

Subject **Adventure Rock Climbing Gym**
From Vikram Shanker <viktechcomputers@gmail.com>
To <nkovac@milwaukee.gov>
Bcc <craig@adventurerock.com>
Date 2014-05-06 16:28



Mr Kovac,

I recently heard that there is an initiative to build a rock climbing facility in your district. As a resident of your district, and an avid climber, I strongly support this, and urge you to, as well. I believe that it will benefit the area in several ways.

The climbing community is extremely friendly to newcomers, often providing advice and support to encourage beginners to progress. Guests and visitors from the area will find friends and allies in a friendly and healthy environment.

The initiative will bring people who are closer to Riverwest than Pewaukee into the area. I have observed that the demographic currently frequenting these gyms tend to be fiscally stable, and willing to spend money. I have met many people that drive 40 to 60 minutes to attend the current gym - people that are dedicated to their passion. This fact, coupled with the unique local independent businesses in our neighborhood, will increase revenue in Riverwest and the surrounding areas.

Climbing provides a high-intensity, full-body workout which is extremely rewarding. This new location will provide the ability for area youths to develop a life-long passion, which they can explore safely by themselves, after school and on weekends.

The location of the gym, and the demographic of Riverwest, is sure to enable neighbors to meet and bond, increasing the cohesiveness and sense of camaraderie of the local community.

Finally, the location that is proposed will become one of the most popular climbing spots in Southeastern Wisconsin. There is a relative vacuum of climbing locations. Currently, only one multi-purpose gym offers climbing in the city of Milwaukee, and the quality of climbing in that establishment is low. This gym will quickly become well-known as the prime spot for Milwaukee climbing, camping, hiking, backpacking, and other outdoor activity.

I urge your strong support to allow this initiative to move forward. The community is in need of such a facility, and the neighborhood will only benefit from its presence.

I look forward to supporting your action.

Vikram Shanker
2464 N Dousman st
Milwaukee, 53212

Dear Alderman Kovac,

I am the chairman of the Century Climbing Challenge, part of the University of Wisconsin Union Directorate. In this volunteer role, I have the pleasure of working with climbers and climbing businesses across the state.

Adventure Rock helped start the Century Climbing Challenge in 2011. With their support, we have grown membership every year. For the 2013 challenge, climbers raised over \$3,400 for the Friends of Devil's Lake, the non-profit attached to the state park. This year's challenge is on pace for more than \$5,000 in donations—all from climbers.

These same climbers also help each year with graffiti cleanup and invasive species removal.



It's the *community* of climbing that makes this happen.

Before I started climbing about two years ago, I was an outdoor enthusiast who picked up trash on my own when I was outdoors. But I was always on my own. When I learned about climbing, Adventure Rock gave me a community, and I was no longer one person with environmental interests. Together, we have accomplished much more for Wisconsin parks.

Building community is where Adventure Rock excels. They draw in local families, students, adults young and old—everyone who discovers Adventure Rock discovers an extended family. For many, it starts with a date night or a birthday party, or something healthy and wholesome to do with friends on a boring Friday night. Before they know it, they're signing up to volunteer with their new climbing friends.

This year, I will join about 100 other climbers in raising funds for Devil's Lake and Governor Dodge state parks. Climbers also volunteer with the Ice Age Trail Alliance, REI and other organizations' environmental projects. I look forward to the support Adventure Rock will bring to the Milwaukee River—anywhere climbers congregate, they develop a sense of personal responsibility for the environment around them.

We love the outdoors. I look forward to bringing our passion to River West.

Sincerely,

Matthew Clausen
Chairman, Century Climbing Challenge
m@climb100.com

Andrew Miers
1812 E. Park Place
Milwaukee, WI 53211

May 6, 2014

Alderman Kovac,

My name is Andrew Miers and I currently live at 1812 E Park Place, on the East Side of Milwaukee. I am e-mailing you in regards to the new construction that will HOPEFULLY take place on the empty lot off of North and Commerce. In September of 2005, I moved to the East Side to attend the University of Milwaukee-Wisconsin, and have yet to leave this gorgeous, vibrant and growing area. During the summer of 2006, I became an employee of Adventure Rock and upon graduating college, was offered an internship opportunity, which, later turned into a full-time position.

As a resident of the East Side, you can imagine that I was very excited to hear about this opportunity. The distance from the east side to the current Brookfield location has always been an obstacle and inconvenience. While attending UW-M and working as a program developer for the Sandburg dorm residents, my attempts to create programming, host events and start a UW-M climbing club in conjunction with Adventure Rock had always been turned down by the University due to distance, transportation, lack of understanding of the sport, etc... As an avid and passionate climber who's life, like many climbers, has been so positively affected by the sport, my goal has always been to share the sport and the benefits it provides with others; which I was unable to do at UW-M. I feel strongly that this new location will provide incredible health, social, financial and employment benefits, among others, to UW-M students as well as the East Side, Riverwest, Downtown and surrounding residents.

I attended the meeting at the Riverview dorms on Wednesday, April 23rd and although I was weary at the start, I thought it turned out to be very productive. Having the opportunity to gather with residents and discuss the issues at hand in a properly mediated environment, which you did a superb job of, was well needed and very beneficial for all parties involved. It wasn't surprising to see participants with concerns regarding the project, approach and view all issues through a skeptical and even negative scope. It was very unfortunate to see some participants so blinded by the potential negatives; they were unable to see the plethora of positive benefits the project will provide.

The potential negative impact the project may have on the bluff, river valley, and nearby environment appeared to be the most voiced issue of the evening. What many of the environmental activists may not have been able to fully understand that night is, how environmentally conscious, involved, supportive and understanding the climbing community is; which is no fault of their own, because who can truly learn about and fully understand a community after a two hour meeting? Mark Nimmer, a longtime member of Adventure Rock, addressed the topic of how an indoor climbing facility is utilized by climbers as a training tool for outdoor climbing. Unfortunately, I don't think he was fully able to elaborate on this important statement. What a non-climber many not understand is, that

climbing outdoors isn't readily available to anyone and everyone. Just because it's done outdoors doesn't mean there aren't barriers to entry. Since outdoor climbing is done on federal, state or privately owned land, there are always access issues to be addressed and relationships to maintain to allow these areas to remain open. The concept, "You abuse it, you lose it," is very well understood by the climbing community and isn't only addressed through respect and proper etiquette, but also by donating time, money and resources.

I will admit that I have limited knowledge of the environmental impact this project may have. Although it's wrong to assume, I will assume that an eroding bluff will not only impact the environment, but also the structural foundation of the building, which would be a concern the engineer would hopefully address and prevent. With this project already under the watchful eye of the community, I'd expect the debris of the construction to be kept to a minimum and like the new dorms, non-existent when the construction is completed. Lastly, if the main concern and ultimate goal is to preserve and restore the river valley, the City of Milwaukee and active environmental groups couldn't have found a better neighbor, community, and business to partner with. Since I am unfamiliar with these environmental groups, I am unsure as to how many active members they have recruited to participate in the revitalization of the river valley and the means in which they use to raise awareness for their cause. With that being said, I can guarantee you the presence of Adventure Rock will not only increase the awareness of their cause, but promote it, increase funding, participation, and ultimately, revitalize the river valley back to the pristine condition it once was, in a much timelier manner.

For as long as I can remember, this plot of land has been a vacant and under-utilized dumping ground with no one to occupy, police or maintain. The attempts to restore the river valley have been going on for years, but with inadequate participation and resources, it has struggled to reach its full potential. As a strong and passionate advocate for Adventure Rock, I ask you to not only approve this project, but also help others understand what Adventure Rock will bring to the table. I can't stress enough the positive benefits the community will see socially, financially and environmentally by making this piece of land Adventure Rocks' new home and the Milwaukee River Valley its backyard.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Andrew Miers