



April 30, 2025

Shakita LaGrant McClain, Director
Milwaukee County Health and Human Services
1220 W. Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205

Re: McGovern Park

Dear Director LaGrant-McClain

Preserve Our Parks (POP) is an advocacy group created out of the need to stand up against inappropriate development in Milwaukee County Parks. As Parks funding has decreased over the last 40 years, there has been increased pressure from developers who see the diminished park funding as an opportunity to cash in on open space.

Preserve Our Parks (POP) is opposed to developing the McGovern Senior Center which is located in McGovern Park into housing. Parks are not “shovel ready” land for development. McGovern, like all parks, exists for many reasons: recreation, green space, ecological health, and peace of mind to name just a few. This is NOT raw land awaiting development. There is a legacy in Milwaukee County of setting aside parks for current and future generations. Let's not be the generation that destroys this legacy.

The POP Board asks the director of Health and Human Services what other sites have been considered for housing? Have you explored other options? Park Land is not even a last resort parcel. It is, in short, a non-starter. It is not available for development because it already has a use and should not be considered for any development looking for available land.

Housing is antithetical to everything our parks offer to citizens. Residents want privacy. Parks are public and open. Residents want to control their space. Parks preserves open areas which are the places where citizens exercise first amendment rights such as speech, assembly, etc. These rights are not available in private spaces. Residents want to park cars overnight. Park policy bans overnight parking in all parks. Residents want control that can include fencing their space or creating rules to keep others out. Parks are open and available and only elected board members can dictate rules for use. In short, these are the very reasons that parkland can not be used for housing, and there are many more than this short list.

POP respectfully asks the director of HHS to cease consideration of park land for housing. It has been stated that other mixed-use projects such as public libraries successfully combine public services with private uses. But even the library projects did not take public parks for development. If the Director is seeking to develop mixed use, find appropriate land available for development, It is not found in our public parks.

Sincerely,

Patricia D. Jursik
President, Preserve Our Parks

Cc: County Executive David Crowley County Board Chairperson, Marcelia Nicholson, Supervisor Felesia A. Martin, 7th D., Guy Smith, County Parks Director, Kent Mayfield, Chairperson, ADRC,