

November 1, 2018

City of Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission
Zeidler Municipal Building
841 N. Broadway, Room B-1
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Historic Commission Members:

As neighbors of Washington Park, we support the nomination of the park as a local historic district. Each of us has long advocated on behalf of the park, including serving on the Steering Committee for a *Revitalization Plan for Washington Park*. That process, which meaningfully engaged many people within the community, was coordinated by Quorum Architects and approved by the County Board of Supervisors in 2000. We appreciate that this plan was underwritten by Milwaukee County as a long-term blueprint. A comprehensive planning document, it remains as relevant today as when it was developed.

Some of the Quorum plan's strategies have been implemented while others still need to be pursued, such as repairing and adding walkways, improving wayfinding, and fully restoring the lagoon as the park's central natural and aesthetic feature. This plan can assist in preservation planning for Washington Park, since it specifically drew upon the park's original planning documents and analyzed subsequent development and contemporary uses and opportunities.

We are grateful to live near such a distinguished park, which has served Milwaukee-area residents since the 1890s. We appreciate how, as Washington Park has evolved, it has clearly and beautifully retained design elements specified by Frederick Law Olmsted, widely considered the father of America's parks and our greatest landscape architect. Thus, Washington Park is a national treasure, not just a local jewel.

We believe that Washington Park deserves to be designated as a historic district to help protect and preserve its character-defining Olmstedian elements, just as Lake Park is within a historic district and its Olmsted history is celebrated. Designation could also protect the park's other historic resources, including the Art Deco band shell and monumental statuary. These assets are all part of the unique and irreplaceable heritage and narrative of our neighborhood, and of Milwaukee at large. Washington Park definitely contributes to the West Side's appeal and sense of place. Created as a regional park, it has also long attracted visitors from far beyond nearby neighborhoods.


A Washington Park historic district would also complement other West Side historic districts, including Washington Boulevard, Sherman Boulevard, Grant Boulevard, Hi Mount Boulevard, 47th Street Bungalow District, and Concordia. There are also many individual designated properties nearby. As is well documented, historic districts help to promote enhanced property values, economic development and civic pride.

Each of us has invested in West Side real estate; some of us own businesses. As engaged citizens, we also volunteer our time and energy to improving Washington Park and addressing challenges within our neighborhood.

We urge you to join us in supporting strategic efforts to revitalize this incomparable historic park. We believe that designation as a historic district will help the park continue to fulfill its role as a public green space, economic generator, cultural asset and gathering place. Historic designation will establish a meaningful framework and guidelines for maintaining and enhancing the park in necessary and appropriate ways that respect and retain its heritage integrity and add value to Metropolitan Milwaukee.

Thank you for your service to the preservation of Milwaukee's heritage.

Sincerely,



DAVID BOUCHER, Resident & Business Owner
Michael Houben - Resident
Pat Mueller, Resident & Business Owner