

Lee, Chris

From: Erin Richards <richards.erin@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 25, 2023 8:43 AM
To: Zamarripa, JoCasta; Bauman, Robert; Brostoff, Jonathan; Murphy, Michael (Alderman); Stamper II, Russell
Cc: Lee, Chris
Subject: My 2 cents on the 794 /downtown dev plan

Hello, Alderpeople and Chris,

I'm Erin Richards, 3130 S. Pine Ave. in Bay View, and I've been watching the debate over the whole 794 thing and downtown development plan. I know you're likely to pass the plan today, but if I may offer another my own input: I have loved the way the downtown/overhead freeway goes through Milwaukee ever since I moved here in 2007. (I never saw the spur that has become the Fiserv Forum area / that one did seem dumb)

From what I've read, however, it's prohibitively expensive to repair the leg through downtown and bringing it down to street level is what's going to happen. My concern is that in the future, me and anyone else using 794 to get the hell out of downtown traffic (or avoid it to get quickly from home to 94 west or 43 north) now will have to come down to street level with this redesign and poke around bumper to bumper on city streets, which are already a crammed, pain in the ass - especially in summer with street closures and barrels everywhere.

Did you see the Janet Jackson traffic and the backups during other Summerfest shows this summer? Please, please work with your planners and architects to ensure there's a plan to accommodate all that. (I know more of this will develop in other committees, however, but you'll get a whack at it again).

So what I'm asking you to consider is this: Since bringing the highway through downtown down to street level seems inevitable, will you PLEASE raise discussion / exert the influence you have over designs that hasten those of us trying to get from Bay View to Mequon --- or Bay View to Tosa (ditto for the opposite direction) by using 794 and who have little patience for crappy downtown street designs that don't facilitate traffic flow?

Of course there's always 94, but that gets REALLY backed up at rush hour. Our speedy way home has helped facilitate growth in the near southern suburbs - and concerns from us there should be considered alongside the future residents you and the rest of the folks in on this plan hope to bring to downtown.

Lastly, please remember that downtown development in terms of bringing condo owners vs renters WILL indeed always be limited by the prospects of Milwaukee Public Schools. As a former education reporter here and national education reporter for USA Today (and also someone who has chosen to make Milwaukee my home), I care deeply about the city schools and I also know that efforts here to improve them are vastly behind efforts of other cities of our size. Discussing what can be done about that should be a major part of downtown development discussions, as they pertain to growing/attracting residents who may have or want children who would use those public services.

That was more than 2 cents. Thanks for reading.

Erin Richards
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