

February 29, 2024

Council Members,

Please accept this letter of strong support for the proposed rezoning of 212 11th Street South, current location of the REACH Services and Resource Center (24-0190). Since its establishment in 2021 as a hub for multiple services designed to prevent and address homelessness in our community, the REACH Center has assisted nearly 2,000 individuals with their immediate and long-term housing goals.

From the letters already submitted in opposition to this rezoning petition, it seems that some downtown neighbors view this as another opportunity to argue whether the REACH Center should exist at all in its current location. Despite some harmful rumors that the building will be used as an addiction treatment facility or a shelter, the building's use has already been established: providing a centralized destination for anyone seeking homelessness prevention or intervention services. We trust that the council sees the REACH Center as an essential component of its recently unveiled Pathways Home plan.

Also worth noting is the rezoning's potential to allow its owners to improve the facility through upgrades to services and facilities that are not allowable under its conditional zoning. The addition of subsidized solar panels, which will reduce the building's carbon footprint and its monthly utility costs. It's the kind of private investment that is outlined in the city's Climate Action Plan. It seems clear that approving this rezoning is supported by the strategic priorities established by the city and should not be delayed.

Sincerely,

Aaron Zitelman, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the 7 Rivers Region

Dr. Xiong Xiong, Executive Director, Cia Siab, Inc.

Kahya Fox, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity of the Greater La Crosse Region

Alicia Martin-Vega