



Metcalf Park Community Bridges
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Zoning Code Technical Committee

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Alderman Robert Bauman

Immediate Halt to Proposed RT5 and ADU Zoning Ordinances

Dear Members of the Zoning Code Technical Committee and Aldermen Perez and Bauman,

Metcalf Park Community Bridges' mission is to cultivate resident-led community development rooted in social justice. For the past year, our organization, along with residents of Metcalfe Park and neighboring communities across the northside, southside, and eastside, has actively engaged in a year-long opposition, study, and research process concerning the Growing MKE Plan. This effort has exposed deep flaws in the plan's approach, including the lack of quality engagement, the absence of protective measures prior to policy changes, and the failure to repair systemic inequities in Milwaukee's zoning framework.

Given this full year of community opposition, we are surprised and deeply concerned that an ordinance for RT5 is being introduced, as it was one of the main ordinances that community members explicitly demanded be removed from the Growing MKE Plan. These proposed ordinances closely mirror the rejected elements of the Growing MKE Plan, and it is unacceptable that the community's clear opposition is being disregarded by pushing forward policies that fail to reflect the clear demands and efforts of residents.

We stand in firm opposition to the proposed RT5 and ADU ordinances for the following reasons, paired with our proposed solutions:

- 1. Lack of Community Engagement → Implement Participatory Zoning**

- These ordinances continue a troubling trend of top-down decision-making that excludes meaningful community participation. Milwaukee must establish a participatory zoning process that ensures residents have decision-making power over future zoning changes. A structured, resident-driven approach will create equitable, sustainable growth while ensuring the community's needs are prioritized.
2. **Insufficient Data to Support Claims → Conduct a Comprehensive Harm analysis Impact Study**
 - There is no adequate data demonstrating that these zoning changes will lead to equitable growth, prevent displacement, or address Milwaukee's housing crisis in a way that prioritizes current residents. A comprehensive study should be conducted to assess the financial feasibility of ADUs, protections against displacement, and how RT5 zoning will impact affordability and local ownership.
 3. **Growth Without Repair → Prioritize Neighborhood-Specific Zoning Updates**
 - Milwaukee cannot afford to prioritize growth over repair. A one-size-fits-all zoning approach does not address historical harms caused by redlining, urban renewal, and discriminatory housing policies. We call for neighborhood-specific zoning updates that acknowledge the unique needs of each area and focus on repairing past harm before implementing broad changes.
 4. **Unanswered Questions and Lack of Protections → Implement Safeguards for Current Residents**
 - These ordinances fail to outline protections against speculative development, displacement, or the unchecked rise of short-term rentals such as Airbnbs. Milwaukee has a growing issue with absentee, out-of-state investors and developers who prioritize profit over community stability. Any zoning changes must come with firm protections for current residents, ensuring affordability and local ownership.
 5. **Lack of Affordability Considerations for ADUs → Ensure Feasibility for Low-Income Homeowners**
 - While there is community interest in ADUs, key questions remain unresolved, such as affordability, financing options, and whether landlords will exploit the policy for profit rather than community benefit. Milwaukee must address these concerns before making sweeping zoning changes that may only benefit developers rather than residents.

Halt These Ordinances Immediately

Milwaukee residents deserve communities of opportunity—communities designed by the people who live in them, not dictated by developers and policymakers without grassroots input. Therefore, we demand that this committee and Alders Perez and Bauman **immediately halt the RT5 and ADU ordinances** in their current form.

The focus should not be growing Milwaukee for outside interests; it should be repairing Milwaukee, creating protections before policies, and creating a pathway for participatory zoning that fosters smart, equitable growth rooted in social justice.

We are demanding direct action. **Do not proceed with these ordinances.** Instead, commit to a zoning framework that centers community voices and ensures Milwaukee's development serves its residents, not absentee investors and speculative developers.

We look forward to your public commitment to halting these ordinances and prioritizing community-led solutions to Repair Milwaukee.

Sincerely,

Metcalfe Park Community Bridges