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**To:**  
**The City Planning Commission and Elected Officials**

**07/28/2024**

As residents of Metcalfe Park, supported by Metcalfe Park Community Bridges, we urgently appeal to your sense of fairness and justice to reconsider the Growing MKE plan. Metcalfe Park Community Bridges' mission is to cultivate resident-led community development rooted in social justice. This plan lacks a community-led process that has left out the hyper-targeted communities, specifically the 15th district. This proposal, which significantly affects the 15th district, was shaped without sufficient input from its most impacted community members, raising serious concerns about its legitimacy and effectiveness. As this plan stands, we oppose its approval.

The process to date has lacked robust community involvement, which is vital when such profound changes are considered. The reported engagement conducted for the Growing MKE plan—1,700+ residents out of a city of over 500,000—does not reflect comprehensive community input. While some engagement has been done, it did not create adequate opportunities for the most impacted communities and their members to be a part of this process. Additionally, the engagement area of the Growing MKE plan was financially supported by The Community Development Alliance (CDA), a white-led entity comprised of city officials, funders, and developers with minimal community involvement. The public policy forum has also found the CDA process to be inequitable, further questioning the integrity of how this plan was created.

In just two weeks of our own outreach and engagement, we reached 1,400 doors with information and flyers, made 300 phone calls, and co-hosted two community events with over 80 residents combined in attendance. As a result, 110 community members, who were previously unaware and not included in this plan, requested that its approval be halted. We managed to almost match the city's year-long engagement efforts in two weeks, with no resources. This speaks volumes about the effectiveness of the current engagement strategy.

Many residents expressed that they were unaware of the plan, unable to access digital platforms, or found the timing of public consultations inconvenient. They also had difficulty submitting public comments through the e-comment link, which often told them to retry their submission later. This indicates a critical gap in outreach that must be addressed.

Moreover, the strategy employed by the Department of City Development (DCD) does not align with the values of inclusive city planning, where every voice is not only heard but actively sought. This was evident when Metcalfe Park residents voiced their concerns directly to the DCD in March, only to find these concerns minimally reflected in subsequent drafts of the plan. The city has a model of equitable engagement from the Fond Du Lac and North Plan but instead hired an out-of-state firm at the start of this project, later switching to only one community-based organization with insufficient resources and time.



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We believe zoning laws should change and be updated, but our community needs to be reflected in this plan. We cannot grow MKE without repairing MKE, and the first step to making that happen is to halt this plan.

Our request is straightforward and founded on the principles of equity and transparency:

- 1. Pause the approval process for the Growing MKE plan:** Immediate action is necessary to prevent the potential disenfranchisement of the communities you serve.
- 2. Initiate a Comprehensive Community Engagement Process:** We propose a six-month period to engage 25% of Milwaukee's population through a co-created strategy led by community-based organizations, ensuring no resident is left behind. This process includes updating the survey to reflect the proposed changes of the Growing MKE plan, rather than using generalized questions. There must also be various educational sessions held on zoning, including its history and current implications. The Department of City Development must prioritize resident engagement, reflected by allocating a budget to support the capacity of community-based organizations to conduct intentional and effective resident engagement throughout the planning process.
- 3. Incorporate our feedback into the revised plan:** After adequate consultation, gather all feedback and ensure it is visibly integrated into the plan's new draft.
- 4. Undertake a thorough harm analysis:** This should detail potential adverse impacts and include clear, actionable measures to mitigate them.

The principles of Equitable Development, Cultural Preservation, Community Empowerment, Sustainable Development, and Social Cohesion must be more than ideals; they must be the pillars of the Growing MKE plan. Our community's rich cultural heritage, the need for sustainable growth, and the empowerment of every resident are paramount.

The past has shown us the consequences of exclusive planning—consequences that echo through generations. We must learn from these lessons rather than repeat them. The first zoning laws that created a pathway to support redlining and exclusionary housing covenants excluded many of the voices still marginalized today. Let us not replicate those oversights. Instead, let us build a Milwaukee that is truly inclusive, reflecting the strength and diversity of its people.

We appreciate your consideration of our perspectives and urge you to act with the urgency and gravity this matter demands. Let us collaborate to create a plan that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of all Milwaukee residents. Thank you for your commitment to our city's future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danell Cross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

**Danell Cross**

Executive Director

**15th district community members who oppose the approval of the growing MKE plan:**

Patrice Gransberry  
Angela, Jackson  
Mark, Chaffin  
Brian, Carr  
Callie, Foster  
Michelle, Duggar  
Sabrina, Stewart  
J, Ellis  
Loretta, Hughes  
Bernadette, Jackson  
Gloria, Spivey  
Augustus, Morehouse  
Hahmari, Hoskins  
James, Smith  
Dorothy, Mitchell  
Valerie, Tobbias  
Ollie, Pruitt  
Doris, Chambers  
Lueverne , Laviolette  
Darcell , Smith  
Carolyn , Jackson  
Megan, Shepard Smith  
Priscilla , Morgan  
Cheryl , Hayes  
Nikia, Woodard  
Haynie, Smith  
Rodney , Johnson  
Doris, Chambers  
Lueverne, Laviolette  
Gloria, Douglas  
Andrea, Nious  
Augustus, Morehouse  
Sheila, Hills  
Mia, Burnside  
Tamela , Gardner  
Ollie, Pruitt  
Janice, Austin Crump  
Keisha, Johnson  
Shirley, Dunn  
Alan , Schultz  
Priscilla, Johnson  
Darlene, Harston  
Ericka, Collins  
Lauren , Forbush

**15th district community members who oppose the approval of the growing MKE plan:**

Derrick, Johnson

D, Green

Delbreia , Ferguson

Albret, Burton

T, Carter

Marion, Autman

Yante, Turner

Darcell , Smith

Sylvia, Burnette

Kenya, Donovan

Carolyn, Jackson

Catherine, Palmer

Kevin , Autman

Topacio, Lucero

Dominique, Hutchison

Lashawn, Ford

Ida, Penix

Alicia, Hutchison

Brandetta , Cook-Bey

Tonia, Matthews

Brittney, Taylor

Gail, Lightfoot

TyQuana, Payne