



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

6th Ald. District
Ald. Coggs

CITY PLAN COMMISSION ZONING REPORT

File No: [240526](#)

Location: 1224 N. Vel R Phillips Avenue, 1244 N. Vel R Phillips Avenue, 1245 N. Martin Luther King Jr Drive, 1225 N. Martin Luther King Jr Drive, and 300 W. Juneau Avenue

**Applicant/
Owner:** Jeffers Block 5 Partners, LLC (Applicant/Developer)

**Current
Zoning:** General Planned Development (GPD) known as Arena Master Plan

**Proposed
Zoning:** Detailed Planned Development (DPD) known as Block 5 – Arena Master Plan

Proposal: In 2016, a GPD known as the Arena Master Plan was established for the entire 8-block Deer District and serves as a zoning master plan for future development within the district. Consistent with the GPD, this zoning change to a DPD will allow the construction of a mixed-use building on Block 5 of the master plan. Block 5 is bounded by West McKinley Avenue, North Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, West Juneau Avenue, and North Vel R. Phillips Avenue.

Jeffers Block 5 Partners, LLC is proposing to construct a 5-7 story building with ground floor commercial space and approximately 269 market rate residential units on the upper floors. The 7-story volume is located on the south portion of the block and the 5-story portion is on the north side. The residential component of the building will be equipped with a ground floor resident lobby, fitness area and outdoor rooftop space, and on-site management offices, among other amenities. A 278-space parking structure that will be utilized by the residents is located at the center of the block, mostly concealed by the building.

The northern portion of the block includes an outdoor plaza on the northeast corner and the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) fieldhouse to the west. The fieldhouse will have a pre-function entry lobby, public restrooms, concessions, locker rooms, service and storage support areas on the ground floor.

Residential units will be on the upper floors. The southern portion of the block includes future retail spaces along the ground floor that may be occupied by uses such as a sit-down style restaurant or café, or other commercial uses.

Building materials primarily consist of brick masonry with precast concrete accents. The insets within grouped window areas on the upper floors will be clad with fiber cement panels. The east façade of the fieldhouse, facing the corner of McKinley Avenue and King Drive, will be clad with a sandblasted finish precast concrete panel base, acid etched precast concrete panels above and vertical striated precast concrete panels at insets. Reveals will be utilized to break down the massing of the wall, with the base strengthened by a tighter reveal spacing. Prefinished metal panels will be used at the top of the 7-story building on the south portion of the block. There is a rooftop terrace along Juneau Avenue for use by the residents. Aluminum storefront window system will be used at the ground floor. Fiberglass windows will be used on the floors above.

The building design, materials and uses meet the requirements of the Arena Master Plan GPD.

Street Activation:

The GPD establishes minimum requirements for street activation and the percentage of glazing at the ground floor of the building. Overall, the proposal meets or exceeds the GPD minimum requirements. Based on the site configuration and building layout, some modifications and adjustments have been made to the precise locations of the low, medium and high activation zones, but all adjustments meet the intent, and meet or exceed the minimum requirements of the GPD.

The majority of the uses that occupy the ground floor of the building will be public and/or commercial spaces that are intended to enhance street activation in accordance with GPD design standards. Specific uses include the resident entry and lobby amenity on the east (King Drive) elevation. The south (Juneau) elevation will be activated with retail entries and uses. The west (Vel R. Phillips) elevation will be activated with fieldhouse entry, pre-function space and fitness area. The activating uses on the north (McKinley) elevation include the fieldhouse fitness area. See Exhibit A (narrative) for a more detailed analysis of the activation zones.

Screening:

The applicant has stated that any mechanical units that are visible from the perimeter of the site will be concealed with architectural roof screens or parapets to screen the view.

Signage:

See the building elevations in the Exhibit for proposed sign locations. All signage will be designed per requirements of the Milwaukee Zoning Code, section 295-407. All permanent signs listed below may be allowed to have changeable messaging, subject to DCD staff review.

Signage types include:

- Temporary construction signage.
- Temporary perimeter site signage that will consist of a fabric sign material with graphics designed to obscure the construction activity and enliven the block. The fabric sign will cover between 50% and 100% of the perimeter construction fence.
- Wall signs with internal face lit dimensional letters
- Canopy signs
- Roof signs
- Projecting signs
- Banner signs as shown at the insets on the east façade of the Fieldhouse.

**Circulation, parking,
and loading:**

Pedestrian Access:

Pedestrian access points are located around the perimeter of the building, at entrances to the individual commercial spaces, fieldhouse, and residential lobby. The main entrance for the residential lobby is along King Drive, and the main entrance for the field house is along Vel R. Phillips Av.

Bicycle Parking:

A minimum of 23 short term and 73 long term bicycle parking stalls will be provided for the entire building, and will comply with the zoning code with respect to minimum numbers, rack types, and so on. The interior bike parking room for the residents will be located near the lobby. Short term bike parking locations will be distributed around the building near entrances.

Vehicular Access and Parking:

A 4-level parking garage with 278-space parking structure is located at the center of the block and will be accessed at the west side of the block, off of N. Vel R. Phillips Av. The parking will be available for residents of the building. The plaza will be accessed occasionally for loading and utility maintenance purposes from both McKinley and King Drive. DPW is working with the applicant to identify terms by which the plaza may be utilized by the fieldhouse for loading and deliveries.

Loading (deliveries, move in/out for residential, and trash pick-up):

The applicant has proposed loading zones along Martin Luther King Jr Dr., Juneau Av., and Vel. R Phillips Av. to accommodate loading and delivery needs. An enclosed loading trash bay is located along Juneau Av. that will also provide space for resident move-ins/outs and building deliveries. Trash will be staged in this area with multiple dumpsters that will be rolled out for truck pick-up in the loading zone during scheduled pickups. Retail and resident trash rooms will have direct access to the internal loading area. The proposed loading zone at the north end of Vel R. Phillips Av. for use by the fieldhouse for drop-offs, deliveries and

trash pickup is within a right turn lane. DPW has requested that the applicant work with them on the feasibility of utilizing the right turn lane for loading, and has also requested additional information on the loading that is proposed to occur within the plaza for the fieldhouse operations. All loading zones in the right-of-way are subject to DPW and Common Council approval, and are not part of the DPD zoning.

Lighting:

A mix of building-mounted systems along with integral and freestanding lighting elements are utilized throughout the project. The northeast plaza area will include wall-mounted sconces, wall packs at exits and strip lights at the top of insets on the east facade of the fieldhouse to light the banner signs in the identified areas. LED fixtures are integrated into the exterior envelope design to create an integrated look and feel. Entries are illuminated via soffit and canopy-mounted down lights. Similar building-mounted fixtures are present at the vehicular and service entries to the west.

The south façade of the building will be illuminated with sconces, wall washing lights, soffit downlights at the southwest and southeast exterior areas. The exterior corner areas will have strip lighting in the planters along with strip lighting to highlight the prominent southwest corner of the building. The lighting concepts used on the south elevation and fixture types will also be used on the east, north and west elevations.

Plaza:

An outdoor plaza is located at the northeast corner of the site, at the corner of McKinley and King Drive. Most of this land is not buildable due to underground MMSD utilities and existing easements. The plaza will be pedestrian-only but will be accessible by MMSD vehicles as needed for maintenance of the utilities. Additionally, the applicant is proposing to utilize the west portion of the plaza (off of McKinley) for fieldhouse-related loading and deliveries. DPW has requested additional information from the applicant on how this loading will occur and the types of vehicles that will load within the plaza area.

Removable bollards will be in place to restrict vehicular access and will be removed as needed by MMSD and the fieldhouse. Significant landscaping will be added where possible within the plaza, and a dog walk area will be provided along the south edge of the plaza for use by the residents. Benches will be provided for seating, and there will be space for a public art installation. Lighting will be added for aesthetics and safety. The applicant continues to work with MMSD, DPW and DCD on the layout and design of the plaza as it relates to the utilities and easements.

Adjacent Zoning and

Land Use:

Land located to the north, across McKinley, is zoned Industrial Mixed (IM) and includes apartment buildings and a bank. Land to the east is zoned Redevelopment – Park East (RED) and consists of the Aloft hotel. Land located to the south and west are located within the Arena Master Plan GPD boundary,

consisting of a mix of uses including in the Deer District entertainment block, including the Fiserv Forum and Trade Hotel.

**Consistency with
Area Plan:**

The proposed DPD is within the boundaries of the Downtown Area Plan, adopted in 2023. The Downtown Area Plan encourages high density residential and mixed-use development on underutilized land throughout Downtown, including in the Deer District. The plan also encourages new buildings to engage the public realm and promote walkability by filling in gaps in the built environment, having attractive well-designed facades fronting the public realm, and providing active uses and large storefront windows in the street level area. The plan also supports the growth of Downtown colleges and universities, and encourages new development to designate locations for public art. The proposed development is consistent with the Downtown Area Plan.

**Previous City
Plan Action:**

11/23/2015 – The City Plan Commission recommended conditional approval of the change in zoning Downtown - Warehouse and Light Manufacturing (C9H), Downtown - Civic Activity (C9D(A)), and Redevelopment - Park East (RED) to a General Planned Development (GPD) for the arena master plan. (FN 150724)

12/3/2018 – The City Plan Commission recommended approval of the First Amendment to the Arena Master Plan GPD to allow temporary banner signs and lighting on the existing parking structure on Block 2 of the GPD. (FN 181157)

**Previous Common
Council Action:**

1/19/2016 – The Common Council approved the change in zoning Downtown - Warehouse and Light Manufacturing (C9H), Downtown - Civic Activity (C9D(A)), and Redevelopment - Park East (RED) to a General Planned Development (GPD) for the arena master plan. (FN 150724)

12/18/2018 – The Common Council approved the First Amendment to the Arena Master Plan GPD to allow temporary banner signs and lighting on the existing parking structure on Block 2 of the GPD. (FN 181157)

Recommendation:

Since the proposal is consistent with the Arena Master Plan GPD standards and the Downtown Area plan, staff recommends approval of the file conditioned on the applicant continuing to work with DPW and DCD on the final plaza design, and submitting updated exhibits that incorporate comments previously provided by DCD and DPW. Those comments generally include:

1. Revising the narrative to incorporate requests for technical corrections and clarification, and include details on how the plaza area will be utilized for loading by both the MATC fieldhouse and MMSD.

2. Revising the landscape plan to reflect the final plaza design that is acceptable to MMSD, DPW and DCD.
3. Correcting the east elevation to include the full east façade.
4. Revising the site plan to include the square footages of the commercial tenant spaces, reduce the width of the screening element of the outdoor seating area at the corner of King Drive and Juneau to maintain the 12.5' sidewalk width adjacent to the bus stop, add additional short term bike parking locations as required, and show the locations of the existing bus stops as well as the proposed loading zones to demonstrate that there are not any conflicts.
5. Providing additional perspective drawings that reflect the final building and plaza design, as requested.