

Copy sent to Mayor Barrett

Mayor Tom Barrett
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

City of Milwaukee Plan Commission
809 N. Broadway
Milw, WI 53202

Re: files #070034 & 061440

Dear City, Plan Commissioners

Re Downer Ave Redevelopment
Zoning Change, Phase 1

I realize that the City of Milwaukee desperately needs an increased tax base to support services for all its citizens and I understand that one of the means to do this is development of new housing and retail outlets in affluent areas. I realize too that the Downer Avenue commercial district needs revitalization after a former monopoly landlord did not pay enough attention to his properties there for over a decade, allowing buildings to deteriorate and empty storefronts to linger.

However, New Land Enterprises and Van Buren Management's *Downer Avenue Masterplan* that proposes an 11-story condo/hotel, streetscaping, façade facelifts, and an inpatient surgical center, also includes the sale of city land to build a 5-story open-roof parking structure at the district's central intersection at Downer Avenue and Bellevue Place. The two-block business area would be dominated by this structure. Its scale, design, appearance, and placement, as well as its utilitarian function, would erase the appealing, eminently marketable, irreplaceable character of the Downer Ave. city-designated historic commercial district.

This district serves citizens from the entire metropolitan area and also attracts people from the suburbs and even from outside the state and the country who are looking to spend time and money in a small European village atmosphere. It makes no sense to ruin a neighborhood that brings recognition to Milwaukee as a destination for history-seeking city-dwellers and travelers along with the revenue that comes with this, in exchange for a utilitarian parking garage.

The *National Trust for Historic Preservation* has strongly objected to this plan for this site, stating: "Simply put, a 5-story parking garage is not the right use for this site." Moreover, the State of Wisconsin's preservation office, *The State Historical Society*, has invoked statutory authority to require the City of Milwaukee to enter into negotiations to "attempt to avoid, minimize or otherwise mitigate the adverse effects resulting from the proposed project," on the entire North Point North Federal Historic district which borders the Downer Ave commercial district.

- 1) Please direct the Department of City Development planning staff to participate in good faith in these negotiations.
- 2) Please direct them to seek alternative development plans that involve meaningful community input and ultimately preserve as well as enhance the unique, marketable appeal of the Downer Ave. historic commercial district.
- 3) Please put the sale of the land at 2574-90 N. Downer and the current plan for development on hold until these steps are taken.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth B. Jones
746 E. Day Ave
53217