
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

October 13, 2009

Ald. Milele A. Coggs
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Common Council Wants DHS Facility to Stay Put at 12th and Vliet

The Common Council today voted 15-0 to oppose the state Department of Administration's (DOA) request to relocate the longtime Department of Health Services (DHS) services center at 12th and W. Vliet St. to a location in the Bronzeville district at 2151 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr.

Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, sponsor of the communication file opposing the move of the DHS facility, said she is pleased with today's vote but knows the issue is not settled. "This is one very positive step today, having the full Council lending its voice in clear opposition to the move, but the bigger hearing is scheduled to take place next week in Madison," she said, noting the Council now stands with many other local elected officials – at the county and state levels – who also oppose the relocation.

The alderwoman, whose 6th District includes the N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. property, said public testimony will be heard by the state Building Commission's Administrative Affairs Sub-Committee at 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, October 21, 2009 at the State Capitol (2 E. Main St.), Room 330 South West. From this sub-committee a recommendation will be made to the Building Commission, which will meet at 1:00 p.m. (also Wednesday, Oct. 21) in Room 115 East, State Capitol. Bus transportation for those interested in attending the meetings has been arranged. The bus will leave at 6:45 a.m. on October 21 from 2212 N. MLK and return by approximately 5:00 pm.

Persons interested in getting a seat on the bus should call **414-278-5173**.

-More-

Council Wants DHS Facility to Stay Put/ADD ONE

Alderwoman Coggs said the DOA proposal to relocate the public assistance offices to the Bronzeville area conflicts with the vision for the emerging Bronzeville cultural and commercial district being developed along King Drive, as described in the Milwaukee Northeast Side Comprehensive Plan and the Bronzeville Redevelopment Plan. “The city has invested heavily in redevelopment of the Bronzeville area, including the establishment of the Historic King Drive Business Improvement District, the Bronzeville Target Investment District, the Brooks Targeted Investment Neighborhood and the Historic King Drive Main Street, and putting the DHS services center in that district just isn’t compatible,” she said.

“Also, the Bronzeville area parking study shows a current parking deficit, and the addition of Department of Health Services staff and clients will increase the parking demand and cause a serious disruption to nearby business and residential areas,” Alderwoman Coggs said.

Other key reasons for opposing the relocation include:

- Neighborhood groups in the area affected by the relocation, including those from the Halyard Park, Brewers Hill and Harambee neighborhoods, have voiced opposition to the move, and residents that attended a public meeting in September also voiced opposition.
- Milwaukee County spent \$14 million in 2004 to remodel the Marcia P. Coggs Human Services Center (1220 W. Vliet St.) and the vacancy in the building caused by this move could cost the county up to \$1.2 million per year unless new tenants can be found for the space.
- The existing Vliet St. DHS location has housed welfare and other aid programs for nearly 40 years and Milwaukee residents are familiar with the location, and moving it could cause service disruptions and confusion for clients.

Residents interested in receiving information on the DHS relocation opposition activities can go to the website www.nodhs.com for updates, Alderwoman Coggs said. “I strongly advise people to check the website frequently, especially the day before the hearing, in case the item gets delayed another month.

She said the website – created by and for area business owners and residents – also includes several posted letters that illustrate the problems that the DHS facility would cause if it is located on MLK Dr.