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230097 An ordinance relating to zoning regulations for tobacco or e-cigarette retailers

Dear City Plan Commission:

I am writing to let the commission know that we do not need these types of businesses close to places where kids are – we know that proximity to tobacco retailers is associated with higher smoking rates and can reduce the success of those trying to quit. We should make choices about which businesses to invite into our neighborhoods based on how they will contribute. **This ordinance only applies to NEW retail establishments, not existing ones.**

The presence of tobacco retailers can undermine a community's ability to establish tobacco-free social norms by increasing accessibility to tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, and increasing exposure to tobacco industry point of sale advertising, marketing and promotions.

There are 3x more tobacco retailers within 500 feet of schools in predominantly Black and Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods compared to predominantly white neighborhoods. This increases the likelihood of youth tobacco use in these neighborhoods. The tobacco retailer density is higher in predominantly Black and Hispanic/Latinx neighborhoods. Some predominantly Black neighborhoods had a retailer density that was 4x higher than predominantly white neighborhoods. We don't need these types of businesses close to places where kids are – we know that proximity to tobacco retailers is associated with higher smoking rates and can reduce the success of those trying to quit. Conclusions across studies reveal that lower levels of tobacco retailer density and decreased proximity are associated with lower tobacco use.

About one in three Wisconsin high school students have tried an e-cigarette. One in every seven high school students in Wisconsin currently vape. Nearly half of those who use any tobacco product have tried to quit in the last year. Most teens who start vaping think using nicotine will help them deal when things get tough. But e-cigarette use can make depression and anxiety worse. Overwhelmingly, current users (nearly 85%) used flavored e-cigarettes, with fruit flavors being the most popular, followed by candy, desserts, or other sweets.

Certain factors heavily contribute to tobacco-related health inequities for African Americans, including higher tobacco retailer density in African American neighborhoods, targeted marketing by the tobacco industry, higher rates of menthol cigarette use, product discounts, higher rates of exposure to secondhand smoke, and less access to medical care. Studies have shown that there are up to 10 times the tobacco marketing in Black neighborhoods than other neighborhoods. African-Americans are more likely to die from smoking-related diseases even though African American smokers start at an older age and smoke fewer cigarettes. The African American smoking prevalence in Wisconsin (26%) is nearly double that of the U.S. as a whole (16%).

Our communities, our youth, our families need a lot of help in making the needed changes to correct zoning for this important health challenge. Your commission can make the difference to improve everyone's health. Thank you!

Best regards,

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