

**Craig, Sondra**

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**From:** Aron Newberry <aron.newberry@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 28, 2024 1:16 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Re-zoning the REACH Center

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2/28/2024

Dear J&A Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the REACH Center's rezoning effort, which seeks to address the current lawful non-conforming status of the REACH Center facility located at 212 11<sup>th</sup> St. As a resident of La Crosse and the Washburn Neighborhood, I believe that this rezoning effort is crucial for ensuring continued access to vital healthcare services, particularly dental care for Medicaid patients. Rezoning to allow improvements to the facility will enhance the services accessible to the community.

First and foremost, access to dental care for Medicaid patients is of paramount importance. Only 22.5% of those enrolled in Medicaid in La Crosse County have had ANY access to dental care within the last 12 months. (Wisconsin Environmental Health Tracking System, 2022) The REACH Center plays a critical role in providing essential dental services to underserved populations in our community. By rezoning the facility to accommodate improvements and enhancements, we can ensure that Medicaid patients have improved access to quality dental care, improving their overall health and well-being.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize the longstanding history of this facility, which has operated as a professional office and medical building since 1957, and the REACH Center has been operating in this location since 2021. The City's establishment of the Washburn Comprehensive Plan designation and associated zoning district in 2001 inadvertently created the lawful non-conforming nature of the REACH Center. The proposed rezoning will remedy this situation by establishing a conforming use in an appropriate zoning district, allowing the facility to make necessary improvements while maintaining its vital services to the community.

The Planned Development District zoning designation provides a transparent process for the REACH Center to propose its plans and allows for community input and feedback. This ensures that the surrounding community is informed about the proposed improvements and has the opportunity to voice any concerns or comments. Additionally, with input from the surrounding community, the City will establish a set of allowable uses at the facility that are consistent with its longstanding operation, providing certainty and predictability to all parties involved.

Lastly, the **proposed enhancements to this facility will NOT impact the area**, given it has been in place for many years. The rezoning process ensures that additional or concerning uses, such as a methadone clinic or shelter, will not be permitted without thorough consideration and public input.

In conclusion, I urge you to support the REACH Centers Rezoning Effort. By approving this rezoning, we can ensure continued access to essential healthcare services, particularly dental care for Medicaid patients.

Leadership is about what you do, not what you say.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Aron Newberry