



May 28, 2024

Zoning and Neighborhood Development Committee  
Milwaukee City Hall  
200 E. Wells St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: File #231461

Dear Members of the Zoning and Neighborhood Development Committee:

On behalf of BID 31, I am writing to convey our opposition to the current proposal to rezone the properties on 324 N. 15<sup>th</sup> Street and 1439 W. St. Paul Avenue for residential purposes. The City of Milwaukee in collaboration with the Industrial Business Improvement Districts has gone to great lengths to develop policy that will determine the future of industrial land and manufacturing in Milwaukee. It is crucial that we as a City stay the course and remain disciplined in preserving industrial land.

The Milwaukee Industrial Land Analysis brought together a collective community voice to include businesses, employees, residents, and workforce development professionals to take a thoughtful and intentional look at the future of manufacturing in Milwaukee. This collective community voice realized the need for having family sustaining jobs within the heart of our City and in turn adopted the policy to preserve industrially zoned land.

This land use debate stretches beyond the disciplines of city planning and zoning. It is an equity issue. In short, while our national unemployment rate for Black Americans has decreased to a record 5.2%, Wisconsin (with Milwaukee being a significant player in the State's economy), remains at 8.3%. Our State of Wisconsin is consistently ranked one of the lowest desirable States for Black prosperity. A new study by [24/7 Wall St.](#) collected the following data to demonstrate this point:

*"According to the study, the median household income for Black individuals in Wisconsin is \$38,732, only 51.1% of the \$75,803 median household income for white individuals, representing the widest income gap among all states. The homeownership rate for Black residents stands at 26.5%, compared to 71.9% for white residents. Additionally, the unemployment rate for Black residents, who make up 6.1% of the state's population, is 8.3%, while the unemployment rate for white residents is 3.0%."*

With the announced efforts of new housing policies in Milwaukee, our city's density continues to increase and the need for jobs will also increase. Diminishing manufacturing and industrial businesses in favor of housing when there are exciting and new housing policies being implemented in areas across the City, could have long term negative consequences on our local job market and tax revenues.



If we want to continue to engage stakeholders in meaningful planning processes, it is important to listen to their voices and stay the course that they charted. If we do not maintain the integrity of the community planning model, trust and credibility can be lost. The MVP plan, adopted by the City of Milwaukee is the embodiment of the needs and desires of the stakeholders in the surrounding communities. Ignoring the MVP plan that has been in place for decades and proven to be very successful, is an affront to the residents, businesses, and practitioners that have worked diligently to make Menomonee Valley the inspiration that it currently is. Altering the course of history to accommodate one developer and/or property owner negates two decades of planning discipline.

We urge you to prioritize the greater good and long term future of Milwaukee and the families that need economic opportunity for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Harling  
Executive Director,

Havenwoods Neighborhood Partnership/ BID 31