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Erika L. Sanders  
President and CEO

July 23, 2024

City of Milwaukee  
City Plan Commission  
809 N. Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Members of the City Plan Commission,

Growing MKE represents a historic opportunity to reshape Milwaukee's housing and economic development landscape for generations to come. The Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council (MMFHC) urges city leaders to consider how such changes can profoundly impact equitable access to quality, stable housing and safe, thriving neighborhoods.

MMFHC is a private, nonprofit, civil rights agency that provides assistance to people who have experienced housing discrimination. Through conducting fair housing enforcement and education and outreach across Wisconsin for more than 40 years, MMFHC staff have witnessed the ways in which systemic discrimination continues to harm all of our communities. More than half a century after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, neighborhoods remain racially segregated, disinvestment blocks many Black and Latinx residents from access to resources, people with disabilities struggle to find accessible housing, and families with children often face limited housing options.

Along with illegal housing discrimination, including redlining and racially restrictive covenants, zoning has historically been used as a tool for exclusion, resulting in racially and economically segregated communities. Many of the racial disparities evident today, including disproportionately low rates of homeownership for Black and Latinx households compared to white households, can be directly traced back to these intentional public policies. Unfortunately, discriminatory policies are not just part of the past; by restricting access to affordable, multi-family housing, modern day zoning codes can often limit housing options, thereby perpetuating segregation and deepening inequity.

Growing MKE represents a rare opportunity to disrupt this pattern, to align our community's policies with its values, and to build a future that is not dictated by our past. Zoning remains one of the single most powerful ways a local community can redress the harmful effects of segregation and create places where everyone can live and thrive. The Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council fully agrees with HUD Action Secretary Adrienne Todman's sentiment that "families deserve to thrive in better resourced communities where the lasting benefits span future generations—like improved health, educational opportunities and wealth creation. Creating opportunities for families to live in neighborhoods with lower levels of poverty helps them achieve long-term success and reduces intergenerational poverty." Growing MKE is an impactful down payment on building a community where all residents have true housing choice.

MMFHC was pleased to have the opportunity to serve on the Growing MKE Technical Advisory Committee and offer input on how equitable zoning changes can serve to further fair housing by expanding equal housing opportunities and creating more housing choices for Milwaukee residents. We commend the City for acknowledging the significance of housing equity when considering these updates, as illustrated by the numerous references to housing choice throughout the draft Plan. Increasing housing supply, diversifying the types of available housing options, and eliminating unnecessary restrictions can all help to foster a more inclusive Milwaukee, where the door to opportunity is open to all.

Sincerely,

Erika Sanders  
President and CEO