

To: Zoning Meeting Committee

From: Linda J May, homeowner on Summit Ave

Date: September 11, 2022

Re: Please help us keep our Neighborhood Aesthetics

Some of my parking problem observations from 2600 N. Summit Ave block vantage point over the last four decades that I've live in the 2600 block of North Summit Ave:

Last winter, the snowplow could not get through the south end of the 2600 N. Summit Ave block and had to reverse / back up the entire way on Summit. This occurred because of the narrowed street available with parked cars on both sides in winter. At least when that happens on Summit, the plow can turn around on Park Ave. after it backs up. Imagine that happening at a 5-star intersection with stoplights..... (Hackett). Due to numerous parked cars on Summit, the plows generally push snow INTO the parked cars, not the curb. So when vehicles do not get moved on a timely basis, a wall of ice forms IN the street, which can last months in a worst case scenario, often for weeks. Cars are generally parked practically a half to full-width car distance into the road due to the accumulated snow near the curb. Narrow roads, where generally only one car can pass at a time rather than two, is the normal occurrence during winter season on our street. We are under snow condition rules that require alternating sides during snowstorms– yet enforcement does not keep up with the cars that do not follow the rules and impede subsequent snow removal. We pay good tax dollars for snow removal, and do not get good service bc of the abundance of parked cars, generally owned by tenants or out-of-the-area owners (we do recognize the cars on the street that belong to homeowners). Homeowners are more vigilant about proper parking than are out-of-area guests. That's a fact, not an opinion. People who come from areas with abundant parking often take up two spots rather than be aware that two cars can generally fit in front of each house between driveways. Again, lost parking spots.

After breaking my foot last summer, I had two different health insurances (end of 2021 vs. beginning of 2022). Even though last winter had very little snow, it was still incredibly easier for me to drive five miles up to my PT (Physical Therapy) appointment in WFB than it was to walk 1.5 blocks to the PT location on Downer Ave. The same logic goes for restaurants, grocery shopping, etc. Winter in WI is not easy, particularly with the need to carry items, on icy surfaces during cold weather. When I'm running errands, even though I am a huge supporter of Downer Ave shops when I can, do I opt to shop elsewhere where parking is easier and parking lots are dry and warmer (underground options such as Whole Foods, Fresh Thyme, or else covered structures such as Shorewood PnS)? Yes I do. And with the exception of my broken foot, I'm a healthy, active person. But yes, I might need to avoid getting rained on or the like, even when it's not winter. Weather is a HUGE factor affecting the parking. So analysis of the parking and traffic situation in Summer is a Best-Case scenario. Let's not forget to factor in the (6) months of crappy weather when customers will AVOID Downer Ave shops & instead drive to and frequent retailers or restaurants with easier parking in other proximate areas of the city which offer comparable services. The lack of available on-street parking to passersby will only increase with this new proposed apartment. It will diminish any easy-access parking spot for persons attempting to support Downer Ave. shops.

Milwaukee is known for residents who are inclined to prefer to park for free vs. pay for a parking structure spot. Also as a female, I'm not inclined to feel as safe walking back to my car in a parking structure as I am to do so on a nearby on-street spot where I'm visible to others (safety first). Considering Café Hollander was just the latest nearby restaurant whereby a patron's bag with computer, keys, purse were stolen recently by two young men at 2 p.m. in the afternoon on a gorgeous summer day on Friday August 26, I don't want to frequent places that require me to feel unsafe ENROUTE TO/FROM destination (parking). To all the men who feel safe walking in parking structures by themselves, Kudos. Women aren't afforded the same safety levels as men. That's a fact. I won't feel safe using the structure at Downer. Crime is everywhere. We are no longer exempt on the east side of Downer Ave.

Speaking of the parking structure at Downer, St Marks apparently plans to offer parking to their churchgoers for services on Sunday. With the additional tenants who will have guests visiting at the proposed apartment, where will all the attendees of Church in the City, right next to the proposed apartment, park? All that's been said is that the Downer Ave merchants agree. I can hardly believe that's 100% compliance but the only statistics given out are stated in such a manner that "no one disagrees with the project". I would bet that Church in the City parishioners will be finding more difficulty attempting to find Sunday morning parking for church services taking place at the same time as St Mark's church services Perhaps they don't even know yet. Communication to neighbors was extremely limited.

So said apartment will offer adequate parking for their 55(?) residents. What about their guests? If one apartment resident decides to throw a small party or gathering with three other couples, depending upon individual work location and logistics beforehand, there could potentially be 4-6 parking spots lost for guest cars for solely that one apartment. Granted that's the most spots to lose likely. Assume a more accurate number, likely – 3 additional cars for that (1) apartment. Multiply that by the number of other apartment units in the proposed apartment with residents that could simultaneously / potentially host guests.... And mathematically it is crazy high number of guests seeking parking. Most people will opt for free on-street parking first, to the extent possible. So when homeowners on Summit Ave and nearby streets need to find parking for their guests, where will they go? We pay high tax dollars already in this beautiful part of the city. Many of our home values / resale prices will very likely go down after an apartment of (4) stories goes in, particularly those directly affected by viewership directly into back yards on Summit Ave.

There's been an incredible up/down vibe on Downer Ave since the 1980s. It started out busy and bustling. After Coffee Trader left, there was adequate parking. The consequence to Downer Ave: a glut of vacancies in the Downer Ave shops. NO ONE wants a glut of vacancies. We WANT a vibrant street life. When Pizza Man returned, we could tell how much business they did based on how full our street was with parked cars. We were happy for them. Granted, patrons parked for a few hours and then returned home. They were not guests who might stay overnight, for days at a time, using spots more than just a couple hours. When church-goers attend St. Marks or Church in the City, it is not 24/7/365. It is for a few hours. Then they return home. Parking is inconvenient for a period of time, just not PERMANENTLY inaccessible. Living as close to Downer Ave as we do, a temporary inconvenience for a few hours is doable. For the area. For the retail shops, churches, restaurants. We WANT them to survive.

We all own houses that are more than 100 years old. Houses that need to be restored under specific restrictions and guidelines of the historic district in which we reside. 106-yr old broken water pipes and knob & tube wiring fixes are next on our list. And four bathrooms. How many contractors will be required to handle this solely at our house? Where will they park? How long will this take? We don't live in an area with brand, spanking new construction. We live in a historical district that requires tons of maintenance which takes a LONG time. Every house in this area is old and will likely require restoration that demands parking spaces for many construction-related jobs. It is not comparable to streets like Prospect Ave – St. John's for example – where a lane of traffic was taken up for many years to accommodate the work truck activities. It is also not comparable to new apartments being constructed in place of huge parking lots downtown.

Recycling and garbage pickup?? We've now had to set our carts out to the street for pickup that is mechanically operated rather than manned. With parked cars taking up the same space as our carts, will we lose service too if our carts are blocked in? Again, residents are aware of pickup dates. Out-of-area guests are not.

One of the most frustrating parts is that many of us in the vicinity have been neighbors of St Marks for four or five decades. Any good neighbor who lives in close proximity to others and will be inconveniencing them or making major changes might not have a *LEGAL* obligation to communicate with their neighbors and alert them to changes, discuss options to minimize the potential problems, OR avoid them if another viable option is available. NONE of that was attempted by St Marks or the developers with the immediately affected neighbors. Everything was done without an alderman to represent us. Even though we all need to meet historical guideline standards being part of a historical district, we get turned down when we request changes. We could not expand our porch when we requested so. Our neighbor had to build a dormer on the back side of his garage because it could be seen by Hackett Ave condo owners one block away. Another neighbor could not (this year) use glass block. Yet developers can construct a 4-story apartment with balconies that overlook our back yards – they are not as close to Hackett Ave. sidewalk and public areas as they are near to the backyard adjacent lot line. We will lose 100% privacy and security with eyes of tenants able to peer into each of our back yards. There is just total inconsistency with what homeowners who have kept up and maintained these properties for decades are allowed, vs. a new developer. Why the inequity?

By not entertaining the idea or attempting to build a 3-story condo instead, which would fit perfectly into the lot and neighborhood, due to the \$\$\$\$\$ they "need to raise", the flavor of this neighborhood will absolutely change. ONE owner organization's change is affecting so many people, be it in the parking, the proximity and height, the lack of sunshine that will affect all our yards and landscaping, the resale value of our homes. The noise pollution (from a 55-unit bldg), A/C noise which is problematic in larger units, isn't going to show up until the proposed unit is built, but I doubt that is even factored in. Saturation points are exceeded and that's when these intangible costs show up. TOO LATE!!! Let's plan FIRST! Exercise all options first.

Downer Ave. is not comparable to other areas of the city. Many of the proponents of St Marks apartment do not live in this area and are suggesting ideas that simply do not make sense, even though they might work in other areas. We are grateful to have resided here for almost 40 years to enjoy what we have. If you look at statistics, you'd likely be amazed: our homeowners likely have lived here and know each other longer than most other Milwaukee blocks, many of us who've resided for 4-5 decades here on this block. Please help us keep our vibe. Entertain other ideas (such as a 3-story condo) that can still bring new residents into this lovely area. What are vacancy rates in apartments in this city? This one construction project cannot save the city of Milwaukee in terms of tax revenue, but it can single-handedly destroy our family neighborhood vibe. One organization owner on this block is trying to change it for themselves. It is a detriment to many in our surrounding blocks. I feel sad that our little big city or our big little city, as we call MKE, seems to care more about \$\$\$ for one contingent, than for quality of life for those who have kept these homes up so pristinely with hard-earned cash and sweat equity for decades. We didn't forgo maintenance for 45 years as was done by St Marks. They are responsible for the state of their building they are razing. It's like giving a huge sign-on bonus to new employees, and ignoring a loyalty bonus to those dedicated employees who have been there since Day 1.

Just some of my accurate, historical observations over the last 40 years. Not theoretical guessing. I doubt any traffic study done in August or September in beautiful weather will take much of this into account. But it is the reality, living in Wisconsin in winter and inclement weather. Adversarial is what we've been called because we are trying to save our neighborhood and add reasonable development that fits. I've even been called racist by proponents of St Marks. We want what fits this area because we are passionate about this beautiful place. To be ignored without even being asked for any feedback before plans were done and submitted is adversarial. And that was done by a church, who preaches 'Love Thy Neighbor', that has shown absolutely none to its neighbors, rather attempting to serve their own needs regardless the fallout to the neighborhood we all share. What is Christian about that?

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me directly at my e-mail. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter, that as you can see means so much to so many of us east side neighbors. As much as we would love to have things remain as they've been, we understand that change is inevitable. We are just asking for reasonable change – three stories, not four – that fits the area and would not bring so many additional cars and parking problems to those who have been the financial and community supporters of Downer Avenue area for so long. We are not Chicago (parking); we are not California (weather). We are MKE!