



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

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To the Honorable Members of the
Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee
City of Milwaukee
City Hall, Room 205

Dear Committee Members:

File No. 150133 relates to the change in zoning from Industrial Mixed and Industrial Office to a General Planned Development for development of a school on properties located on the east and west sides of South 5th Street, south of West Harrison Avenue, in the 14th Aldermanic District.

This zoning change was requested by AEE LLC, and would allow phased development of a school on the project site. The first phase would consist of a K4 through 12th grade independent school, and the second phase would involve increasing the capacity of the facility. The school would include instructional and athletic space, outdoor athletic fields, uses ancillary to the school and surface parking. This file would approve a GPD, which establishes the parameters by which the site could be developed. Specific building elevations and detailed site plans would be reviewed and approved through a Detailed Planned Development (DPD) in the future before any construction may occur on the site. In addition to this zoning change, the applicant has also submitted an application to vacate the southern portion of South 4th Street, South 5th Street, the remnant of South 5th Place and alley remnant (FN 150183).

More specifically, Phase 1 will involve development of an up to 70 feet in height, 185,000 GSF structure and will provide capacity for 1,000 students in grades K4 through 12th grade plus a gymnasium. The intent would be to open the school in 2017. All outdoor athletic facilities and fields, including a small outbuilding supporting the fields, would be constructed in the first phase. The applicant has indicated that the gymnasium would be available to the public when not in use by the school, and will be constructed to accommodate basketball, volleyball and futsal. The outdoor facilities would also be made available to the public when not in use by the school, and would include a WIAA compliant track as well as a combined football and soccer field. Phase 2 includes expansion of the school by up to 100,000 GSF and an increase in the school capacity from 1,000 to 2,000 students by 2022/2023. Other possible elements in Phase 2 may include an auditorium and a 25 meter competition natatorium.

The current 9.4 acre site (including proposed vacated areas) is largely underutilized and vacant, surrounded by existing residential neighborhoods to the north, west and east, across the freeway. Given the existing adjacent residential context, a school and recreational facility is an appropriate land use. An up to 114 stall surface parking lot is proposed to be located east of the school. It would be landscaped per zoning requirements. Additionally, curbside pickup and drop-off will be provided on site. Arrivals and departures will be staggered by age group to minimize congestion. A loading apron is also provided on site to allow deliveries and trash/recycling pickup out of the right of way.

The Near South Side Plan has a specific recommendation for this parcel, that it "should be evaluated for a housing development that could include market rate and subsidized or supportive housing units with one & two family units, row houses and small multi-family buildings. The buildings and the site should be developed with green/sustainable principles to build upon the Kinnickinnic River revitalization efforts and evaluate the potential to incorporate a neighborhood park and other recreational activities."



As far as the appropriateness of a school at this site, the plan suggests that civic uses such as schools should be located at sites that are located nearby major intersections or locations where they are easily accessible by foot, car, bicycle or other modes of transit. This site is on a bus route and within a short walk of Lincoln Avenue and the Kinnickinnic River Trail. On balance, while residential is the preferred use for this site in the plan a school is a land use that is permitted in a residential district. Further, the plan contemplates other uses than industrial for this site and this is the type of site where the plan would support a school use from a locational standpoint.

In advance of the City Plan Commission meeting, Planning Staff received 12 letters in support of the project, stating that a quality school is needed in this area and can help to transform the neighborhood. On June 8, 2015, a public hearing was held and at that time, approximately 20 people registered in support of the proposal and 4 people registered in opposition. One person in opposition stated that public funds should not be used for private schools. Two people who own a company, Bird Ladder and Equipment, immediately north of the eastern zoning change boundary and their attorney stated that they were concerned about retaining sufficient room for trucks that access their site to turn around. Their driveway appears to be located on all of vacated Klondike Street though only half the limits from the vacated street reverted to their property. The architect and developer stated that they would work with the business owners to make sure that access to their site would be retained. Those who appeared in support of the proposal stated that this is a tremendous opportunity for the neighborhood and the children in the area.

Since this proposed use is consistent with the existing context of the residential neighborhood and comprehensive area plan, and bus and vehicular circulation will not adversely impact the existing neighborhood, the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on June 8, 2015 recommended approval of the subject file.

Sincerely,



Rocky Marcoux

Executive Secretary

City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

cc: Ald. Tony Zielinski