

**From:** Debbie F  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 10, 2007 9:55 PM  
**To:** Schiller, Lynn; mayor@milwaukee.gov; Sam McGovern-Rowen; mdamat@milwaukee.gov  
**Subject:** Downer Avenue Proposal by New Land Development - Stop! Look! Listen! Slow Down

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February 10, 2007

City of Milwaukee  
Mayor Barrett, Alderman D'Amato  
City of Milwaukee Planning Commission  
200 East Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mayor Barrett, Alderman D'Amato and the City of Milwaukee Planning Commission:

I am writing to express concern and opposition to some of the plans proposed by New Land Enterprises for the development of the Downer Avenue Business District and a request for a zoning change. I live in the Georgetown Condominium Units on the corner of North Hackett Avenue and Park and my condo home will be affected significantly by the proposed rezoning, new buildings and parking.

In fact, I am already being significantly affected by the success of the new restaurant 'Café Hollander' which opened in November 2006 in the expanded location of Gil's restaurant. I love the new restaurant but not what has happened to parking. Parking has been dramatically affected for the residents on Hackett Avenue, the same block that includes the new restaurant. The 20 Regency and Georgetown Condos do not have any parking included with their condos and therefore, we must use street parking. These condo units yield over \$100,000 in property taxes plus above average incomes for the City of Milwaukee. We live adjacent to a great business district on Downer Avenue, and we have always jockeyed for parking with residents, employees, Sunday and evening church activities from the Church in the City and St. Mark Episcopal Church and customers in this area...just part of living in this area. However, with the enlarged restaurant, most evenings I have to search for parking on adjacent streets. When I left for work on Friday, February 9 at 7:30 AM, only 3 cars (not mine) were parked in front of our residencies on Hackett, which shows you how much employee and customer parking in the evenings have forced the condo owners off of Hackett Avenue parking to other neighborhood parking.

I disagree that there has been adequate public hearings on these plans. The hearings scheduled on January 8, 2007 were cancelled. I do agree that the Downer Avenue Business District needs to be improved, but many things need to be taken into consideration.

The stagnation of businesses on Downer Avenue has been affected due to multiple reasons:

- Landlords which have failed to maintain their properties and drove out tenants with lack of maintenance
- Increasing business rents
- Lack of parking for residents, employees, and customers.
- Intense enforcement of the parking regulations which makes this area less desirable to visit

This area serves a high student population, plus employees and residents. As long as there is free street parking, most people will seek the free street parking in lieu of metered or paid parking garages if they only have to walk a few blocks.

After reading the proposal to the City of Milwaukee Planning Commission, it is very difficult to assess the impact of the building renovations and improvements and new buildings. Is there enough parking which meets the planned growth of residential, hotel, restaurant, retail, ambulatory surgery center, doctor's office, and banquet facilities? What are the various ratios for parking for the use and square footage in the City of Milwaukee? The plan refers to land use but not occupied space. What is the square footage of the condo/ hotel complex? How much office space is being added?

#### **Hotel/Condominium Complex**

The plan includes 78 hotel rooms, 52 condo units with a ratio of 1.76 parking spaces per condo unit, a restaurant and banquet facilities. How many employees will work at this complex? What parking is provided for the employees, hotel guests, restaurant guests and banquet facility guests?

#### **Medical Office Complex on Downer Avenue and Park**

The standard for parking for doctor's offices is denser than retail parking. I have planned medical office buildings and the ratio that we use is 4 -5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet. Medical offices need drop off and pick up areas. Can you picture a patient from the ambulatory surgery center walking across Downer Avenue to a parking garage after a surgical procedure? The needs for senior citizens access to a medical building is even greater for drop off and pickup, access to wheelchairs, etc.

The medical office building will be adjacent to the Georgetown Condos. What will be done for waste removal – there is not enough space in the short alley behind the condos to accommodate more trash bins, let alone hazardous waste. It would appear that the balconies of our condos, particularly the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors will lose their views because of the 3 story building that will be built. I will

lose the best view for the Downer Avenue Bike Races, as my condo faces the corner of Downer and Park (I know that this will not influence the build plans but just thought I would mention this).

The Eastside of Milwaukee has a unique and much beloved ambience. I am very concerned that the scope of this plan will significantly change the unique character and desirability of the Downer Avenue Business District and desirability and value of the adjacent homes and neighborhoods. Locally owned businesses and unique restaurants attract people from the western suburbs. The Coffee Trader should not have been a failed, but bad management and building maintenance contributed to this business failure.

There is a local example of how some improvements were made in a business district and maintained the village ambience – that of the Village of Wauwatosa. It is a popular dining district, there is free garage parking, as well as generally adequate parking for employees and customers.

There is also closer example of the slow development of new businesses along Prospect and Farwell and North Avenue because there is not adequate parking.

The Eastside of Milwaukee is an historic district and this plan will overwhelm the area. The Eastside has the charm similar to a small European village or small town with stores, local churches, great neighborhoods with a small town feel in the great city of Milwaukee. The Downer Avenue Business District will lose the charm of a neighborhood business district and become a high density business area jammed in the midst of a once nice residential area. This Master Plan for Downer Avenue does not address the adequate parking needs of the new businesses and buildings that are planned, and worsens the parking for existing businesses and residents and customers.

Much more information (total occupancy square footage of each building, total number of occupants planned (employees, customers, residents), traffic impact, parking costs per hour, day, month planned for short term and long term parking, net new spaces to the business district, number of new jobs expected when this project is completed, cost of the new condominiums).

Is the Parking Commission involved in this approval? Are they willing to provide resident only designated parking?

Please do not approve the requested zoning change and the Master Plan. Let's work more closely with the developer and owners to develop a viable and desirable plan for the Eastside and the Downer Avenue Business District.

Sincerely,

Deborah Fears