



January 13, 2025

Police and Fire Commission

Re: Selection of Interim Chief for the City of Madison Police Department (MPD)

Dear Members of the Police and Fire Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the Latinx Consortium for Action (LCA) to offer our highest recommendation for Assistant Chief John Patterson as the Interim Chief of Police. The LCA is a collaborative of Latinx-led organizations, councils and professional associations and Latinx education and governmental leaders in the greater Madison area who come together with a vision of aligning strategy and programs for the greater good of the Latinx community. Personally, having worked closely with Assistant Chief Patterson during the past 7 years, I have witnessed firsthand his extraordinary leadership, deep commitment to community well-being, and genuine authenticity in every aspect of his work. I believe Assistant Chief Patterson is the ideal candidate to lead our police department through this transitional period.

Centro is the largest Latinx-led organization in Dane County, Wisconsin, with an intentional mission of empowering youth by also strengthening families. At Centro we are dedicated to ensuring strong neighborhoods, thriving young people and stable families. The success of our mission relies on collaborative relationships with diverse systems and like-minded partners who believe in the value of healing ethno-racial trauma among BIPOC communities as foundational to a safer and healthier community.

Assistant Chief Patterson has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to building stronger relationships between law enforcement and the communities we serve. During his tenure as the Southside Captain, he was always at Centro, not because there was an event or because there was an “ask” but because he personally enjoys getting to know the community, building relationships and because he enjoyed practicing his Spanish. Under his leadership, community engagement efforts flourished in South Madison, with an emphasis on open dialogue, trust-building, and ensuring that every resident feels heard and valued. Together we built community gardens, shared community dinners and created a beautiful community mural inside the South Madison Police Station on Hughes Place. His approach to policing is rooted in empathy and understanding. Without his knowing, by his organic presence in the community, he was sending a signal to community residents that they belonged, that he believed in them and that they were safe.



During this volatile time for the Latinx community, his approach to policing speaks volumes.

It is clear to me that Assistant Chief Patterson embodies integrity, transparency, and a deep commitment to ethical practices informed by the community. His ability to remain grounded and true to his values inspires confidence. For a department committed to growing diversity equity and inclusion in hiring and retention, I know his approach is important for groups such as *Amigos en Azul*, whose mission is to dissolve cultural barriers, build partnerships and open lines of communication between the Latino community and the City of Madison Police Department, in partnership with Dane County-area law enforcement.

Assistant Chief Patterson's calm demeanor, sharp problem-solving skills, and strategic thinking have been instrumental in addressing complex challenges and driving positive change. I have every confidence that Assistant Chief Patterson will continue to lead with the same dedication, vision, and authenticity in the role of Interim Chief of Police. He brings a unique combination of skills, experience, and passion that will serve our community well in this critical role. The LCA wholeheartedly recommends him for this position and looks forward to the positive impact he will continue to make as Interim Chief.

Thank you for considering this recommendation. Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me directly at 443-676-9996 or [karen@micentro.org](mailto:karen@micentro.org)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Karen Menendez Coller, PhD  
Executive Director  
Centro and on behalf of the Latinx Consortium for Action