

January 28, 2022

Councilman Jecorey Arthur
Louisville Metro Council
601 West Jefferson Street
Louisville, KY 40202
Via electronic mail

RE: O-637-21 Ordinance amending Metro Land Development Code relating to changes in child care regulations

Councilman Arthur,

Greater Louisville Inc., the Metro Chamber of Commerce, represents more than 1800 businesses in the Greater Louisville region. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have had many conversations with our members regarding workforce challenges that they have faced, the greatest of which is access to child care.

Our region has struggled with access to affordable childcare and workforce participation over the past decade, but these issues have been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jefferson County has lost more than 10% of its daycare capacity since March of 2020. This loss has far-reaching effects for children and parents, and most often impacts minority families in their ability to participate in the workforce. The lack of available child care is particularly bleak in the west and southwest parts of Louisville with as few as 15 spots available for every 100 children. The loss of child care capacity combined with some of the most restrictive regulations around child care zoning in the nation have left Louisville parents and employers at a disadvantage as our economy continues to recover.

On behalf of our members, GLI encourages you to support the recommended changes that are before the Planning & Zoning committee regarding child care regulations in Metro Louisville's Land Development Code. These changes are intended to allow for child care facilities to be located where people live and work and to remove the extensive barriers that child care providers face when attempting to meet the needs of our community.

The proposed changes would allow expanded capacity for in-home child care providers to serve up to 12 children in residentially zoned areas, with appropriate regulation and detailed standards from the Kentucky Division of Child Care and from Planning & Design. Child care centers would also be allowed to operate in residential zones provided they meet detailed and thoughtful standards designed to integrate this vital service into the fabric of our neighborhoods.

Importantly, this ordinance would also allow child care centers to operate in industrially zoned areas, with approval from the APCD and meeting other specific standards as outlined. This change gives employers the opportunity to provide the benefit of onsite child care for their workforce, a benefit that is increasingly being considered as businesses compete for workforce in this extremely tight labor market. GLI is sensitive to the concerns regarding traffic and parking that have been raised by Committee members and we believe the latest amendment requiring more stringent review and approval of parking and pick-up plans would alleviate those concerns for neighbors.

The data regarding child care availability in Louisville is alarming and we know that there is work to do at every level of government to make quality child care affordable and accessible in our community. We encourage you to support these changes at the local level which will have an immediate impact on the availability of child care in our community.

Sincerely,

Liz McQuillen
Director, Government Affairs & Public Policy