

February 12, 2008

To the Honorable Common Council  
Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee  
City of Milwaukee

Dear Committee Members:

File No. 070963 relates to the change in zoning from General Planned Development (GPD) to Detailed Planned Development (DPD) known as Downer Avenue Redevelopment Phase II, on land located generally on the West and East Sides of North Downer Avenue between East Park Place and East Webster Place, in the 3rd Aldermanic District.

The General Planned Development that was approved by Common Council on February 22, 2007, established zoning standards for a \$60 million redevelopment plan for revitalizing the 2500 and 2600 blocks of the declining Downer Avenue commercial corridor. The general plan established permitted uses, building height and a master plan for rehabilitating existing buildings and vacant commercial spaces, bringing new medical office tenants and residents, and new building construction.

The second phase of development would permit the construction of a 7-story hotel and 11-story residential condominium building, with 3-story townhomes along Stowell. The Mulkern's Building (garage) will be renovated and a new, 4-story addition will be constructed for medical office tenants at the southeast corner of North Downer Avenue and East Park Place. More specifically:

1. Residential condominium and townhouse building (2502 and 2512 E. Webster Pl., 2560-2562, 2566, and 2570 N. Stowell Ave)
2. Hotel (mid-block building at 2567-2577 N. Downer Ave)
3. Renovation of the Mulkern's garage building with retail uses and 4-story office addition (southeast corner of East Park Place and North Downer Avenue).

All proposed uses are permitted under the approved GPD. The GPD approved an 11-story condominium and hotel building. To reduce the overall volume of the building, the 11-story orientation (now solely the condominium building) was rotated to a north-south orientation to allow for 5 townhomes with individual, private entrances along Stowell Avenue. The townhomes will be three stories in height and will provide a transition in mass towards the residential neighborhood to the west.

The reduction in volume and change in orientation also allowed the 7-story hotel component to be separate from the condominium building. It will be located east of the alley, along Downer Avenue, instead of across the alley. The reconfiguration reduced the overall volume of the building by approximately 100,000 cubic feet and the height of the building. More than half of the site is below the maximum volume approved in the GPD.

On February 11, 2008, a public hearing was held and at that time a few people spoke in support of the proposal and several neighbors opposed it. Opposition was in regard to overall height of the buildings, which were approved per the GPD, and request for more neighborhood input. Since the proposed change is consistent with the approved GPD, the City Plan Commission at its regular meeting on February 11, 2008 recommended approval of the subject file, conditioned on exploring the reduction of the length of the balcony along Downer Avenue and working with Department of City Development staff on final design details.

Sincerely,

Rocky Marcoux  
Executive Secretary  
City Plan Commission of Milwaukee

cc: Ald. Michael D'Amato