



September 20, 2022

RE: Ordinance No. 220806 Authorizing the Westside Owner-Occupant Residential 353 Development Plan

Dear Mayor Lucas and Members of the Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce to encourage members of the Neighborhood Planning and Development Committee to support ordinance 220806 authorizing the Westside Owner-Occupant Residential Property Chapter 353 Development Plan of Census Tract 153. As the city continues to work on effective strategies to improve access to affordable housing, the KC Chamber believes this ordinance provides a valuable tool to help protect long-term residents and continued home ownership in one of Kansas City's most historic and ethnically rich neighborhoods and calls on this committee and the full City Council to pass this ordinance.

Studies show home ownership plays a vital role in helping to build strong, stable communities by improving health outcomes, reducing crime, and increasing community engagement. Helping residents stay in their homes is a best practice and cost efficient for the city. It improves the quality of life for the homeowner and the community. When owners are evicted from their homes, they become a resident that needs housing support and other services from the city. Ordinance 220806 will help keep Westside owner occupants, including many multigenerational families in their homes and actively contributing to the community.

As the KC Chamber has considered its position on this ordinance it has taken into account the following points that reflect the critical need to provide homeowner stabilization measures in this neighborhood:

- Over 20% of Westside neighborhood owner-occupants have a household income less than 45% of the Kansas City average median income.
- From 2019 to 2020 the average annual increase in values on the Westside was 128% while the Jackson County average was 18%.
- The average Jackson County resident spends 2.65% of their income on property taxes, while in the Westside, lower-income owner-occupants spend on average three times as much.
- The plan offered in ordinance 220806 will reduce property taxes for low and moderate-income residents (those making less than \$75,000 per year) to the county average rate for up to 25 years.
- The cost to taxing jurisdictions would be approximately \$1,000 per low and moderate-income household per year, which is in line with the city's target for public funding to create new affordable housing.

The KC Chamber commends the City Council for its work to create more attainable housing in our city. We believe ordinance 220806 offers a complementary strategy by helping to stabilize home ownership in a neighborhood that is seeing an extraordinarily rapid increase in assessed property values. We encourage the committee to pass the legislation and help preserve the fabric of this rich and historic community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Reardon', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Joe Reardon
President and CEO