



## Legislation Text

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THE CHAIR

Resolution amending the design guidelines for the Site Plan Review Overlay District as established by Section 295-91.0021 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances. (Department of City Development)

- Analysis -

This resolution adds detailed design guidelines and specifications which apply to the BID portion of the Riverwalk.

Whereas, The City of Milwaukee ("City") has placed a great emphasis on the full utilization and appreciation of the Milwaukee River ("River"); and

Whereas, The City also prepared numerous studies and evaluations of the River's potential including the Milwaukee Riverlink Guidelines and A Planning Guide for the Middle and Upper Portions of the Milwaukee River; and

Whereas, Environmentally sensitive development of the river's edge for this part of the River will constitute a significant improvement of an underutilized resource within the City; and

Whereas, A continuous system of riverwalks on both sides of this part of the River would be a tremendous asset and amenity for all citizens of Milwaukee; and

Whereas, Section 295-85 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances ("Code") requires the establishment of design guidelines for a Site Plan Review Overlay District; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee that the following design guidelines and detail specifications are established and shall apply to all parcels:

1. Building facades should contain architectural features such as doors and windows which improve their appearance and provide a pleasant pedestrian environment.
2. Site features which detract from the use and redevelopment of the river's edge will be discouraged. Features such as blank walls; chainlink fencing, barbed razor or concertina wire; utility doors and staircases; service drives; loading docks; parking areas; outdoor storage; electrical or mechanical equipment; trash containers or other building maintenance facilities or equipment; ventilator exhausts; and concrete road barriers and guardrails, if required by necessity shall be screened from river areas.
3. Where a soft river edge still exists along the Middle River, preserve natural riverbanks and historic elements of the built environment where feasible.
4. Where historic buildings exist along the River, preserve those historic elements of the built environment.
5. Riverwalk landscaping should include native species of trees, plants and shrubs with trees planted, in order of preference, in the ground, in box-outs with protective guards and grates, or in planters.
6. Riverwalk landscaping should emphasize plant species which provide year-round interest.
7. Riverwalks should be on the land side of the River where feasible. To provide space for amenities such as benches, planters, light poles, trash containers, trees and railings, riverwalks should typically be 12 feet wide at 0 to 5 percent slope with a minimum 8 foot unobstructed corridor and be open to the general public 24 hours a day at no charge.
8. If land side riverwalks are not feasible, walkways that float on or extend over the water may be considered if they do not obstruct navigation, and do not have permanent roofs, and match the high quality of permanent riverwalks.
9. Special amenity/activity areas are encouraged but shall be limited to a maximum of 3,200 square feet, must be open to the general public, shall not block pedestrian movements on the riverwalk and shall not encroach into navigable waters.
10. Riverwalks must be passable year-round and be handicapped accessible.

11. Walkways, seating areas and other high traffic areas should complement adjacent buildings and neighborhoods, be aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-friendly, and should be paved with brick, tile, stone, decorative concrete or other attractive hard material; avoiding large expanses of slab concrete or asphalt.

12. Lighting units shall be Milwaukee Harp fixtures providing illumination in accordance with standards recommended by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IES) and approved by the Commissioner of Public Works.

13. All segments of the riverwalk shall be designed to connect to future portions of the riverwalk system or to connect to adjacent portions of the existing riverwalk system.

14. Structures built within 50 feet of bridges must not obstruct bridge maintenance.

15. Floating riverwalks will be permitted under bridges if a minimum 7 foot clearance can be maintained and if the connection will not obstruct navigation or bridge operations.

16. Finger piers will only be permitted where they will not obstruct navigation or do not extend more than 40 feet from the dockline.

17. Temporary moorings (less than 4 hours) for water taxis and tour boats will be permitted riverward of any amenity/activity area subject to navigation restrictions.

18. Parking adjacent to the River is strongly discouraged. Parking areas, service drives, loading docks and outdoor storage areas shall provide an appropriate buffer of at least 5 feet in width, meeting the standards of Section 295-75 of the Code and located between said parking area and the river/riverwalk. Parking areas shall be set back from the dockwall at least 25 feet and shall also devote at least 3.33 percent of their area to interior landscaping.

19. Temporary riverwalks are meant to provide connections between existing and/or proposed riverwalks when the area of the connection is not ready for development of a full-scale riverwalk. Such connections may be approved at a lower standard than permanent riverwalks if the proponent can demonstrate that the proposed temporary riverwalk is truly temporary, that the temporary riverwalk will not provide direct pedestrian access to the property on which it is located or attached or be utilized in any manner by that property including boat moorings, docks, tables or chairs, and the design of the temporary riverwalk is generally consistent with the intent of these design guidelines; and, be it

Further Resolved, That the City Plan Commission is authorized to grant variances to these design guidelines on a case by case basis when development in strict accordance with the design guidelines would cause a hardship or practical difficulty and there are unusual circumstances or conditions which apply to the property. Any variance granted shall be consistent with the intent of the design guidelines and shall not create substantial detriment to adjacent property nor materially impair its development; and, be it

Further Resolved, That additional guidelines for the area within 50 feet of the Milwaukee River from the North Side of Pleasant Street to the South Side of Clybourn Street require special treatment. More detailed design guidelines and specifications are attached to this Common Council File as Exhibit A; entitled "Riverwalk Development Guidelines".

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