

# MEMORANDUM

May 14, 2007

**To:** City of Milwaukee Plan Commission members

**From:** Jim Plaisted, Executive Director, East Side B.I.D. #20 (414-272-5823)

**Re:** Milwaukee River Greenway Corridor Interim Study Overlay District

Six parcels affected by Interim Study Overlay District are in BID #20:

*Judge's Tavern, Mandel Group (former Hometown gas station), Webworks, Mandel Group (former Hometown office building), RC's Tavern, WE Energies substation, and Wisconsin Paperboard.*

These properties form an important gateway to BID #20 and the E. North Ave. commercial corridor. The BID board of directors is concerned about the present appearance of these properties and we hope that future redevelopment will form a new and improved gateway to the E. North Ave. corridor. We have high expectations for the catalytic nature of the redevelopment of this area of our district and its relation to the Milwaukee River corridor.

In conclusion, the effort to protect the northern City of Milwaukee stretch of the Milwaukee River is admirable. We support the efforts of the various River groups working towards a common goal of creating Milwaukee's green ribbon river parkway.

I have several questions and comments stated below in the context of the draft Exhibit A. I am also aware of new draft language submitted by the River groups earlier this morning.

**DRAFT  
EXHIBIT A  
File No. 070124**

***Milwaukee River Greenway Corridor Interim Study Overlay District***

a. The Milwaukee River Greenway Corridor Interim Study Overlay District (MROD) consists of the parcels outlined in the attached map. *Why does the map extend to Newhall Ave.? We do not support this inclusion without reasoned explanation as to why the overlay district would impose restrictions this far from the corridor (two blocks).*

b. The area covered by the MROD basically consists of the Milwaukee River Corridor from the former North Avenue Dam to City limits at Silver Spring Drive. This portion of the Milwaukee River Corridor is predominantly natural and forms an important natural resource, education, and recreational asset for the community. The purpose of the IS is to

permanently protect existing natural areas along the Milwaukee River primary environmental corridor, floodplains, and river bluffs and improve public access to this natural resource. These areas are important in protecting water quality, providing migratory pathways for wildlife, and minimizing flooding. It will also study establishing building setback and design guidelines for new multifamily residential, multi-lot, and commercial developments that will preserve the natural character of the greenway corridor, and possible enhanced guidelines to control erosion and stormwater run-off from entering the river and viewshed. *We are very concerned about the term "viewshed" being included at this time. We understand it should be ultimately determined by the study that will follow the creation of the interim overlay district. The term is both vague and exclusionary at the same time. As I understand it, the term is included to protect river users from viewing new buildings and new structures. But what of the value of actually viewing/seeing the River from buildings? Is there not inherent value to a community of users that wish to view the River from their home or workplace? We welcome the study of building setback and design guidelines being established during the study. We do not support arbitrary setbacks and height restrictions being defined in the interim process. To my knowledge, survey work has not been done to help define the actual corridor, the bluff line, etc.*

c. The MROD is being created to provide an opportunity to develop the Northeast Side Area Plan that will provide strategies and study potential guidelines for new development projects that compatible with the goal of maintaining a natural greenway along the Milwaukee River, and recommend a site plan review process.

d. The Northeast Side Area Plan will be a two year planning process directed by the Department of City Development and guided by a Contract Management Team, Plan Advisory Group, constituents, Aldermen, businesspersons, and other interested parties. The area planning process would develop a vision for a preferred future of the district in addition to strategies for these areas in a variety of subject areas, including regulatory tools, development preferences, transportation issues, and open space priorities. A full scope for the district planning process is available from the Department of City Development at: [www.mkedcd.org/planning](http://www.mkedcd.org/planning).

e. The MROD would be effective for a period of up to twenty-four months following its date of adoption by Common Council. It is anticipated that the Northeast Side Area Plan will be complete by 2008.

f. For parcels within the MROD, all permitted uses for new construction, except for building additions, alterations and accessory structures for dwellings (i.e. garages, sheds) would become special uses and require approval by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA), per Chp. 295-7-166, special use findings relating to protection of public safety, health and welfare, protection of property, traffic and pedestrian safety and consistency with the comprehensive plan. *We do not agree with specific height restrictions at this time, as proposed by the sponsoring groups.*

g. Proposed developments that have begun the development review process prior to the effective date of this MROD by applying for a special permit; variance; zoning change or planned development, or beginning a plan review process shall continue to be governed by the use table in the current zoning district and are exempt.

h. Special Use Permits in the MROD: For parcels within the MROD, any applicant for a special use permit shall be required to obtain an additional finding that they meet MROD Interim Guidelines.

These Interim Guidelines shall include the following:

\_ Construction of new principal buildings shall not be permitted within or encroach within the primary environmental corridor, as delineated by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).

\_ Uses: encourage land uses and activities along the river corridor that maintain a natural greenway corridor without infringing on existing land uses or unreasonably restricting future uses on adjacent land.

*We strongly disagree with first bullet point related to viewshed that was included in their revisions(see comments above). We understand this is to be determined over the course of the study.*

i. Underlying Zoning: In all other ways the underlying zoning districts shall continue to apply to parcels within the MROD. In cases of conflicts between this overlay district and the remainder of the Zoning Code requirements, the overlay district shall govern.