use it everyday. Please prioritize the future of the city over the past, and reject historic designation for the benefit of the school and the school children.

LETTER TEMPLATE 1
Topic: Without owner's consent, restrictions on owner to renovate and/or maintain

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

I am writing to oppose the historic designation of the former St. Andrew's Church.

The church was de-sanctified by the Catholic Church in 2010 and merged the parish with another local parish. The building has not been used as a sanctuary since then. When the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) purchased the property over six years ago, the school adaptively reused the former church building as a makeshift gym and cafeteria. With the maintenance costs and need for pedagogically usable facilities, TCGIS needs to reconstruct part of its building.

The desire to historically designate a portion of the TCGIS building goes against the will of the school and has not received any form of consent. If historic designation is approved, the owner will not only have to deal with the added costs of maintenance of a decaying building but also with the strict regulations that are required of historic designations.

The Heritage Preservation chapter 4.5 states that the City should "acquire key threatened historic properties until a suitable owner can be found." St. Paul Senior City Planners have opined that this provision suggests that the will of a property owner should receive consideration. George Gause, Heritage Preservation Supervisor, has publicly stated that it is almost unheard of for a St. Paul property to receive historical designation status without the consent of the property owner.

I ask you to vote against historic designation of the former St. Andrew's church that is now a part of the TCGIS building.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 2
Topic: Previous votes against historic designation and City Comprehensive Plan 2030

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

As you may know, the issue of historic designation of the former St. Andrew's church will be before you in the coming weeks. I ask for your opposition to the historic designation as historic designation is not the will of the majority of neighbors in District 10, where the former church resides.

On December 14, 2018, the Saint Paul Planning Commission already voted 12 - 1 not to recommend historic designation of the part of the building that used to be a former church based on a number of factors, including concerns that the designation process had been "weaponized" by the group Save Historic Saint Andrew's (SHSA). District 10 and its Land Use Committee voted to support the Twin Cities German Immersion School in its project to improve its own facilities. A historic designation would ignore the votes cast by the neighbors at the Land Use Committee meeting and those by the members of District 10 Community Council.

Additionally, the Land Use chapter of Saint Paul's 2030 Comprehensive Plan includes a policy that the City "**collaborate** with public and private elementary and secondary schools in conjunction with construction or major remodeling." LU 1.55. **By definition, the Comprehensive Plan directive to "collaborate" is defeated where the City acts to designate the school building against the property owner's strong objections.** Historic designation would clearly go against any "collaboration" from the City of Saint Paul with its own Comprehensive Plan.

I request that you vote against historic designation of the former church currently owned by the Twin Cities German Immersion School.

Best regards,

[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 3
Topic: Previous studies on historic designation

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

I am writing to request that you vote against the historic designation of the former Church of Saint Andrew's. It was not considered to be historic in past studies when it was an active parish. Now that it has been desanctified, sold, reconfigured and repurposed, its eligibility is even less warranted.

Saint Paul's Heritage Preservation Commission ignored its own historical documents in making this decision, including a 1983 Historic Sites Survey that indicated St. Andrew's is Not Eligible for Designation, according to the Ramsey County Historical Society, and it was NOT recommended for further designation study in the 2001 St. Paul Historic Context Study of Churches done by HPC. Nor did the Catholic Church deem the church building historical prior to or at the time of deconsecration and sale.

Additionally, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) letter from December 2018 strikingly omitted any mention of eligibility for state designation or national registration.

I sincerely ask that you reject the historic designation of this part of a building that is now owned by the Twin Cities German Immersion School, which is a thriving part of our community in Saint Paul.

Most respectfully,

[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 4
Topic: Aging building, significant maintenance costs, fewer funds for education

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

The question of historic designation of the former church of St. Andrew's will likely be put to you in the coming weeks. I would like you to oppose this historic designation due to the enormous financial impact this would have on a public school that does not even desire the designation.

The former church now belongs to the Twin Cities German Immersion School and is physically connected to the rest of the school building after a 2014 addition. The former church has been adaptively reused as a makeshift gymnasium and cafeteria for the past 6 years; however, the building is costly to maintain and does not meet the programming needs of the school.

The nearly 100-year old building requires substantial maintenance. Estimates for basic repair of the building exceed $1.2 million. If historic designation is granted, these costs would greatly exceed the $1.2 million due to the requirements specified by the HPC's preservation plan. The maintenance alone is beyond what the school can afford, not to mention the implications that this facility has on the educational experience of TCGIS students. The primary purpose for a public school is to educate children, and funds diverted to historic designation would impede this purpose.

The proponents of historic designation commonly mention that there are grants to maintain such a facility, although the proponents themselves do not offer financial support or search them out in support of a school in their own community. Furthermore, local designation only offers tax relief, which is of no benefit to a tax-exempt public school. Moreover, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) letter from December 2018 strikingly omitted any mention of eligibility for state designation or national registration. HPC commissioner, Casie Radford, publicly stated that in her experience, the alterations already done to the former church would prevent it from earning a spot on the national registry of historic places.

I implore you to reject the request for historic designation of part of the Twin Cities German Immersion School building.

Best regards,
[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 5
Topic: Adaptive reuse, preservation and carbon neutral goal 2050

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

I am writing in opposition to the historic designation of part of St. Paul's Twin Cities German Immersion School because historic designation does not fit the needs of the school or the climate action plan of the City of Saint Paul.

Despite years of adaptive reuse of the former church, 25% of the current building is unusable for the school due to vestibules, 2 steep staircases, etc. The new building with another floor will double the usable square footage for the school, without any significant increase in building footprint. The current site has grandfathered storm water management from 1920's. The new building adds stormwater management to help improve Lake Como.

The preservation plan provided by the HPC prohibits adding insulation to the brick walls of the former church, which does not harmonize with St. Paul's climate action plan to become carbon neutral by 2050. Buildings in Minnesota simply require insulation if they are to be used daily as a modern school facility, or the amount of carbon dioxide emitted to heat the structure will jeopardize the long-term vision of the city.

St. Paul's goal is to be carbon neutral by 2050, completely offsetting emissions so there would be no net release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. How does a preservation plan that prohibits adding insulation to the exterior, currently uninsulated, walls of the former church comport with this goal? A modern insulated structure will emit less carbon dioxide than the uninsulated structure with voluminous heated space that is currently unusable by the school.

Please consider the environmental irresponsibility of the HPC's preservation plan and reject the historic designation of this building.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 6
Topic: No other viable alternative for TCGIS

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

In the issue of historic designation of the former church of Saint Andrew's, I ask you to vote against the historic designation, which would ultimately leave no viable option for the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) to continue to thrive.

If historic designation is approved, it would force unnecessary financial hardships upon TCGIS, a very successful school within our community. The proponents of historic designation commonly mention that TCGIS did not explore all the options. However, TCGIS investigated numerous alternatives to their campus improvement project, including more re-modeling to continue adaptive use of the building, and selling the building and moving to another location. Ultimately, the school determined that these were not viable alternatives because the school (1) requires additional and more functional space for its existing student body; (2) would incur a substantial bond penalty if the school acted to sell the building and move elsewhere; and (3) alternative sites were more costly and created risks to the school's success, which is due in part to its location.

Historic designation of the former church would likely lead to financial ruin for TCGIS, which would have a negative impact on the community and the City of Saint Paul. Therefore, I request that you oppose this issue for historic designation.

Most respectfully,

[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 7
Topic: For parents/guardians in Saint Paul

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

As a resident of the City of Saint Paul and a parent of a student at the Twin Cities German Immersion School, I oppose the historic designation of the former church that is currently part of TCGIS.

As a resident of Saint Paul, I am proud to have TCGIS here because of the reputation this school has in the community of the Twin Cities and beyond. Many families have chosen to move closer to the school over the years, and the longer the school remains at its current location, the more families will move to be near the school. These deliberate moves increase the stability of the neighborhood and increase property values in the immediate community. In fact, several families bought up properties around the school that were in need of repair. More and more staff choose to live in Saint Paul and specifically within walking distance or biking distance of the school. 57 students live in District 10, and nearly half live in other parts of Saint Paul.

TCGIS has also been a positive force in the community as a whole. Students have a clean up day around Lake Como and Como Park, and the school has gone above and beyond in developing a green facility with stormwater filtration and landscaping as examples. Their outdoor facilities are available to the families around the neighborhood when school isn't in session. More than 50% of the year is quiet for neighbors, including nights, weekends, holidays and longer school breaks. The school's indoor facilities have been used as a gathering space for various groups and events. TCGIS adds to the vitality of the community with a 5K fun run and Halloween parade.

I implore you to vote against historic designation so that TCGIS can continue to attract families and highly qualified staff from around the world. Please, allow TCGIS to continue to thrive at his current and forever home.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 8
Topic: For parents/guardians outside of Saint Paul

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

As a parent of a student at the Twin Cities German Immersion School, I oppose the historic designation of the former church that is currently part of TCGIS.

Although I live outside of Saint Paul, I decided to have my child attend school in Saint Paul because of the academic reputation TCGIS has in the Twin Cities and beyond. Many families like ours enjoy what the City of Saint Paul has to offer. We have a vested interest in the development of the city as the school brings us to Saint Paul every day. We do our various errands, shopping and freetime activities within the city. We support businesses along Grand Avenue and visit museums in downtown Saint Paul. Many students at TCGIS will also attend Saint Paul's Central High School, which will continue to bring in families like ours to spend time in the City of Saint Paul.

TCGIS reaches out into the world, as well. Every year the 8th graders go to Germany for a few weeks and receive young people from Germany as visitors. Saint Paul becomes a place to visit for many from around world. The German Consulate has also come to visit the City of Saint Paul because of TCGIS.

I ask that the Saint Paul city council oppose historic designation as this issue would likely cause the school to suffer insurmountable financial hardships and drive families away from Saint Paul.

Most respectfully,

[SIGNATURE]

LETTER TEMPLATE 9
Topic: For TCGIS students

[NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]

City Council of Saint Paul
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member [NAME]:

As a student of the Twin Cities German Immersion School, I would like to have a building that works best for my classmates and me. The current building that is our gym and cafeteria does not give us the space we need to have real gym classes. Smaller kids have to have gym in the basement cafeteria, and some of my friends have to learn in the hallways rather than small rooms for their individualized lessons.

As a member of the community, I would like you to vote against historic designation so that we can have a building that fits what my school needs.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]