



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

Vanessa L. Koster
Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Bauman
4th Ald. District

CITY PLAN COMMISSION ZONING REPORT

Ordinance File Nos. [211529](#)

Location: Land generally bounded by the Milwaukee River to the south and west, North Harbor Drive to the east, and East Corcoran Avenue to the north (*see map on last page*).

Applicant: City of Milwaukee by a motion of the Common Council

Current Zoning: Industrial Mixed (IM)

Proposed Zoning: Downtown-Mixed Activity (C9G)

Proposal: This file refers to the change in zoning from Industrial Mixed, IM, to Downtown-Mixed Activity, C9G, on land generally bounded by the Milwaukee River to the south and west, North Harbor Drive to the east, and East Corcoran Avenue to the north, in the 4th Aldermanic District.

The Common Council adopted a motion sponsored by Alderman Robert Bauman that directed the Dept. of City Development (DCD) to introduce a proposed zoning change ordinance that would rezone this portion of the Historic Third Ward from Industrial Mixed (IM) to Downtown – Mixed Activity (C9G). The Downtown – Mixed Activity (C9G) district is the zoning already in place for the majority of properties located within the Historic Third Ward. The C9G zoning district is designed and intended to permit a wide range of retail, service, light manufacturing and residential uses.

These subject sites within the proposed zoning change boundary were assigned the IM zoning designation at the time the current zoning code was adopted in October 2002, likely to correlate with the land uses at that time when there were more active industrial users in the area. The IM zoning designation allows the orderly conversion of certain older industrial and warehousing areas with multi-story buildings to residential, commercial or offices uses for which the buildings, at the present time, may be better suited.

The uses allowed in the C9G District are generally very similar to the uses that are allowed in the IM District. This include residential units, both apartments and condos, restaurants, offices, health clubs, and retail stores. Assembly Halls are permitted in the C9G zoning district, while requiring a Special Use approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals to operate in the IM district.

Theaters are currently permitted in the C9G district. However, a separate ordinance has been introduced by the Common Council that would change theaters to a “Limited Use” in the C9G district, requiring a Special Use approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals if their capacity exceeds 2,000 persons. This proposed ordinance is Common Council File Number 211537 and will also be considered at the March 7th CPC meeting.

There are some differences between the IM and C9G zoning districts, the most significant being:

- C9G has no parking requirements. The IM district does include a relatively low minimum parking requirement, including options for developers to meet the requirements by providing parking in off-site lots, shared parking and other methods. The C9G district has no parking requirements, consistent with the majority of downtown zoning districts including the other portions of the Third Ward.
- C9G includes some additional limits on industrial uses. Both the IM and C9G districts reflect the transitioning of neighborhoods from a more manufacturing, industrial and storage type area, to an area that is becoming more mixed use, more residential, and more commercial. IM has **no** size limits on light manufacturing uses; in the C9G zoning district, a light manufacturing use larger than 3,600 sq. ft. would need a Special Use approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- Design standards are very similar. The maximum height limit in the IM district for a non-industrial building is 75 feet. The C9G does not have a set maximum height, but uses a floor area ratio to set the maximum density for a building. Building scale in the Third Ward is also addressed through the Third Ward Design Guidelines which are administered by the Historic Third Ward Architectural Review Board. The C9G zoning and ARB guidelines would generally limit heights to the 7 or 8 stories range. First floor glazing (storefronts) requirements and restriction on overhead garage doors for townhouses facing the street remain the same.

If a use is currently allowed under the IM zoning but isn't permitted under the proposed C9G zoning, the use will have legal non-conforming status provided the user has an occupancy permit for the use on file with the Dept. of Neighborhood Services. This allows the user to continue to use the property, but there may be some restrictions on the ability to make changes to that use such as intensification or expansion of the use. Board of Zoning Appeals approval might be required if the user proposes to make changes to the use or expand a legal non-conforming use.

Adjacent Land Use:

Surrounding properties to the north of the subject sites are in the Downtown-Mixed Activity (C9G) zoning district. Properties located across the Milwaukee River to the southwest are zoned as Industrial Mixed (IM). East of the subject area are lands owned by the City of Milwaukee and under control of the Board of Harbor Commissioners that include the Summerfest grounds and adjacent parking lots, zoned Park – PK. The zoning and allowable use of those properties would not be impacted by this zoning change.

Consistency with Area Plan:

This area is within the Third Ward Area Plan, which was adopted in 2005, and amended in 2006. The Plan provides recommendations for specific locations in the neighborhoods, by districts and corridors. The proposed area for rezoning falls within “Area A – Historic Third Ward District” and “Area B – South Residential District.”



The Vision for Area A describes that “the District’s in-fill opportunities deserve careful consideration so that appropriate fitting buildings activate the street edge, complete the blockface, and add new elements of contemporary style consistent with the scale and grain of the historic context.” (p. 53) The Use Policy specifies to “encourage a change in use from surface parking to mixed-use development.” (p. 55)

The Vision for Area B “is based on extending the qualities that have made the historic district so successful to the east and south. These qualities include integrating ground floor retail, services, and restaurants into the residential mix, where feasible, a respect for the industrial heritage of the neighborhood, and connections, both physical and visual to the Milwaukee River.” (p. 57) The Use Policy specifies to “[d]iscourage industrial expansion or any new industrial uses in this district. There is no reason to press for existing industrial users to leave. The industrial users pose no serious nuisance concerns at present for those seeking to live an urban lifestyle here. These uses provide a bit of grit, a real life link to the history of the location.

