

**From:** Steven Raasch <Steven.Raasch@zastudios.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2024 8:27 AM  
**To:** planadmin <planadmin@milwaukee.gov>  
**Subject:** March 25th Plan Commission

Dear Plan Commission members,

My name is Steve Raasch, and am a business owner and CEO at Zimmerman Architectural Studios located in the Menomonee Valley.

I am unable to attend the Plan Commission meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup> in person but am writing in response to the rezoning request at 324 N 15th St and the topic of multi-family housing in the Menomonee Valley.

While I am not familiar with the specifics of the property and building in question, I do feel that it is appropriate to allow multi-family housing in certain parts of the Menomonee Valley. Not all of the Valley, but a certain unique part of the valley. In specific, the area bordered by the Menomonee Valley to the South, the freeway to the North, and 25<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> streets to the West and East. This area includes St. Paul Avenue and the property in question. This area is unique in the Valley, and separated from the rest of the Valley by a natural border, the Menomonee River, and I believe is appropriate for a different zoning classification from the rest of the Valley that would include multifamily housing.

For any community to thrive there needs to be a balance of opportunities to live, work, and play. The Valley has work and play opportunities, but no opportunities to live. This interrelationship is critical, and if any one piece is missing then positive development will be hindered. By allowing multifamily housing in this unique part of the Valley, the following benefits could be realized...

- The Valley would be more safe, as the presence of people and activity would not stop after normal business hours.
- Tax paying businesses like ours would be more willing to relocate to the Valley because it would be a more vibrant place.
- Employees of Valley businesses would have a place to live that is closer to their employers. Today, there is no public transportation to these places of employment, and some businesses are resorting to reimbursed ride-share programs to help them get to work.
- The City would be one step closer to achieving its population growth goals.
- This portion of the Valley would become a natural extension of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Wards, and would be a more viable connection between those areas and the near West side neighborhoods.
- The increased tax revenue could help fund the extension of Mt. Vernon Avenue and the riverwalk / bike trail from 21<sup>st</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street, among other things, further enticing businesses to locate here.
- The Menomonee Valley Partners goal of this area becoming a “design district” would be strengthened, because the area would become more vibrant and less intimidating to the patrons of those businesses.

I understand and embrace the goals of the City and the Menomonee Valley Partners to hold the Valley aside for industrial development, but the parcels in this area do not lend themselves effectively to industrial uses due to the size and proportion of the properties. The size of the buildings and needed area for truck access and turning radiuses for most industrial uses is difficult to achieve here, without

using the public streets as a semi-truck staging and turning area, similar to the way the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward used to exist. While this small area could allow for multifamily occupancies, the remaining much larger portion of the Valley could accommodate the desired industrial uses.

Please consider allowing multifamily occupancy in this relatively small and segregated part of the Menomonee Valley.

With all the best intentions and hopes for the Menomonee Valley,  
Steve Raasch

**Steve Raasch, AIA, LEED AP, EDAC**

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