



**Milwaukee Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Cmte.
Public Hearing on Harley Davidson Museum
May 21, 2004, City Hall, Milwaukee**

Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on Harley Davidson's plans to acquire City land to construct a museum complex near the intersection of Sixth and Canal streets in the eastern end of the Menomonee Valley. I am Cheryl Nenn, Project Director, of Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers.

Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers (FMR) is a non-profit organization, representing roughly 350 members in the greater Milwaukee area. Our mission is to protect and improve the water quality and wildlife habitat of the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers. FMR's constituents are very concerned with both maintaining and improving public access to our rivers for recreation and conserving the beauty and health of our rivers, which enhance our quality of life.

It is our understanding that Harley Davidson is proposing to completely control the property east of 6th street, which is currently Traser Yards, governing how much public access would be allowed during certain times of year. FMR believes that public access to the Menomonee River and Burnham Canal is a public right that must be upheld 24 hours a day/7days a week/365 days a year. Public access to our waters is guaranteed to the citizens of Wisconsin under the Public Trust Doctrine, which dates back to the time when Virginia ceded the Northwest Territories to what is now Wisconsin. As a condition of handing over this property, the new territory promised that "the navigable waters ... shall be common highways and forever free ... to the inhabitants of said territory as to the citizens of the United States". This language is mirrored in the Wisconsin Constitution.

It is also our understanding that the Harley Davidson Plan includes green space along the water's edge on both the northern and southern portions of the Traser Yards site. FMR is in favor of a Riverwalk and green space along the Menomonee River and Burnham Canal at this location, but urges the City of Milwaukee to work with Harley Davidson to require the installation of a vegetative buffer near the river that will both protect water quality and be aesthetically beautiful.

FMR also urges the City and Harley Davidson to rethink proposed plans to construct parking lots west of 6th Street in the Valley. Innovative use of existing parking, and possible construction of a parking structure with a smaller footprint would be appropriate at this location and would better fit the Menomonee Valley Vision. Given our local problems with flooding and sewer overflows, FMR also urges the City to require innovative stormwater control to capture and treat runoff from any parking lots and impervious surface placed at this riverfront location. FMR feels strongly that new development, especially along our rivers and lake, must adhere to higher design standards that protect our waters and quality of life.

Thank you.

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