

May 2007

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

Re: file #070034 & 061440

Honorable Commissioners:

I realize that the City of Milwaukee desperately needs an increased tax base to support the services for all its citizens and I understand that one of the means to do this is development of new housing in affluent areas. However, the Downer Ave Masterplan that proposes a 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 whose scale, design, and appearance 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 one neighborhood that brings recognition to Milwaukee as a destination for history-seeking travelers and the revenue that comes with this, in exchange for a utilitarian parking garage.

The *National Trust for Historic Preservation* has strongly objected to the sale of the city land for this purpose. 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.

Please direct the Department of City Development planning staff to participate in good faith in these negotiations. Please support alternative development of the city land at 2574-90 N. Downer that involves community input and ultimately enhances the unique, marketable appeal of the Downer Ave. historic commercial district.

Sincerely,

Andrew B. Martin

Janet North Martin

2427 E. Bellevue Place