

Milwaukee River Advocates Co-op

2934 N. Humboldt Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
414-372-3443
milwriver@gmail.com

An Open Letter to the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee and the Milwaukee Common Council from Milwaukee River Advocates Co-operative.

May 29, 2014

Greetings,

Regarding FN 140045, AMENDMENT #3, GENERAL PLAN PROJECT, DESCRIPTION AND OWNER'S STATEMENT OF INTENT; and FN 140046, DETAILED PLAN PROJECT, DESCRIPTION AND OWNER'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The mission of MRA Co-op is to cultivate the natural habitat of the Milwaukee River, to provide educational and stewardship opportunities for members, and to engage people and organizations in the preservation and renewal of that habitat to restore it to pre-settlement conditions.

MRA Co-op organizes, promotes and supports activities that move in the direction of restoration, and opposes activity and development that move in the opposite direction.

In the interests of the primary environmental corridor (PEC) of the Milwaukee River and its natural habitat, and of all Riverwest and city residents who enjoy the natural beauty of this wonderful resource, MRA Co-op urges the Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee and the Milwaukee Common Council to reject the requested changes and allowances of FN 140045 and FN 140046 unless the following changes are made.

1. There be no path accessing the West bank of the Milwaukee River. Paths always cut off passage of wildlife, and between Commerce and Capital on the West bank there are already 19 points of access from the parks, streets and bluff. In this immediate area there are the dorm path, the Rivercrest I staircase, and the pedestrian bridge path. Any convenience gained by adding an additional path is far outweighed by the environmental damage it will cause.
2. That there be no paved or gravel paths anywhere below the bluff line.
3. That only native plants be used in all areas where the owner plans to do planting. The current plan calls for "native and natural" plants, and that language could allow for non-native species since all plants are "natural."
4. That all signage without exception conform to the standards of the General Plan Development, meaning that no signage be visible from the East or West river bank as specified by the View Shed defined by the Milwaukee River Overlay District. An exception is an unacceptable precedent which would lead to more signage to blemish our experience of the beauty of the Milwaukee River and its foot trails.

5. That the footprint of all building construction be moved back to fifty feet or more from the bluff line, as is specified for all construction on the North side of North Avenue. The same environmental protection reasoning that protects the North side of North Avenue applies to the same corridor immediately to the South of North Avenue. The current plan is 8 feet (or 10 feet 9 inches, it varies depending on which document or drawing is being used) at its closest to a mere 21 feet at its furthest, always way below even 50% of the same requirement less than 100 yards to the North.

6. That MRA Co-op be allowed to write “rules of etiquette” on how to enjoy the river and its footpaths with respect and without violating the corridor’s carrying capacity, including such courtesies as staying on existing paths, and respecting no biking regulations on county owned areas. And that Adventure Rock and Mandel Group allow MRA Co-op to conduct quarterly workshops on proper ways to appreciate and enjoy the River without exceeding its carrying capacity. That lease and membership contracts require tenants and members to attend this workshop and abide by these rules.

Regards,

Milwaukee River Advocates Co-operative

cc: Mandel Group
Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee
Milwaukee Common Council members
Mayor Barrett
Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
River Revitalization Foundation
Urban Ecology Center
Members and supporters of MRA Co-operative