

2585 North Summit Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53211  
May 15, 2007

Honorable Robert Bauman, Chair  
Public Works Committee  
City Hall  
200 East Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Alderman Bauman and members of the Committee:

I would like to submit formal objection to Resolution File No. 061440 as presently drafted. This resolution will sell the City parking lot at 2574 North Downer to DAPL, LLC (aka New Land Enterprises). I request that your committee hold the file for plan modification by the developer.

While the Downer Avenue redevelopment has received much debate, there doesn't seem to have been any attempt to find a compromise. Your committee can find that common ground to meet the developer's needs while not creating permanent harm to the neighborhood by approving such an intrusive structure.

Also, having lived within a single block of the Downer shopping district for more than 20 years now, I want you to know that I appreciate that someone is attempting to revitalize Downer. However, you can accomplish that goal in a manner that respects the commercial district and the neighborhood.

I spent the first 6 years of my career in the field of transportation planning, first for the Metropolitan Washington COG and then for SEWRPC. Based on my experience I believe you can provide adequate parking for the new commercial and office space in a three-level, fully enclosed garage combined with daytime-parking permits in the existing City owned lot at Downer and Park. My reading of the parking requirements for LB zoning indicates that the developer only needs to provide 78 spaces for the new office and commercial space in the in the three buildings in this development (28,000 SF of office and commercial in the Schwartz's building, 23,721 SF in the 2600 block building and 7,000 SF of retail in the new garage). If you add in 29 existing spaces that the developer needs to replace, the total only comes to 107 spaces, not 134 spaces that are being proposed. Simply eliminating the 27 unnecessary spaces reduces the size of the structure by one full level. Further, the existing lot at Downer and Park is one of the most underutilized lots in the City. Allowing the developer to lease an additional 27 or 29 spaces in that lot would increase the use of an underutilized asset and also reduce the size of the parking structure by another full level. This would allow the structure to be three levels fully enclosed. At that point, the project meets the developer's needs and is more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

As you well know from dealing with development issues, parking problems are often more perceived than actual. Drivers adapt, you know that. People won't pay a quarter for parking in a

lot if they can park on the street for free. That's one of the reasons that the existing City owned lot is empty all day. It's actually in the developer's best interest to save money by not building, maintaining or managing two levels of unnecessary space.

Further, since selling the land makes the City an active participant in this deal it would seem reasonable that a request for parking beyond that required by zoning should be accompanied by a solid rationale. If they really need more parking then document it. How many doctors will actually lease space? How many people will they employ? What is their average patient load? The structure as planned is incredibly intrusive. And yet, the only basis for the number of requested spaces amounts to not much more than "because I said so" on the part of the developer.

And what is the danger of not modifying this project? The long standing businesses like the hardware store and Sendiks' are the key to the Downer District. But what shopper in their right mind is going to wrestle a 20 pound bag of fertilizer or a weeks worth of groceries up to the fourth floor of a garage? The little old ladies that shop at Sendiks' aren't going to park in a structure, ever. The size and scale of this project will hurt these businesses more than it could possibly help them.

Finally, I know this is a small point in relation to the whole project but I would urge you to direct relocation of the Popcorn Wagon to the public area by Café Hollander rather than next to the bus shelter. This wagon is an icon for this district and it deserves a "public space" where the neighbors and visitors can gather. Shoved up against the CVS is not such a space. The fountain has been restored and the Popcorn Wagon would be the perfect complement to this refurbished space.

Sincerely,

Andrew L. Schwartz