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Honorable Members of the Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee
City Hall
200 E Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Aldermen:

On behalf of Menomonee Valley Partners, Inc. (MVP), I am writing in support of the newly developed Industrial Commercial (IC) Zoning category and the rezoning of designated parcels on W. St. Paul Avenue to IC zoning.

The City of Milwaukee Planning staff and MVP engaged in an intensive 18-month planning process in 2013 and 2014, interviewing stakeholders and holding public meetings, to shape a vision for the Menomonee Valley's future and create a strategic framework to guide its implementation. This effort, culminating with the Valley 2.0 Plan which was adopted by the Common Council in June 2015, includes five major recommendations to drive development in the Menomonee Valley for the next 10-15 years. One of these five major recommendations is to redevelop the vacant properties on St. Paul Avenue between 6th and 25th Streets with a focus on establishing the St. Paul Avenue Design and Showroom District, but **current zoning presents a barrier to redevelopment.**

This section of St. Paul Avenue has had high rates of vacancy for decades, despite adjacency to downtown, the Third Ward, Menomonee Valley, the Intermodal Station, and two I-94 exits. The current zoning – a mix of Industrial Heavy (IH) and Industrial Light (IL) – is a significant factor in the stagnation of the street. There are several large, multi-story buildings that have been difficult to redevelop. IL and IH zoning do not allow sufficient options for commercial development and these buildings do not work for modern manufacturing needs. In addition, many manufacturers continue to thrive on St. Paul Avenue and do not want to open the street to residential, schools, daycares, or other uses (allowable under the City's Industrial Mixed (IM) zoning) that would conflict with their manufacturing operations (trucking, operations hours, etc.). No existing zoning categories fully meet the desires of business and property owners on the street who want to see existing manufacturing continue to thrive while also opening new commercial redevelopment possibilities for the street's multi-story buildings.

The Valley 2.0 Plan's focus on the St. Paul Avenue Design and Showroom District recognizes the need to build on the assets of the street, allow existing businesses to continue to thrive, and present opportunities to redevelop vacant properties. The new IC zoning category would allow opportunities for office, commercial, and business service uses that

are not permitted in the current zoning, while restricting the currently allowable but undesirable uses for the street, such as motor vehicle and salvage uses.

The intent is to have the zoning work together with the building stock, the existing uses, and the market. It would allow expansion of “front of factory” showroom space, additional retail and commercial uses to support the emerging design showroom district, and office and other uses on upper floors, while protecting the needs of existing manufacturers. **IC zoning accommodates the types of retail, commercial, and manufacturing uses we expect to develop on the street while supporting the growth of existing businesses.**

MVP worked closely with City staff to align IC zoning with the needs of businesses and stakeholders for zoning that supports manufacturing and commercial uses in a way that existing zoning categories do not adequately do in areas like St. Paul Avenue. Our staff coordinated a meeting in January to review the code changes with St. Paul Avenue business and property owners and give them opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the IC zoning. Business owners have voiced support for these changes both generally, throughout the Valley 2.0 planning process, and specifically, after reviewing the proposed IC zoning code. There is momentum on St. Paul Avenue now, and rezoning will allow the street to continue to develop and fulfil its potential.

MVP believes that changing the zoning of St. Paul Avenue to IC will benefit the Menomonee Valley’s continued revitalization. We hope that you will look favorably upon this request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Corey Zetts
Executive Director

cc: Alderman Robert Bauman
Alderman Robert Donovan
City Plan Commission