Dear Committee and Alders,

My name is Melody MCurtis. I live in the 15th district, and I am a community member who has actively been vocal about my concerns, alongside my neighbors and neighboring communities, for over a year regarding the Growing MKE Plan. For a year, we have been asking to be heard, and to date, our concerns have not been addressed.

Early on, we opposed the 8-plexes and asked about the feasibility of ADUs, along with additional information about their potential impact. However, we received no meaningful response, and while the DCD team claimed to remove 8-plexes, these new ordinances closely mirror what we fought against. I do not support these two ordinances as they do not provide protections for me and my community.

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

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.

Insufficient Data to Support Claims → Conduct a Comprehensive Harm Analysis and 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.

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.

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.

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.

I'm 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.

Sincerely,

Melody McCurtis