



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

Lafayette L. Crump
Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

Ald. Bauman
4th Ald. District

CITY PLAN COMMISSION
ZONING REPORT

File No. [231809](#)

Location: 1005 N. Edison Street, 100 E. State Street (owner), 1001 N. Edison Street, and 1027 N. Edison Street (long term lease with the City of Milwaukee)

**Applicant/
Owner:** The Neutral Project

**Current
Zoning:** Downtown – Residential and Specialty Use (C9B(A)) and within the Riverwalk Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ)

Proposal: In August 2021, the City Plan Commission approved the site plans and building elevations for a proposed mixed-use development at 1005 N Edison Street. The proposed development entailed a 15 story building with 194 residential units and ground floor commercial space. CPC also approved changes to the existing Riverwalk connectors at 1001 and 1027 N Edison Street relative to the Riverwalk Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ). In September 2021, the Common Council authorized a lease agreement between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee for the properties at 1001 and 1027 N. Edison Street to the developer.

Since 2021, the applicant has razed the existing commercial building on site and prepared the site for construction. Development plans have evolved significantly, requiring re-approval by the City Plan Commission as they relate to the Riverwalk SPROZ. The proposal also required BOZA approval of a dimensional variance for exceeding the allowable floor area allowed by the C9B(A) zoning and a Special Use permit for street activation (glazing) requirements. The Dept. of City Development has carried out a thorough review of the development plans submitted for both the BOZA approval as well as the updated CPC approval, and believes that proposal meets the SPROZ standards as well as the BOZA criteria for the dimensional variance and Special Use. Approval was granted by BOZA on March 7, 2024 for this project as proposed.

The revised project consists of the following:

- 32-story mixed-use residential building with 381 units and ground floor commercial space. The building sits entirely on a privately-owned site consisting of two parcels (1005 N. Edison St. and 100 E. State St.), which will be joined by CSM.
- The building's 2nd through 6th floor plinth encompasses a 288-space parking structure, topped with community rooms and outdoor landscaped community spaces on the 7th floor overlooking the river. The parking will be accessed via N. Edison Street, outside of the SPROZ limits.
- Several sustainable features are incorporated into the building design, including but not limited to mass timber construction, green roofs, alternative energy sources, and a communal electric vehicle sharing program. The project is using Passive House standards as a driver, with the goal of reducing energy consumption by up to 50%.

The applicant is making improvements to the Riverwalk and ensuring connectivity between the building and Riverwalk. These items fall within the SPROZ boundary:

- The lobby will be stepped down to match the contour of the site and expand the Riverwalk to cover the gap currently between the river wall and the Riverwalk to allow a seamless flow from the building to the river.
- Retail spaces will have access from the building to the Riverwalk.
- Riverwalk access will be upgraded to include a new 13' wide concrete stair, a new 8' wide concrete ADA accessible ramp to the south and a new 16' wide ADA accessible wood ramp to the north.
- The new Riverwalk surface will be Accoya wood decking with linear wood benches providing separation from the retail deck and pre-weathered steel edging along the Riverwalk as well as new bollard lights and park lights.
- Expanding the Riverwalk to cover the gap between the river wall and the Riverwalk to create a seamless flow from the building to Riverwalk.
- The adjacent open spaces, a small sliver along State Street to the south of the building, and much larger green space to the north surround the access point to the Highland Street pedestrian river bridge. The building's developer has entered into a 100-year lease with the City and RACM on the adjacent lands. The leased area will remain open space, however they will be significantly improved and will be maintained by the developer at the developer's expense, no longer at City expense. The open space is dedicated for public use as it is now. A portion of this open space falls within the Riverwalk SPROZ.
- Consistent with the 2021 approval, the proposal is intersecting the bridge abutment at the same location that was previously approved and lowering the wall similarly to allow it to connect to the bridge and

adjacent land. There will also be multiple paths to the Riverwalk from the south end of the site.

Staff concludes that the building design, particularly along the river side, and the enhanced Riverwalk and well-developed landscaping of the public open space on the leased land are in full alignment with the Riverwalk SPROZ standards.

Adjacent Land Use:

The subject site is across State Street from the Marcus Performing Arts Center and just to the west of the Marcus Center's multi-story parking structure. Just north along is a pedestrian bridge which spills out into an adjoining City-owned public park. Across the park to the north are low-rise condominiums, also along Edison Street.

Consistency with Area Plan:

Connecting MKE, the Downtown plan which was adopted by Common Council in 2023, recommends providing the amenities needed to support the enjoyment of the public realm, and ensure that streets and public spaces are welcoming and accessible to all. The plan also encourages buildings to engage the public realm and promote walkability. The plan emphasizes the importance of connecting to the Milwaukee River, and encourages active uses and pedestrian friendly facades along the Downtown Riverwalk.

This site is unique because it is on the river, and also has four visually exposed frontages. The plan further recommends requiring buildings within active commercial districts to include large storefront windows and regular pedestrian entries on the ground floor fronting streets and other public spaces, and restrict blank walls along active streets.

The proposed design prioritizes activation along the river and open space while still engaging Edison Street, which conforms to the recommendations of the Downtown plan. The ground floor level along the Riverwalk and facing the open green space will have continuous windows and interior activation. Given the unique river-front site with four prominent exposures, the proposed building design ensures blank walls are kept to the minimum possible for functional operation, while maintaining an active public realm on all sides.

Connecting MKE also recommends encouraging high density development, with larger residential and mixed-use developments providing at least 100 dwelling units per acre (435 sq. ft. of lot area per dwelling unit), with significantly greater densities near high frequency transit lines, retail and entertainment districts, and other public amenities. The proposed project aligns with this recommendation.

The Citywide Policy Plan, adopted as part of the overall Comprehensive Plan in 2010, provides guidance on land use decisions for issues of city-wide importance. Specifically, it recommends working with developers to contribute to open space in exchange for additional development density. The portion of the site under long-term lease provides such amenities.

In summary, the proposed design of the new building, improvements to the Riverwalk as well as the public green space, are consistent with the recommendations of the Downtown Area Plan.

Previous City

Plan Action:

08/23/2021 – City Plan Commission approved the site plan and river-facing elevations for a proposed mixed-use development and changes to the existing Riverwalk at 1005 North Edison Street, and changes to the existing Riverwalk connectors at 1001 and 1027 North Edison Street, on the east side of the Milwaukee River, west of North Edison Street, relative to a Site Plan Review Overlay Zone (SPROZ) established by Section 295-91.0021 of the former Milwaukee Code, in the 4th Aldermanic District (FN [210647](#))

Previous Common

Council Action:

09/21/2021 - Common Council authorized a lease agreement between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee for the properties at 1001 and 1027 N Edison Street to the developer. (FN [210716](#))

Previous BOZA

Action:

3/7/24 – Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) approved a dimensional variance relating to the Floor-Area Ratio of the C9B(A) district to allow the 32-story mixed-use residential and commercial building.

10/7/21 – BOZA approved a dimensional variance for the floor-area ratio and a Special Use permit for street activation (glazing) requirements along Edison Street.

Recommendation:

Since the proposed building design and modifications to the existing Riverwalk and connectors north and south of the subject site are consistent with the Riverwalk SPROZ standards, and the overall proposal is consistent with the recommendations and goals of the Downtown Plan, staff recommends that the City Plan Commission approves the subject file.