From:	Monique Ortiz
To:	Public Testimony
Cc:	ONeill, Kevin; Willett, Nathan; French, Lindsay; Rogers, Wes; Melissa Patterson Hazley; Robinson, Melissa; Rea, Crispin; Bunch, Eric; Curls, Darrell; Parks-Shaw, Ryana; Bough, Andrea; +johnathan.duncan@kcmo.org
Subject:	Opposition to CD-CPC-2023-00141
Date:	Thursday, December 7, 2023 8:34:32 PM

Dear Members of City Council:

As a Westside resident, I want to express my opposition to the Westside Heritage Urban Renewal Plan CD-CPC-2023-00141.

Here are some of my key concerns:

Lack of Public Engagement: Many Westside residents have not been able to understand the complete 27-page plan document. Given that this plan would be in effect for 15 years, all of our neighbors deserve to understand it, not just a small group of people.

Lack of Transparency: Many questions have been left unanswered. The lack of transparency due to the lack of community engagement is concerning.

Redundant and Unnecessary: Tax incentives for the most vulnerable homeowners in our neighborhood already exist with the 353 plan. Homeowners can pay a lot less for a much longer tax incentive with the 353 plan. A total of $3,500 in home improvements is an insurmountable cost for anyone already struggling to pay property taxes.

Does not Serve Intended Population: Most small business owners do not own the land they operate on in the Westside. Tax incentives should not be directed to a small number of [wealthy] commercial landlords. There are better ways to serve the actual intended beneficiaries–small business owners.

Ambiguity: The plan contains language that leaves room for misinterpretation and potential misuse by developers. Because of this, the plan can be exploited by developers to pursue projects that do not align with the best interests of our Westside neighborhood. Given the long history of our neighborhood, development with tax incentives should be considered on a case-by-case basis, not a blanket policy.

Preservation of Historic Character: The plan states that the Westside neighborhood has a rich historical and architectural heritage. We agree that we want to preserve the historic character. We are concerned that the plan would not adequately protect our neighborhood given the vague language and contradictory statements throughout the plan.

Rewards Vacant Land Hoarders: This plan rewards owners of vacant property who hoard various lots of vacant land with a tax incentive. While previous versions of this plan only incentivized vacant land owners with properties adjacent to their residence, that is no longer the case with the final version of the plan. Tax incentives should not be used to buy time for land hoarders waiting for the highest bidder.

I respectfully request that the City Council vote against the Westside Heritage Urban Renewal Plan and consider my concerns and those of many community members.

Thank you,
Monique Rojas Ortiz
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