

From: [Steve O'Connell](#)
To: [planadmin](#)
Subject: Formal Objection to the Gorman & Company/Trent Overhue Application for the Storage Center at 5825 W. Hope Avenue and a massive 200-unit complex or double 100 unit complexes.
Date: Friday, July 17, 2026 8:01:58 AM

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Date: July 16, 2026

To: City of Milwaukee City Plan Commission,
c/o Department of City Development, 809 N. Broadway, 2nd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202
City Hall, 200 E. Wells St., Room 301-A or DCD Boardroom at 809 N. Broadway
PlanAdmin@milwaukee.gov

Subject: Formal Objection to the Gorman & Company/Trent Overhue Application for the Storage Center at 5825 W. Hope Avenue and a massive 200-unit complex or double 100 unit complexes.

To: The City of Milwaukee Plan Commission Members:

I am writing to formally log a strenuous community objection to the proposed Storage Center and 200-unit low-income housing apartment project submitted by Gorman & Company, slated for land owned by Trent Overhue. While our community deeply understands and supports the critical need for quality affordable housing, the history of this project proves that these developers do not have the well-being or safety of vulnerable populations in mind.

It is a matter of public record that this project was conceived as a packaged, transactional deal: Gorman & Company would build a massive 200-unit complex or double 100 unit complexes (still 200 units) on land purchased from Trent Overhue, conditioned upon the city approving an adjacent Walmart data center and self-storage project right next door to the residential units. **While intense public outcry has recently forced a change in the plan—resulting in the removal of the research/data center component—the underlying issue still remains: Gorman & Company and Trent Overhue willingly designed a plan that sacrificed human health for profit and without planned community meetings during which neighbors could offer their concerns about this project.**

The protected and vulnerable populations living in the immediate area of Midtown deserve developers and builders who naturally consider their health, safety, and dignity from day one. Gorman and Overhue did not think of them.

We urge the Plan Commission to deny support for this 200-unit project and self-storage units based on the severe structural safety, environmental, and zoning violations that

remain:

1. Deliberate Concealment of Health Risks

Originally, the developers initially failed to maintain open communication with the community regarding the true environmental repercussions of placing a heavy-utility data center directly adjacent to low-income housing. The potential use of diesel generators, the need to store massive amounts of diesel on site, pollution and particulates it would release into the air, noise concerns non stop humming sounds, closed loop water systems, chemicals used in that system, added stress to the energy grid as well as the sewer system that floods often. That they only stripped the data center from the proposal after being caught by the community demonstrates a reactive desire to secure funding, rather than a proactive commitment to resident health. The contentious community meetings left the community mistrusting the whole project.

2. Severe Traffic Dangers and Reckless Driving Risks for Children

The location of this proposed 200-unit development sits directly inside a dangerous traffic triangle bounded by **W. Fond du Lac Avenue, W. Capitol Drive, and N. 51st and 60th Streets**.

- **High-Crash Corridors:** These specific arterial streets are well-documented high-injury networks heavily impacted by Milwaukee's ongoing reckless driving and vehicle crash crisis.
- **Pedestrian Vulnerability:** Intentionally placing hundreds of low-income families—and by extension, a high concentration of children—in the immediate center of high-speed, high-volume traffic corridors is a recipe for pedestrian tragedy.

3. Egregious Site Layout: A Playground in a Parking Lot

Compounding the traffic dangers of the surrounding streets, the developers' site plan includes placing the designated children's playground **surrounded by a high-capacity commercial parking lot**. The Logistics Company directly north of the proposed site is a prime example of how this project has not been thought through. There is the potential of heavy duty trucks driving in the area as they load and unload at what was the old Lowe's store that closed around the same time as the WalMart store.

- This design choice forces young children to play on an island surrounded by moving vehicles, blind spots, and delivery traffic.
- It shows a fundamental disregard for basic child safety and showcases the developers' corner-cutting approach to layout planning. A parking lot and logistics

company warehouse is not a park, and vulnerable children deserve dedicated, safe, green recreational spaces protected from vehicular traffic.

4. Infrastructure Strain and Flood Zone Risks

Even without the data center, forcing a massive 200-unit complex onto this specific site introduces severe environmental and infrastructural hazards:

- **Chronically Stressed Sewer System:** This geographic pocket is a known flood zone where municipal sewer systems already frequently back up into neighborhood homes.
- **Increased Runoff:** Adding a massive apartment structure dramatically increases non-permeable surfaces. This will worsen local flooding, pushing hazardous wastewater and sewage backups into both the new units and surrounding residential homes.

What has been left out of all the discussion is the need for an indepth impact study of the area. As was pointed out above, this is a well known flood zone; the original area where the first Shopping Center in the State—Capitol Court—was placed was a swamp/marsh lowland area with three documented rivers in the area. Before any more development in this area is considered, we demand that an impact study be done and that the DNR be consulted about the area. Flooding in the whole area continues all the time.

The layout of the whole Midtown Shopping area did take into consideration the fact that back in the 1800s-into the early 1900s the designers of Capitol Court and even Albright United Methodist Church across Capitol Drive knew about the water/flood issues and designed green space for run off and were aware that they needed to protect the adjoining neighborhoods. When Capitol Court was removed, the flooding started in earnest. Before any change in the present structures be considered, let's make sure that the immediate neighborhoods and projected housing are protected.

5. Direct Violation of the Development Incentive Zone (DIZ)

This project remains completely out of step with local zoning protections. The local Development Incentive Zone (DIZ) explicitly dictates architecture and building scales that harmoniously fit into the existing neighborhood fabric. There are no 200-unit apartment complexes or double 100 unit complexes in this area. The majority of the housing is single owner occupied houses with scattered duplexes and some four plexes. Forcing a high-density complex of this scale into the neighborhood fundamentally violates the strict intent and guidelines of the DIZ.

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The Affordable Housing "Carrot": The developers explicitly attempted to use the critical need for affordable housing as a structural "carrot" to force severe zoning deviations through the City Plan Commission—attempting to leverage vulnerable families to greenlight a heavy-utility industrial data center and massive self-storage facility that completely oppose the promised, community-centric intent of the DIZ.

- **Persistent Non-Compliance:** While public outrage successfully killed the research center/data center component, **the developers are still actively pursuing the massive indoor self-storage facility** on this site. Storage facilities do not create vibrant neighborhood destinations or community-serving spaces; they kill local development. Using an affordable housing project to bait the city into approving an otherwise unwanted, unapproved storage facility proves a complete disregard for the community's master plan.

Conclusion

The City Plan Commission has an exemplary history of taking seriously its stewardship of vulnerable populations. Affordable housing should never be built by entities who view basic child safety, human health, and environmental safety as negotiable chips to be traded away until the public objects.

The initial coordinated strategy between Gorman & Company and Trent Overhue treated the lives of low-income residents as a non-concern. Even with a modified layout, this group has shown who they are. Vulnerable families deserve partners who care for their safety, the environment, and the community from the very beginning.

We respectfully request that the Commission uphold its high standards for community care and deny support for this project.

Thank you for your time, vigilance, and continued commitment to equitable, safe housing and a thriving community..

Sincerely,

Steve O'Connell

Resident leader: Grasslyn Manor Block Association

3180 N. 56th St., 414-445-7472