

From: [Ashley Adam](#)
To: [planadmin](#)
Subject: Adam Feedback RE: (240402) Comprehensive Planning - Public Hearing
Date: Friday, May 30, 2025 9:40:55 AM

RE: (240402) Comprehensive Planning - Public Hearing
1:30 PM, A substitute ordinance adopting the Growing MKE Plan as the Housing and Neighborhoods Element of the Citywide Policy Plan as part of Milwaukee's Overall Comprehensive Plan, and directing implementation.

May 30, 2025

Common Council President Jose Perez
Chairman, Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee – Alderman Robert Bauman

President Perez and Chairperson Bauman:

My husband and I are long-time Milwaukee residents who chose this city—and our block—as the place to build a future for our family. We have put down real roots here, investing our savings, sweat equity, and hopes for our daughter's childhood in a neighborhood defined by single-family homes, block-party camaraderie, and a sense of shared responsibility. That perspective shapes the concerns below.

Genuine Praise Where It's Due

- Transparency and Pace. We appreciate your decision to slow the Growing MKE / Housing Element process so that everyday residents—not just policy experts—can understand and weigh in on the changes.
 - R-5 “Overlay” Concept. Requiring the new R-5 district to clear neighborhood, City Plan Commission, and Common Council review is exactly the level of public scrutiny Milwaukee expects for major zoning shifts.
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Core Concern: “By-Right” Internal ADUs in Single-Family Districts

The current draft quietly restores “by-right” internal ADUs in single-family zones—contradicting earlier assurances that owner-occupied districts would remain untouched. As Urban Milwaukee recently noted, this feels like a bait-and-switch.

Allowing a homeowner—or, more likely, an outside investor buying on spec—to double density without any public hearing is the functional equivalent of spot-up-zoning every single-family lot in the city overnight. Stable neighborhoods such as Sherman Park, Rufus King, Jackson Park, and Tippecanoe—many with high concentrations of Black, Latino, Hmong, and other minority homeowners—would bear the brunt of that shift without ever being asked.

Key data underline the risk: owner-occupancy in single-family districts is roughly 75%; in two-family districts it drops to below 50%. By-right ADUs open the door for out-of-state landlords to “house-hack” established blocks, eroding the very home-ownership base City Hall says it wants to grow.

For context: today a neighbor must seek a BOZA variance (with mailed notice) just to install a

six-foot front fence. Yet under this proposal that same property could be converted to a duplex—or even host a second freestanding dwelling—with zero neighborhood input.

Bigger Picture: We Can Add Housing Without Undermining Homeownership

We support the stated goals of diverse, affordable housing. Forward-thinking efforts such as Community Development Alliance's work in Harambee or the housing TIF you recently approved are proof that Milwaukee can expand supply where it is genuinely needed—vacant lots, under-utilized industrial parcels, obsolete commercial corridors—without destabilizing owner-occupied streets.

Our city's growth hurdles have never been zoning alone. Safe streets and high-quality schools top every study on why families leave Milwaukee. Up-zoning stable single-family areas in the name of ADUs will not solve those issues—and risks sending more families like ours searching for stability elsewhere.

What We Are Asking

1. Mail a simple postcard survey to every property owner in single-family districts explaining the ADU proposal and asking whether they support doubling density on their block.
2. Delay any vote on by-right ADUs until that homeowner feedback has been gathered, published, and discussed in an open hearing.

A city that can invest hundreds of thousands of dollars in consultant studies can surely invest a few thousand to hear directly from the people whose equity—and community fabric—are on the line.

Thank you for considering the viewpoint of families who have chosen to plant deep roots in Milwaukee. We stand ready to participate constructively in any process that balances new housing with the stability that makes our neighborhoods worth calling home.

Sincerely,

Ashley & Michael Adam

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